

User Interaction- allows users to customize their experience with the website by adding personalized elements either for public display or in order to create an individualized experience for their personal use.

Membership Profile- available on many of the sites participants most responded to, having a profile allows visitors to create a permanent, personalized version of the site. Artsy is the only site surveyed which requires one and actively communicates with members by e-mail.

Favorites- allows users to save works they like and curate their own mini exhibitions for repeat viewing, available on several sites, only Google allows for multiple groupings and public display- transitioning from a personal organization tool to a social aspect.

Games- users can gain points and compete against other users as they contribute to user generated tagging through two game formats at The Brooklyn Museum.

User comments- also, available at the Brooklyn Museum users can leave comments on works or exhibitions. This feature was the most controversial, do website viewers really want to see just anyone's comments?

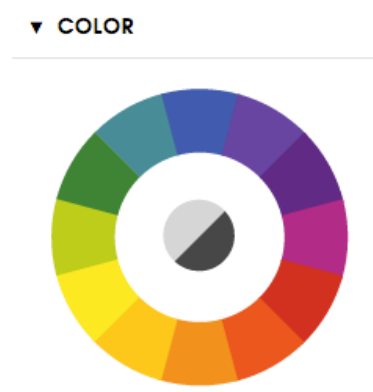
Linking to Additional Resources

Many of the most successful sites incorporated links to other sites with more detailed or supplementary information. Both Artsy and Google Art Project include links to individual works' records on the website of the museum or gallery in which they reside. The Stedelijk museum lists bibliographies related to each work and links them to their library page.

These links allow users to take advantage of more in-depth information about a work without having to reproduce it in the initial interface. Links also encourage users to explore institutions they may not have been aware of and possibly become patrons. This type of linking builds relationships between art, users, and repository institutions.

Search Filters-Innovative and unique search features attract users of all types from those generally interested in art to the art scholar. The websites with the most search features, especially those with unconventional filters, are expected to be successful art websites.

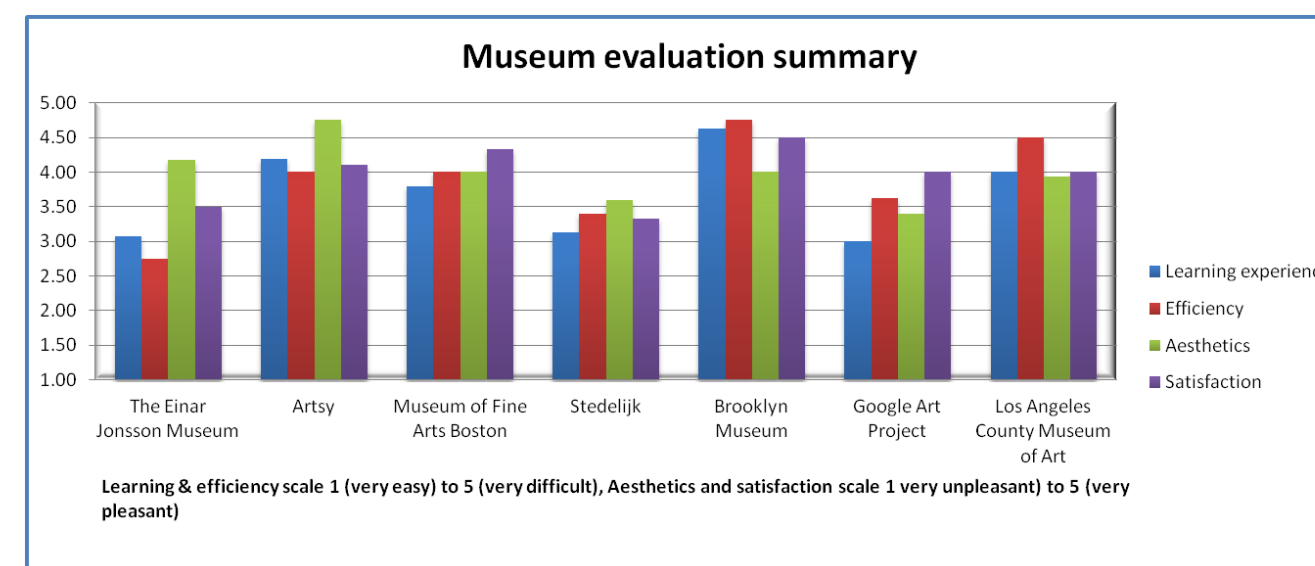
Browse-Browsing is an incredibly useful tool for those who are uncertain of their searching goals. Artsy has fully embraced browsing capabilities with a designated "browse" feature that provides five broad criteria and a multitude of sub-categories. It also includes a "filter" interface to narrow results by price, medium, size and a unique color wheel. which The Google Art Project interface provides users with four main types of collections to browse: Collections (Museum Collections), Artists, Artworks, and User Galleries. Additionally, users can filter collections by those with Street View or those that have been recently added.



Pre-Search-The Brooklyn Museum and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) websites both have extensive advanced search options. The LACMA interface allows a user to search within a variety of fields, and filter their search with one criterion from four different categories: Object Type, Curatorial Area, Chronology, and On View. The Brooklyn Museum offers four separate advanced searches—Object Search, Artist Search, Exhibition Search, Library and Archive Search—each with its own unique search terms. The most innovative feature of the Brooklyn Museum's interface is a sliding date range that allows the user to narrow his or her search result by time period.

