RECONNECT
Is an Exhibition Design Proposal about the Effect of Social Media and Strategies to Deal with The Information Revolution Mindfully Through an Interactive Experience.

by Sarah Al Khedair

B.Sc. in Interior Design Engineering, January 2014, Prince Sultan University

A Thesis submitted to

The Faculty of
The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences
Of George Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

January 10, 2019

Thesis directed by

Barbara Brennan
Visiting Assistant Professor of Exhibition Design
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my thesis instructors Mr. Nigel Briggs, and Ms. Naomi Crellin. Their knowledge, expertise, and insight saw me through the evolution of my project from its inception to its completion and their critique always pushed me towards the next step of my creative process. I would also like to thank Ms. Barbara Brennan for her support in all aspects of my academic career, that enabled me to have a smooth and productive year. My siblings who have been there for me during the highs and lows of this past year and without whom I could not have achieved my goals to such a level of excellence are also owed a huge debt of gratitude. Last but not least, a special thank you goes to my parents, whose unconditional love and encouragement made this entire experience possible and without whom I would not be where I am today.
Abstract

RECONNECT
Is an Exhibition Design Proposal about the Effect of Social Media and Strategies to Deal with The Information Revolution Mindfully Through an Interactive Experience

RECONNECT is a proposal to create awareness of the power and mindful use of social media through the medium of an exhibition. The exhibition will take place in the Newseum in Washington, D.C., an ideal venue in which to hold an interactive exhibition that explores the relationship between social media and humans. This exhibition will take visitors on an experiential journey through three different active learning environments. People tend to learn in more practical situations, so a multi-sensory experience will increase audience engagement. This paper will explore the design challenge of getting visitors to fully experience an exhibition by giving up their phone in the middle of the exhibition.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements iii
Abstract iv
List of Figures vi
Introduction 1
Exhibition Overview 3
Site Overview 7
Audience Overview 11
Precedents 13
Content Overview 21
Interpretive Plan 24
Design Strategy 26
Conclusion 30
Bibliography 32
Appendix I: Inspiration images 34
Appendix II: IPOP engaging system strategy 37
Appendix III: Survey conducted at the Newseum 39
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Newseum site, Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Newseum Exterior View</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Newseum Second Floor Gallery</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Life Online Exhibition</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cyber Detectives Exhibition</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sensory Story Exhibition</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fast Forward Exhibition</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>YOU! Exhibition</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Content Diagram</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Interpretive Strategy Moments</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Inspiration image for CONNECT</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Inspiration image for CONNECT</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Inspiration image for DISCONNECT</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Inspiration image for DISCONNECT</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Inspiration image for RECONNECT</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Inspiration image for RECONNECT</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Social networking, enabled by computers and smartphones, has become an important, if not vital, tool for most of us. The spread of these platforms and the increase in the number of users is changing the social, educational and psychological aspects of our lives. People think of themselves as being more connected and social while the truth is they are continually isolated and “alone together”. ¹ People believe that by using social networks they are more efficient and aware of what is happening in the world. The reality is that the volume of information we are exposed to daily is changing our experiences and our world. “Today, we are confronted with an unprecedented amount of information, and each of us generates more information than ever before in human history.” ² This overwhelming mass of information is forcing people to exert extra effort to filter the necessary information which makes us less conscious of our surroundings.³

RECONNECT is an exhibition proposal that will address this issue by providing the opportunity for visitors to disconnect from social networks during the show, with the ultimate goal of encouraging them to use these platforms mindfully, as social media is an essential and omnipresent part of this age. As Erik Qualman, the author of Socialnomics, stated, “If Facebook were a country it would be the third largest country in the world behind only China and India.”⁴ This show case the large number of social media users and how these platforms can strongly affect many aspects of human life. Social networks are powerful tools that individuals should use to enhance their lives and careers by

developing a “seventh sense”, described by Joshua C. Ramo as “the ability to look at any object and see the way in which it is changed by connection”.\(^5\) Ramo encourages the reader to take a leading role early, as the revolution of social media is starting to influence power dynamics among people.\(^6\)

The goal of the proposed exhibition is to not only to encourage visitors to recognize these influences, but to understand their agency in shaping their online interactions and use of social media. The best way to do this is through an exhibition that provides an active, hands-on, multi-sensory learning setting. As Benjamin Franklin once said, “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn”; the more relatable the experience, the more exhibition-goers will become aware of the change they can create. While most people are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of these platforms, many are still not taking the responsibility of changing their online presence and behavior. Therefore, this exhibition, through a series of dynamic and emotional interactive activities, will encourage the audience to learn about and explore the power of social media, particularly as it relates to their lives.


Exhibition overview

RECONNECT is an exhibition that will deliver an awareness and inform the audience of how social networks are changing our lives. We live in a fast-paced world where we often feel out of control. The network age is affecting all aspects of life, including but not limited to politics, economics, education and above all social life. Therefore, developing strategies to balance our lives in this network age is necessary to our well-being.

Most people are aware of the mass of information surrounding us, but they likely have never engaged with a tangible experience of it. Someone can go to the library and go through shelves to count the number of books they have access to, but this is not possible on social networks. Rather, social networks carry a tremendous amount of information that can be accessed on small devices that can fit in our pockets. To emphasize this fact, the first section of the exhibition will present the virtual media surrounding us by having a room full of data that keeps changing and updating. This showcases how easily we are distracted if we try to stay aware of everything on these platforms. In addition, the connection concept will be represented in the work created by light artist Christopher Bauder and composer and musician Robert Henke in the audiovisual installation “Deep Web” that will be installed on the ceiling. The installation takes the audience through an immersive experience that allows the information flow to be represented through various media, thus adding to the intensity of the experience.

