

Museum Visitor Assistant

Overview

The Museum Visitor Assistant is an Ekahau-powered location-aware solution for museums, exhibition floors and similar applications where is a need to provide interactive, multimedia-based assistance and guidance systems for their visitors or customers.

Problem

Museum visitors often would like to have in-depth information about objects of interest to them, but providing this service is typically too impractical and/or expensive for museums. Printed catalogues are expensive to produce, cumbersome, and become obsolete too fast as collections and exhibits change. Guided tours provide a partial answer but still do not solve the information needs of individual patrons. Conventional, audio-based guidance systems are inflexible, expensive and not very informative.

Solution

Ekahau's positioning technology combined with reasonably priced PDA devices with their multimedia capabilities and a WLAN network with wireless data transfer capability provides the first complete solution to the museum guidance challenge – The Museum Visitor Assistant.

System Description

The complete Ekahau solution comprises of the following components:

- An inexpensive WLAN network (which many museums already have and they can utilize for other functions, as well)
- Ekahau Positioning Engine which can pinpoint the location of visitors using the system
- PDA device with client software which presents information about nearby objects, guides the visitor to desired locations, and provides suggestions and other information in an easy-to-use format
- Server software, which contains the information about the exhibits and objects. If the museum's collection is already digitized and stored in a database, this database can in most cases used as the data store for this application



Location information and data

Ekahau is the leading software-based WLAN positioning enabling technology provider. *Our multiple patent-pending* software-based positioning technology works with any standard WiFi (802.11) network and requires no proprietary hardware. Leading OEM manufacturers and system integrators use Ekahau positioning platform to create applications and turn-key solutions for their customers. Potential vertical segments and applications for Ekahau technology include such as:

- Healthcare: patient, caregiver & equipment tracking, portable patient monitoring, point-of-care information delivery
- Retail: shopper assistance, customer service, visitor behavior tracking & layout optimization
- Warehousing: locationenabling barcoding, locating equipment
- Public venues, exhibitions: visitor guidance & tracking, route planning, etc.
- Safety & security: locating prison guards, security personnel, firefighters, etc.



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Features

- Location-specific information push the system can automatically offer information relevant to the visitor's location
- Full multimedia features information can be presented with text, graphics, audio, video and animations
- Integration into existing museum databases
- Easy set-up of temporary exhibit information
- Available integrated walkie-talkie function for getting live assistance if needed
- Available email integration
- Route and point of interest recommendations based on visitor profile and/or action history
- Available customized tours and assistance features for museums guides
- Visitor route and behavior tracking the system can save visitor movement information for later analysis that can help in designing traffic flow and collection placement

Visitor Benefits

Visitors can get a whole new perspective and deeper insight to museum collections using the system:

- Visitors can get specific information about objects of interest when they want it at their own pace without having to follow guided tours
- Visitors can deepen their appreciation of exhibits and objects with available background information
- The route planning and suggestion features help visitors to plan and optimize their visits and find interesting pieces they otherwise might not find
- The system can help visitors better understand the significance and context of single pieces by providing relevant background information
- Visitors can optionally email themselves or friends exhibit highlights or information about objects

Museum Benefits

Museums using the system can realize significant benefits from deploying the system:

- As visitor service is improved using the PDA devices, museum personnel can devote more of their time to developing other aspects of the operation
- Improved guidance and service makes the museum more attractive to visitors and helps the museum to better fulfil its mission of transferring knowledge and cultural heritage
- If desired, PDA equipment rentals to visitors can become a significant new revenue source for the museum that can help fund other aspects of its operation
- Because the system can also provide visitor route and behavior information, both permanent collections and temporary exhibits can be designed more effectively
- The multimedia and positioning features of the system help make museums more accessible to hearing and vision-impaired patrons
- By the use of advanced interactive guidance, museums can make their collections more appealing to young visitors
- The system can offer different types of guidance to different visitors based on their preferences and interests
- Unlike conventional devices, all information can be stored on servers with no need to upload new versions to devices

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