Curating Kisumu: Adapting Mobile Humanities Interpretation in East Africa

Project team
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The Curatescape mobile framework was developed in 2011 by the Center for Public History + Digital Humanities at Cleveland State University with CSU and NEH startup funds; adopted by 35 institutions in 3 countries to date

Purpose of this project:

- Optimize Curatescape platform & process for more facile & productive adoption in East Africa
- Build capacity at partner institution, Maseno University in Kisumu County, Kenya, to become a regional leader in implementing mobile humanities strategies across Kenya and the Great Lakes region

What is Curatescape?

Curatescape enables curation of location-based stories using interpretive text, images, and audio and video clips.

It consists of themes and plugins for the open-source Omeka CMS.

It is a low-cost solution to help small- to medium-sized organizations curate both collections and communities.

Opportunities

Build aspiration and capacity for creating DH projects

Create a high-quality public educational resource

Encourage the embedding of humanities in societal debates of pressing needs such as public health, urban policy, economic development

Maseno University is among 7 public universities in Kenya (Top 10 in Kenya; #3 in Kenya for IT; 4 campuses with 8,000 students)

Our investigation includes adapting Curatescape through identification of best practices that find the right balance between established practice and local/regional constraints

A strong foundation: Kenya is a regional innovator in high tech; strong, committed partner at both faculty and administrative levels; rich physical archival materials; flexibility of open-source tools

Expected challenges: spotty Internet access; time difference btn.the two partners; prevalence of "feature phones"; pay-as-you-go data plans; dearth of current generation computers; overburdened personnel in partner universities; very large university class sizes; difficulty in finding local/institutional funding to sustain a project long-term

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