In this era of social network dominance, "stilled freeze moments" become necessary to rethink your social network presence. Joshua Ramo, the author of The

---

Seventh Sense, explained this, starting his book with a chapter about the model of the Master Nan method of stating slow training:

“Why begin with sentiments of the slower culture that Master Nan embodied, passed like delicate and still-warm tea, with so much calm in the face of all this urgency? It’s not only because, as Master Nan said, the faster we move, the sicker we’ll get. It’s also something else: The training of an instinct of a truly fresh way of looking at the world, demands a kind of calm. Understanding of anything, after all, is most durably assembled in slow conversations, in patient probing, It is developed as much from brushes with music and literature as it is from any direct confrontation with the truth. What Master Nan was trying to teach was the lesson of thousands of years of philosophy, Eastern and Western alike: The birth of a new instinct - for justice or truth or beauty - requires a rewiring of our minds, and this can be done only at the slow pace of contemplation. In this early moment or a revolution, we should seek those stilled, freeze-framed moments when we can pause amid light-speed-fast networks to think about why they work and just what they are doing to us.”

The second section of my proposed exhibition will engage with this concept by challenging visitors to leave their phones behind and be more present in the experience. In this section they will be introduced to the idea of disconnecting from social network to be more active and focused in real life. Through interactive stories the audience will be encouraged to evaluate their use of social media and consider their options, including quitting entirely or staying connected, but in a mindful way. The stories will be presented by real people who have quit using social media.

In the last section of the exhibition, the audience is encouraged to meaningfully and efficiently reconnect with social media by appreciating the huge impacts it can have on many aspects of this generation’s life, including politics, psychology and social life. The exhibition will grapple with some of the social, psychological and economic impacts of social media. This process will include soliciting information from visitors about their interests and backgrounds. This data will be programmed into a customized chip card at

---

the beginning of the exhibition and will be used to create their unique experiences in the show. After a computer uses this information to assess the impacts of social media on participants, the interactive wall will give the audience the opportunity to create a virtual profile. This profile will convey a set of instructions that Guy Kawasaki and Peg Fitzpatrick, the authors of The Art of Social Media, have explained about creating the perfect social media profile.\(^9\) Through this experience, the audience will learn practical tools for using social media without creating unnecessary distractions. For example, people will be able to create content that is directly related to the goals of their profiles, whether it be personal or professional. Also, they will be introduced to the filter setting in social media, which will save time and limit distractions. Virtual reality is another active learning environment where users will be aware of the effects that social media has on their generation and will continue to have on future generations.

There is no question that what goes on the internet stays there forever, and this will affect the privacy of individuals for generations to come. For example, the Library of Congress has archived every Twitter post ever tweeted, even if the user deleted it later.\(^{10}\) The purpose of this archive is to help scholars and researchers, yet it shows how accessible social media can be to anyone. Moreover, new generations are sharing a lot about their private life on social media, which can have an effect on their career later on: “An organization called On Device Research surveyed 6,000, 16- to 34-year-olds across 6 countries and found that more than 10 percent reported that they had been turned down

---


https://www.cnn.com/2013/01/07/tech/social-media/library-congress-twitter
for a job because of pictures or comments on their online/social media presence.”

Google’s Executive Chairman, Eric Schmidt, stated in a 2013 speech that the new generation, especially teenagers, are widely sharing their private lives online, for which they may suffer the consequences of their mistakes longer than they expect.

“RECONNECT” will engage the audience through the lens of their online performance. It will give them the opportunity to reconsider the information revolution from a new perspective. This exhibition will provide the opportunity for the audience to reflect on and rethink their presence online and then learn how to use social media to their advantage. After leaving the exhibition, the visitors will be more aware of the positive impact that social media can have on their lives and how to craft their online presence.

---

Site Overview

The proposed site of the exhibition is the Newseum in Washington, D.C. It is located on Pennsylvania Avenue, the most powerful part of the city, between the United States Capitol and the White House. The location encourages the museum to take a powerful media stand. The building is located on the street corner, which allows for high vehicle/foot traffic and direct street access. Also, the building is easily accessible through Metro, with two stations within a walkable distance. Additionally, a parking garage is provided for an hourly fee. The Newseum opens an hour before the Smithsonian Institution museums, which helps attract tourists visiting the National Mall.

Figure 1 Newseum site, Washington, D.C.

The Newseum was created by Freedom Forum with contributions from different news organizations. The museum promotes the five freedoms of the First Amendment

---

and traces the evolution of communication media. The museum is considered one of the
most interactive museums in the world.

![Newseum Exterior View](image)

**Figure 2 Newseum Exterior View**

The Newseum was chosen in part because of its unique design flow, which guides
visitors from the upper level to the bottom, allowing them to walk through
all of the exhibits on every floor without exiting. Changeability is another characteristic
this location affords: the exhibitions in the museum are easily changed every day to
reflect updates in the media and news. Also, the innovative design of the museum is
inspired by the 3D newspaper, and technology is embedded in the design of the
exhibitions.  

The selected gallery for the exhibition will be in the northwest corner of the
second floor, which currently houses the NBC interactive newsroom exhibition. Visitors

---

can see the exterior of the exhibition, which can be used to display attractive graphics, from the atrium or the upper levels of the museum.