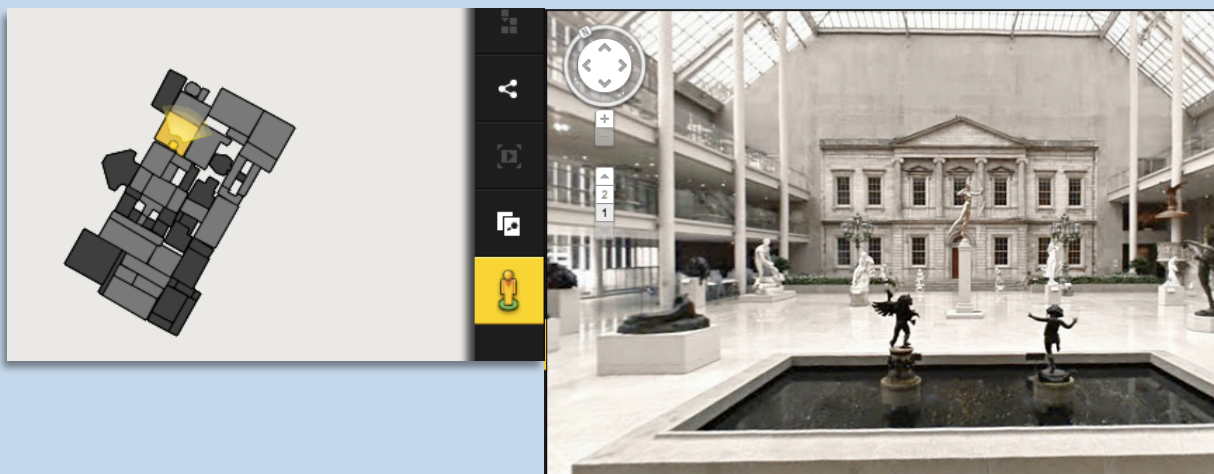
Post-Search-Once a search is performed, all websites offer the ability to refine the search results using various filters. The LACMA interface is consistent with its pre-search terms and allows the user to filter by Object Type, Curatorial Area, Chronology and Classification (here Classification takes the place of On View). Each item cataloged by the Brooklyn Museum includes a Completeness scale to notify the user the range of each record's depth—the interface allows users to order search results by Relevance or Completeness. Artsy, a for-profit website, allows users to filter search results by price range, genres, and size.

Our study evaluated seven online collections interfaces selected for their innovative approaches to presenting art image databases. In analyzing our results we discovered four main areas where innovative interaction features were being applied:



Google Street View

One of the most innovative features seen among the art museum websites is the application of Google Maps Street View Function to several museum collections on the Google Art Project interface. Currently 51 collections offer the Street View function, all allowing the user to virtually "walk" through the museum collection as if they were visiting in person.



Tagging- Tags are keywords or terms assigned to art images. Labeling art through a tagging system allows users to search or browse via natural language making art access more egalitarian. Tagging systems encourage user engagement and can mix terms that are from the traditional art history lexicon with those that are outside it.

User Generated - Brooklyn Museum and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) allow users to generate their own tags. Tag types can include anything from emotion words like "sad" to pop-culture phrases like "crazy eyes". LACMA reviews the tags before allowing them to be published.



Edward Hicks' Peaceable Kingdom with tags from the Brooklyn Museum

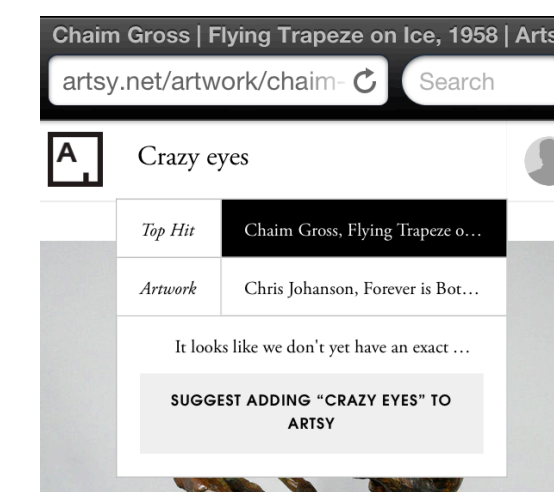
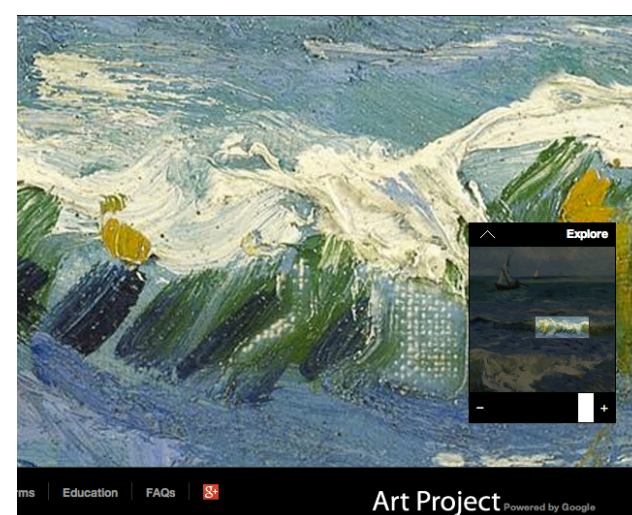


Image Manipulation- provide the highest possible quality images and allow users to manipulate them as freely as possible.

Download- available at the Brooklyn Art Museum and LACMA, both customize availability of the download option to reflect the applicability of reproduction rights

Zoom- high res photos fuel the Google Art Project's stunning depth of zoom allowing visitors to zoom in to the level of individual brushstrokes

Interactive features- At the Elinar Jonsson Museum webpage patrons can flip through the artist's sketchbooks page by page



WHY?

These user experience-enhancing features ultimately benefit the institutions that host these sites because they:

- Enhance the experience of museum visitors either before, after or even during visits to the physical museum space. This encourages return visits and strengthens positive associations with the institution.
- Support interest in the field through greater access, a more pleasing and usable site encourages visitors to learn more whether they are scholarly researchers or just interested laypeople.