![Figure 3 Newseum Second Floor Gallery](image)

The unique characteristics of the Newseum allow for a challenging, yet attractive exhibition. The traffic flow will attract more people to the exhibition. In a study I conducted at the Newseum in March 2018, most of the visitors I interviewed had not heard about the NBC newsroom exhibition, but they visited it simply because they happened upon it. During my study, I observed that most of the visitors entered the exhibition because it has an open floor plan; the interactive and accessible layout encouraged visitors to walk in. This would create a design challenge for the proposed exhibition, in that the space would have to be adapted to provide an enclosed layout that includes a single entrance and exit. So, to attract visitors to the space, my proposal suggests adding an interesting wall design, which will draw attention from both visitors
passing by and those who can see the exhibition from the atrium and other floors. Also, the Newseum is known for using cutting-edge interactive technology, which makes it challenging to create an innovative and unique interactive experience for visitors. According to the study that I conducted, the visitors of the Newseum typically come to visit the entire museum. Therefore, an attractive experience will encourage them to spend more time at the exhibition before moving to the next exhibition.

Moreover, one of the challenges of exhibiting in the Newseum is the admission fee; the Smithsonian museums in close proximity are free. However, charging a fee may make visitors spend more time in the exhibition because they might want to get their money's worth. As Jonathan Jones writes, "Perhaps our culture of free entrance makes museums seem more ordinary and detracts from their wonder." Also, the museum provides free admission for a second day so that visitors can come back to spend more time. Taking advantage of this policy, a Trip Advisor reviewer spent a total of six hours over two days during his visit.  

Audience Overview

This exhibition is relevant to anyone who uses social networks, regardless of age or language, a population that is growing every day.\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, to help me design the proposed exhibition, I developed a focus group to help me to create experiences tailored to selective groups. The exhibition’s target group will be the visitors who are looking to change their social network presence and impact. This includes adults employed at technology and energy companies who are looking to change their careers. A second target group is social network addicts. This group will include young adults who are studying in colleges and universities near and in the District of Columbia and tourists who spend a significant time using social media.

The users will not describe themselves as social media addicts, nor would the exhibition. Their behavior while using social media is what is evaluated to identify them as being social media addicts. Media addiction has existed since the revolution of T.V and video gaming to the invention of internet.\textsuperscript{19} The social and cognitive behavior of social media addicts includes “taking away attention from other tasks, experiencing unpleasant feelings from reducing or stopping interaction with social media and restarting the activity very soon after stopping completely.”\textsuperscript{20} The exhibition will describe this population as “social media active users” and will suggest changes that can make their online presence, including their browsing and social media activities, more productive.


\textsuperscript{20}Tony Rao. “Social media is as Harmful as Alcohol and Drugs for Millennials.” http://theconversation.com/social-media-is-as-harmful-as-alcohol-and-drugs-for-millennials-78418
Moreover, the exhibition will create an environment where discussion is encouraged throughout the experience, which is particularly important for social network addicts, who tend to be more isolated and less social. As Sherry Turkle explains, “our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other.”21 The exhibition will explore ways for addicts, as well as everyone else, to be more engaged in the social experience through this interactive platform.

---

Precedents

This section will explore different exhibitions that have similarities with the proposed exhibition in content, experience or interpretive strategy.

First content related:

A. Life Online

National Media Museum, Bradford, England

Addressing themes related to the internet, *A Life Online* consists of two exhibitions: one that is permanent and one that is regularly changed and temporary. The exhibition was created for a diversity of audiences. The exhibition content is divided into four different spaces. The first gallery, ‘In The Beginning’, explores the history of the internet, particularly its creation. The next gallery, ‘Into The World’, explains how the internet became accessible to the public. The gallery ‘Into Our Lives' shows how the internet became a force in our lives and the effect it can have on us. ‘Into The Future' is the final space and is about the future effects and evolution of the internet. *Life Online* uses a variety of mixed media, including interactive touchscreens, games, QR codes,
digital artworks (some collaborative), various audio/visual materials and an online mini-
sit.” 22

Key take-away points:

Permanent and temporary galleries
The temporary gallery serves to address the evolution of the internet. This gallery
will be updated as the internet and media continually change with new platforms,
innovations and services.

Self-navigating exhibition
Though the gallery is divided into four different spaces, there is no linear flow, so
visitors can start and navigate to any point.

Interactives to introduce each topic
The exhibition is divided into different topics. Near each of these topics there is
an easy-to-use interactive element. The use of interactive multimedia serves
different audiences.

Linear historical artifacts presented on floor
Artifacts from every day life, such as phones and computers, are placed on the
floor to guide visitors through the timeline of the development of the internet,
which provides a tangible element to the show.

B. Cyber Detectives

The Tech Museum of Innovation, San Jose, CA

Figure 5 Cyber Detectives Exhibition

The goal of the exhibition Cyber Detectives is to create an understanding and awareness of cybersecurity. The developers avoided scare tactics, opting instead to create interactive games that teach visitors how to protect their digital identity and stay safe online. The creators believe that this exhibition will be especially relevant to both kids and adults considering careers in IT. 23 These visitors in particular may become cybersecurity professionals who detect and solve online threats. 24

Key take-away points:

Valid for both adults and kids

The interactive exhibition creates a learning environment that engages both adults and kids.

Information through problem-solving:

The series of interactive elements on a guided mission inform and create awareness by teaching participants how to solve problems that cybersecurity professionals might face.

**Long-term goal:**
Due to the lack of expertise in the field of cybersecurity, the exhibition aims to encourage the audience to consider a career in cybersecurity. It also informs all attendees about cybersecurity issues.

**Second experience related:**

*A. Sensory Stories*

Museum of the Moving Image, New York, NY

*Sensory Stories* combines both storytelling and digital innovations by using virtual reality. Each of the seventeen interactive platforms not only take users through stories, but also through experiences. For example, in Birdy NYC, virtual reality simulates flight in the sky over Manhattan, creating a unique experience for each
individual. Through an immersive experience that engages all of the senses, the visitor is exposed to a new narrative experience.

Key take-away points:

Using technology to recreate the experience.

The exhibition uses technology to recreate stories, but also enables visitors to have their own experiences within the story through their individual actions and decisions.

Involving the audiences’ senses.

Through the experience, all the senses will be involved through the use of technology, thus enabling full body immersion.

---


Third interpretive strategy related:

A. Fast Forward

Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, IL

Figure 7 Fast Forward Exhibition

Fast Forward is an exhibition that shows collections of different innovation in technologies, examining how technological creativity and development may develop in the future. "What if?" is the simple question asked in each section of the gallery to challenge you to think deeply about future innovations. There are twelve interactives that visitors can participate in, with the goal of educating visitors about the challenges of various technologies. The exhibition is rotating to keep up-to-date on the latest innovations.27

Key take-away points:

Engaging the audience through a series of questions

The questions require the audience to reflect on their own experiences and ask questions of their own.

---

Allowing visitor to observe the innovations up-close through interactives

The interactive takes the visitor through the challenges and process of each development, explaining the stages of development and components of each innovation.

Rotating to keep updated

With a subject related to the future, the exhibition continually updates the artifacts and interactive.

B. YOU the Experience

Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, IL

Figure 8 YOU! Exhibition

YOU the Experience is an interactive exhibition that explores different aspects of human bodies and lives. The exhibition is not designed in a regimented way; visitors self-navigate through the nine sections. Each section covers a topic related to the human body such as “Your Mind and Your Heart”, or about an aspect of human life, such as “Your Future”. In the “Your Future” section, visitors have different interactives that make the topic more relatable. For example, there is an interactive screen where they can drag and drop selections of things to do before they die.  

Key take-away points:

There is no description of the interactive goal

One of the exhibition reviewers wasn't sure what the purpose of the interactive was until he researched the curator’s intention.

The interactive allows visitor to check and print their results later, through the online website

After leaving the exhibition, the interactive experience continues online.

The interactives are easy to operate using common sense

Most of the interactives in the exhibition doesn't provide explanations for usage; it is left to the audience to figure out.
Content Overview

The primary goal of the proposed exhibition content is to create an awareness of the following three concepts: 1) The massive amount of unfiltered information provided every day in social networks is beyond comprehension. 2) Leaving social networks is an option, but might not be the best choice. 3) Use social network tools mindfully and understand the impact of your online presence. Accordingly, the content of the exhibition will be arranged in a linear path and divided into three primary sections: CONNECT, DISCONNECT and RECONNECT.

CONNECT

Is the first section, the introductory experience for visitors is to inform them about the mass of information surrounding us. An immersive environment with large multi-touch screens will provide an updated social network feed. Visitors can select different social media platforms to see how fast the feeds are for each one. For example, Instagram is composed of visual feeds that rapidly change, while on Twitter the feed is mostly texts. They also will be able to see usage statistics collected daily, projected as digital
visualization graphics. Additionally, users will be able to browse their social network profile on one of the kiosks in this section.

**DISCONNECT**

In the second section of the exhibition, visitors will enter a different environment that will build on the previous section, giving them a strategy to manage the mass of information. In this section, visitors will be introduced to the concept of quitting social networks. The learning experience will include interacting with virtual stories that discuss the advantages and disadvantages of disconnecting from social networking sites. The stories will show real-life experiences of people who have disconnected from social media to live a life free from distractions. The audience will be asked to consider the cost of such an action. Also, panels will list quotes from the storyteller and will be available for visitors who choose not to enter the video booths. An interactive experiment in this section will challenge the visitors to leave their phones in lockers. This experience will be further explained in the next section of this paper.

**RECONNECT**

The third section of the exhibition will be divided into five subsections of content. The primary goal of this section is to develop an awareness of the power of social networks and encourage the audience to use them mindfully. The “psychological impact” subsection will discuss the impact of social networks on cognitive abilities. The next two subsections will explore the effects of social networks on the economy and on social life. Relevant examples will be displayed to the visitors, according to their own experiences and background information they provided at the beginning of the exhibition. The information in these three subsections will be presented in a Twitter-like format - brief
and fast. The stories will also appear in a format similar to Snapchat messages - short and to the point.

After these three sections, visitors will go through an interactive experience to learn how to use various tools to create a virtual profile. Following the instructions on how to create a perfect social media profile that Guy Kawasaki and Peg Fitzpatrick, the authors of *The Art of Social Media*, have laid out in their book,²⁹ visitors will do just that. In particular, they will learn how to select the right content and use these platforms to improve their careers and education.

Finally, visitors will use virtual reality to explore a world in which everyone is connected through the internet. This activity’s design is inspired by two episodes of the British TV series *Black Mirror*: “Nosedive” (episode one, season three) and “The Entire History of You” (episode three, season one).³⁰ In “Nosedive”, people are able to see, judge and rate your social media history. The goal of this section of the exhibition is to emphasize that what goes on the internet stays forever; every post and photo uploaded today will be visible to future generations.

**AFTER LEAVING**

After leaving the exhibition, there will be an online portal, such as website and phone app, that will enable visitors to continue their experience long after they have left the exhibition. The online interface will contain reports of social network usage and links to and information about tools that will help maintain private online identities. A record of the visitor’s virtual experience in the exhibition will remain in their online account.

---


Interpretive Plan

The proposed exhibition will introduce the audience to the power of social media through an immersive environment that will help them comprehend the technological connections around us. Additionally, through the use of interactives, visitors will rethink their online performance and presence. The primary goal of the exhibition is for visitors to gain knowledge about social media, and develop goals and strategies to change their online profile to enhance their professional and/or personal lives.

The exhibition will take place in the NEWSEUM, which is known as one of the most interactive museums in the world. Therefore, the design of the exhibition will incorporate interactive experiences to better deliver information. The visitors of the NEWSEUM will be expecting technology and interactivity to be a part of their experience, so including interactive activities will satisfy customers.

The main target audience of this exhibition are individuals interested in technology and social media development. The exhibition will engage high performing digital interactives to introduce visitors to innovation in human engagement interface design. Information will be conveyed through screens that provide brief explanations, whether written or filmed, rather than 'long information panels.

Interpretive goals:

- Visitors will be amazed by the vast amount of information that is instantly available to them
- Visitors will be challenged to choose disconnection to face the revolution of information

---

• Visitors will **learn** the power of social networking and how to use it.

**Interpretive strategy:**

• The CONNECT section will show the update of different social media platforms in seconds.

• The kiosk in the CONNECT section will give visitors an opportunity to see a map of their social media connections by connecting one of their social media profiles, i.e. Instagram. Once they are connected, the tree will keep growing, continuing onto their followers’ trees. So, if someone thinks they only have a hundred followers, they may discover that they have many more connections than previously suspected.

• In the DISCONNECT section the visitors will face the challenge of leaving their phones behind before continuing the exhibition experience. The challenge is optional and they will get a reward if they choose this option. This will be a card with a chip in it that they can customize to enhance their experience in the RECONNECT section.

• The exhibition will be designed around an active learning environment. The audience will learn through interactive activities and stories as well as VR games.

---

*Figure 10 Interpretive Strategy Moments throughout the Exhibition*
Design Strategy

The exhibition will guide visitors through a series of psychological ups and downs. The changing environment will be a linear path. The three sections will lie on a linear pathway and each will have different environments and goals, as explained earlier in this paper. The overall concept of the exhibition is derived from how connections are formed and represented in nature. For example, nature often is represented in geometric forms, like triangular and polygon shapes. In architecture this style known as the Biomimetic style which is inspired from natural solutions in design.\(^\text{32}\) This style will be used in the exhibition in order to create a unified, cohesive design throughout. It will be translated in the design of the dividers, screens and interactive kiosks.

CONNECT

- Look and feel:

This section, through presenting a massive flow of information that visitors can scroll, browse and interact with, will provide an immersive environment in which visitors can engage. The atmosphere will appear futuristic, in that everything will be touchable and have sensors. The overall environment will be vibrant and will include bright colors with dark backgrounds in order to attract visitors. The bright colors, including red, bright pink and sharp blue will exude a sense of charged energy. The colors will be represented in the installation of the audiovisual installation on the ceiling entitled “Deep Web”, created by light artist Christopher Bauder and composer and musician Robert Henke. Moreover, touchable, sleek and reflective glass screens will be used to translate the use of modern materials.

technology. The goal of this environment is to emphasize the CONNECT concept – how everyone is now connected to everyone despite differences of time and location.

- **Visual communications.**

   The graphic style of this section will primarily be black, but titles will be multi-colored and subtitles will be white. The artwork installed on the ceiling will be bright to attract visitors. Lines and rectangular shapes will frame the title, subtitle and visual materials. Light projectors and screens will display written materials on the walls and kiosks.

- **Transition to the next section:**

   The contrast of light and dark is mainly used to guide visitors to the next section of the exhibition. The dividers that separate section one from two will create a dark space, allowing visitors to refocus after seeing their vast trees of connection. In that space, visitors will be given 30 seconds to decide whether to take a challenge and continue. The bright light coming from section two will lead the visitors forward.

**DISCONNECT**

- **Look and feel:**

   Visitors will move to the next section of the exhibition where it is calm and there is minimal movement and colors. Compared to the intense environment in section one, visitors will find the opposite in section two. This section will contain mainly natural colors and be mostly white. It will feature four different 4D cinema booths where the visitors can engage with a storyteller by sharing their experience about leaving social networks. The exterior of the booth will be white, while its inside will be dark and feature large centered screen with the addition of the 4D effects. Taking into account that some
people experience claustrophobia in small spaces, the booth will have an open ceiling and a wide entrance. People will also have the option to engage from outside the booth, which will display the storyteller’s biography and the transcript of their story on a screen. There will be a peaceful space where visitors can reflect on the experiences of the exhibition and guess what is to come. A seating area in the center will allow visitors to lay down on chaise lounge chairs or pillows on the floor to observe a projection of written quotes on the ceiling. Also, this area will provide the visitors a chance to do a last minute check on their phone before leaving it in the next challenge. A centered sculpture with lockers is where the visitors will be challenged to lock up their phones. If they do so, they will be rewarded with a customizable chip card in the final section of the exhibition.

- Visual communications:

  In this section, the graphics will be mostly white and use the same lines and shapes of the overall design of the exhibition. The written component will be presented through the use of light projection on dimmed surfaces.

- Transition to the next section:

  Light is also used in this section to attract visitors to the next section. Visitors will follow the blue light that emanates from the entrance to the next section.

  **RECONNECT**

- Look and feel:

  Visitors then move to the last section of the exhibition where the core content will be presented in the RECONNECT section. There will be mixed media in this section, including information panels, 360 degree screens, and virtual reality interactive activities.
This section will be a high tech digital environment that has ambient light and an open design flow design. In this space, the environment in the first section will be repeated in a more elegant, sharp and organized way. The mix of the first and the second section design concepts will be presented in this section. The overall color palate will be a mix of bright colors like red, bright pink, and blue with a background of white. These vibrant colors will present the bright spectrum of light, which will communicate a sense of energy and movement. The design concept will be inspired by the organization of applications on an individual’s phone and will have a white background. The information panels will be designed following the biomimetic style of the exhibition. Additionally, a center piece designed with different geometric shapes will represent content on different levels. The goal of this space is to create an interactive learning environment that has few distractions.

• **Visual communication:**
The graphic style will use the bright colors and lines and triangles will frame the titles, subtitles and visual graphics. The titles will be written in black with a white background so they can easily be read. The titles will be written in the Passage font, which will convey a modern and technological look, and the subtitles will be written in Open Sans font in order to make them clear and more visible.

• **Transition:**
The center piece will guide the flow of the exhibition. A panel near the exit will explain the web and application interfaces to visitors so that they can continue their experience after leaving the exhibition. Also, a reminder to go back to pick up their phones and return the chip cards will be placed near the exit.
Conclusion

RECONNECT will contain a dynamic introductory section that will increase visitors’ awareness of the amount of information circulating on social networks. The exhibition will then take the experience to another level by challenging visitors to temporarily quit social media by leaving their smartphones behind. After that, the audience will move to the last section of the exhibition where the displays and interactive activities will discuss the main topic of the exhibition. The content provides a setting where people can learn to stay thoughtfully connected online.

The exhibition aims to discuss the effects of social networks by engaging visitors through different experiences. Recently, many books, broadcasts, and T.V. shows have been released about the advantages of quitting social media in order to live life to the fullest. A lot of social network users may have considered quitting social networks, but have yet to do so. It is important to remember that the number of social media users is growing every year and is expected to reach three billion users by 2021. Nowadays, a lot of our communication is occurring via social media platforms. For example, students are connecting through Facebook for updates on classes, and companies and universities send notifications and alerts through Twitter and other social media platforms. Therefore, quitting social networks might sound attractive to some users, but it is not an easy decision. This exhibition will encourage and teach visitors how to create and maintain a healthy online presence.

After attending this exhibition, visitors will understand the psychological, economic and social impacts of social media. Through interactive activities they will

---

learn how to engage safely and intentionally with social networks. Even after visitors leave the exhibition, their learning will continue: they will have access to an online platform with tools that educate about social media use. Also, the exhibition will collect data from the audience’s answers to questions posed throughout the exhibition. This information can be used in future studies that focus on how people can stay connected through social media, but also maintain their privacy.
Bibliography


“What is IPOP.” *Office of Policy and Analysis*, Smithsonian Institution, [https://www.si.edu/Content/opanda/docs/IPOP/IPOP short description 150806.pdf](https://www.si.edu/Content/opanda/docs/IPOP/IPOP short description 150806.pdf).

Appendix I: Inspiration images

Figure 11 Inspiration image for CONNECT section

Figure 12 Inspiration image for CONNECT section
Figure 14 Inspiration image for DISCONNECT section

Figure 15 Inspiration image for RECONNECT section
Figure 16 Inspiration image for RECONNECT section
Appendix II: IPOP engaging system strategy

The exhibition will be designed to incorporate the Smithsonian’s IPOP system, which takes into account visitors’ interest in either physical, people, ideas, or objects as a means of learning and engagement.34 In the CONNECT section, the content will provide those looking for information with live statistics. For visitors interested in learning through physical means, such as by using interactive and tangible elements, this exhibition will contain screens that respond to touch, giving users the chance to browse through the changing content. For people seeking objects, the exhibition will include smooth glass and shiny screens showing HD images. For visitors interested in human interactions and stories, the exhibition will incorporate information from different online users worldwide.

In the DISCONNECT section, the four lenses will also be taken into consideration by providing interactive stories with different design elements. In this section, visitors will be interacting with people who are explaining their decision to leave social networks and the experiences they have been through as a result of this. Giving visitors the opportunity to consider the advantages and disadvantages of leaving social networks. Through this experience, the audience is more engaged through human stories and through interactive activities would be expected to be highly interacting while the visitors who are considering the content and the objects in this section will be provided with graphic panels that provided facts of the disadvantages of not being engaged in social networking.

In the RECONNECT section, the four different models of interest - physical, people, ideas, or objects - will be explored through the elements in this gallery. This section’s content will offer personal examples, facts and virtual reality interactions. Through this content, the person interested in objects will leave the show with access to videos and other information via an online portal that will keep visitors informed.

In conclusion, visitors will engage with tangible experiences that communicate the vast amount of information that increasingly impacts our lives. Through this exhibition, visitors will make the choice whether or not to temporarily disconnect from social networking platforms in order to understand what it feels like to be isolated from online communications. Ultimately, visitors will learn that a balance can be obtained through constructive and thoughtful planning of their online behavior.
Appendix III: Survey conducted at the Newseum in March 2018

The following survey was conducted over the course of two days in March 2018 on 20 people

1) What is your age? □<18 □18-25 □26-35 □36-50 □51-64 □65+

Results:
18-25 / 15
26-35/ 3
36-50/ 2

2) What motivated you to visit the museum today? (Check all that apply.)
1 □ See a particular exhibition.
If so, which one? __________________________________________________________
2 □ Attend a particular program.
If so, which one? __________________________________________________________
3 □ Visit the entire museum. 4 □ Conduct research/school assignment. 5 □ Personal
   fulfillment (to learn, relax, pass time, for fun, etc.). 6 □ Spend time with friends/family.
   7 □ Entertain out-of-town visitors.
   8 □ Other:

Results
1/ 1 – 9/11 exhibition
2/
3/ 9
4/
5/ 4
6/ 3
7/ 2
8/ 1 all of the above

3) Of the following statements, which best describes why you visit museums, generally?
(Select one.)
1 □ To stimulate my own creativity, to reflect and contemplate, to escape or recharge
2 □ To be moved emotionally, to experience fascinating or beautiful things, to feel a strong sense of personal connection
3 □ To improve my own knowledge or understanding, to satisfy a personal/academic/professional interest in a subject
4 □ To spend time with people in a nice place, to visit a major attraction in the area

Results
1/ 2
2/ 7
3/ 10
4/ 1

4) Did you visit the NBC interactive newsroom Exhibition today? □ Yes. (Go to question 5)
□ No. (Survey complete. Thank you!)

Results:
All yes

5) Did you know about the NBC interactive newsroom before you visited the Museum?
□ Yes □ No

Results:
Yes/ 4
No/ 16

6) How did you hear about the NBC interactive newsroom? 1 □ Newspaper 2 □ Poster 3 □ Recommendation from someone 4 □ Internet 5 □ Other (please state)
Results:
1/
2/4
3/3
4/1
5/12 / walking by

7) Approximately how long have you spent in the gallery? 1 □ Passing through 2 □ 1-5 minutes 3 □ 5-10 minutes 4 □ 10 to 15 minutes 5 □ More

Results:
1/3
2/3
3/9
4/2
5/3

8) What was most memorable of the experience? 1 □ VR videos 2 □ Touch screen
3 □ Becoming a T.V. presenter

Results:
1/ 6
2/ 3
3/ 11

9) How easy was it to understand the experience? 1 □ Very easy 2 □ Quite easy □ (go to 9a)
3 □ Neither easy nor difficult 4 □ Quite difficult 5 □ Very difficult (go to 9b)

Results:
1/9
2/9
Results of Q8 and Q9
VR videos/6
1/5
2/1
3/
Touch screen/3
1/1
2/2
3/
Becoming a T.V. presenter/11
1/4
2/5
3/2

9a. What made the interactive easy to understand?

Results:
VR videos/6
    Clear instructions
    Clearly stated instructions
    Easy instruction
    The instruction
Touch screen/3
    There were easy to read instructions
Becoming a T.V. presenter/9
    Good help
    Clear instructions
    Explanations on screen
Simple directions on screen & person working was helpful
Simple
It was self explanatory through the prompts
Helpful people and staff

9b. What made the interactive difficult to understand?

Becoming a T.V. presenter/9

The interactive newsroom didn’t work 1st time so had to retry, wasn’t sure why

10). If you were describing this gallery to a friend, which three words would you use?

bright useless exciting uncomfortable fun relevant noisy boring cheerful
uninteresting good for kids interesting doesn’t relate to me attractive hard to understand

Results:

bright **
useless
exciting *****
uncomfortable
fun ************
relevant ***
ooisy
boring
cheerful *
uninteresting
good for kids ********
interesting ********
doesn’t relate to me
attractive ***
hard to understand
11). What, if anything, do you find particularly attractive or appealing about the exhibition?

Results:

- it is a unique experience
- interactive nature helps to understand it better
- fun and interesting
- technology
- The history
- It’s very interactive and not what you’d find in a typical museum
- Interactive experience
- Very timely topics
- Our favorite museum – information
- Being able to experience a job that I don’t have I think this is important for children too
- Experience and create an understanding for journalism (at least on aspect of it)
Exhibition Experience Survey

1. What is your age?  □ 18-25 □ 26-35 □ 36-50 □ 51-64 □ 65+

2. What motivated you to visit the museum today? (Check all that apply.)
   □ See a particular exhibition.
   □ Attend a particular program.
   □ Visit the entire museum.
   □ Conduct research/school assignment.
   □ Personal fulfillment (to learn, relax, pass time, for fun, etc.).
   □ Spend time with friends/family.
   □ Entertain out-of-town visitors.
   □ Other: __________

3. Of the following statements, which best describes why you visit museums, generally? (Select one.)
   □ To stimulate my own creativity, to reflect and contemplate, to escape or recharge.
   □ To be moved emotionally, to experience fascinating or beautiful things, to feel a strong sense of personal connection.
   □ To improve my own knowledge or understanding, to satisfy a personal/academic/professional interest in a subject.
   □ To spend time with people in a nice place, to visit a major attraction in the area.

4. Did you visit the NBC interactive newsroom Exhibition today?
   □ Yes. (Go to question 5.) □ No. (Survey complete. Thank you!)

5. Did you know about the NBC interactive newsroom before you visited the Museum?
   □ Yes □ No

6. How did you hear about the NBC interactive newsroom?
   □ Newspaper □ Poster □ Recommendation from someone □ Internet □ Other (please state)

7. Approximately how long have you spent in the gallery?
   □ 5-10 minutes □ 10-15 minutes □ 15 minutes or more

8. What was most memorable of the experience?
   □ VR videos □ Touch screen game □ Becoming a T.V. presenter

9. How easy was it to understand the experience?
   □ Very easy □ Quite easy (go to 9a) □ Neither easy nor difficult □ Quite difficult □ Very difficult (go to 9b)

9a. What made the interactive easy to understand?
   ________

9b. What made the interactive difficult to understand?
   ________

10. If you were describing this gallery to a friend, which three words would you use?
    □ Bright □ Dazzling □ Lively □ Exhausting □ Uncomfortable □ Amusing □ Relevant □ Noisy □ Boring □ Dull □ Uninteresting □ Good for kids □ Interesting □ Doesn’t relate to me □ Attractive □ Hard to understand

11. What, if anything, do you find particularly attractive or appealing about the exhibition?
    ________

   It’s a unique experience!
Exhibition Experience Survey

5 Did you know about the NBC interactive newsroom before you visited the Museum?
   Yes   No

6 How did you hear about the NBC interactive newsroom?
   Newspaper  Poster  Recommendation from someone  Internet  Other (please state)
   Walking by

7 Approximately how long have you spent in the gallery?
   Passing through  1-5 minutes  5-10 minutes  10 to 15 minutes  More

8 What was most memorable of the experience?
   VR videos  Ethics Touch Screen  Becoming a T.V. presenter

9 How easy was it to understand the experience?
   Very easy  Quite easy (go to 9a)  Neither easy nor difficult  Quite difficult  Very difficult (go to 9b)

9a What made the interactive easy to understand?
   It was self-explanatory through the prompts.

9b What made the interactive difficult to understand?
   The interactive newsroom didn’t work the 1st time
   so had to retry, wasn’t sure why.

10 If you were describing this gallery to a friend, which three words would you use?
   bright  useless  exciting  uncomfortable  fun  relevant  noisy  boring  cheerful  uninteresting  good for kids  interesting  doesn’t relate to me  attractive  hard to understand

11 What, if anything, do you find particularly attractive or appealing about the exhibition?
   Being able to experience a job that I don’t have.
   I think this is important for children to experience
   and create an understanding for journalism
   (at least on aspect of it).
Exhibition Experience Survey

1. What is your age? [ ] 18 [ ] 18-25 [ ] 26-35 [ ] 36-50 [ ] 51-64 [ ] 65+ [ ]

2. What motivated you to visit the museum today? (Check all that apply.)
   [ ] Visit the entire museum
   [ ] Conduct research/school assignment
   [ ] Personal fulfillment (to learn, relax, pass time, for fun, etc.)
   [ ] Spend time with friends/family
   [ ] Entertain out-of-town visitors
   [ ] Other:

3. Of the following statements, which best describes why you visit museums, generally?
   (Select one.)
   [ ] To stimulate my own creativity, to reflect and contemplate, to escape or recharge
   [ ] To be moved emotionally, to experience fascinating or beautiful things, to feel a strong sense of personal connection
   [ ] To improve my own knowledge or understanding, to satisfy a personal/academic/professional interest in a subject
   [ ] To spend time with people in a nice place, to visit a major attraction in the area

4. Did you visit the NBC interactive newsroom Exhibition today?
   [ ] Yes. (Go to question 5.)
   [ ] No. (Survey complete. Thank you!)

5. Did you know about the NBC interactive newsroom before you visited the Museum?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

6. How did you hear about the NBC interactive newsroom?
   [ ] Newspaper
   [ ] Poster
   [ ] Internet
   [ ] Recommendation from someone
   [ ] Other (please state)

7. Approximately how long have you spent in the gallery?
   [ ] Passing through
   [ ] 0-5 minutes
   [ ] 5-10 minutes
   [ ] 0 to 15 minutes
   [ ] More

8. What was most memorable of the experience?
   [ ] VR videos
   [ ] Becoming a T.V. presenter
   [ ] Touch screen game

9. How easy was it to understand the experience?
   [ ] Very easy
   [ ] Quite easy (go to 9a)
   [ ] Neither easy nor difficult
   [ ] Quite difficult
   [ ] Very difficult (go to 9b)

9a. What made the interactive easy to understand?

9b. What made the interactive difficult to understand?

10. If you were describing this gallery to a friend, which three words would you use?
    [ ] Bright
    [ ] Useful
    [ ] Exciting
    [ ] Uncomfortable
    [ ] Relevant
    [ ] Noisy
    [ ] Boring
    [ ] Cheerful
    [ ] Uninteresting
    [ ] Good for kids
    [ ] Interesting
    [ ] Doesn't relate to me
    [ ] Interactive
    [ ] Hard to understand

11. What, if anything, do you find particularly attractive or appealing about the exhibition?
    Interactive nature helps to understand it better.