

CREATING VIRTUAL MUSEUMS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the introduction of digital technologies and the digitalization of museum collections in Uzbekistan, and also analyzes the role of computer technology in the popularization of museums and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Keywords: digitization of cultural heritage, virtual tours, museums of Uzbekistan, digital technologies in museums

The modern era is characterized by the development and intensive use of computer technology in all areas. Most commercial enterprises and industrial corporations have long used them in advertising and selling their services, and the museum is no exception in this regard. The use of innovative technologies in the museum field has become a challenge, an opportunity and a significant part of the work on preserving cultural heritage, which begins with the detailed digitization of all storage units available in the museum, requiring a differentiated approach to its implementation and the availability of special knowledge about digitization technologies, equipment for photography and lighting, the ability to set a task for programmers and specialists in creating databases data. With the help of websites created on the Internet, museums inform the public about current and promising areas of their activities, announce exhibitions and expositions, create a favorable image, and sell their services. And the information received in the feedback is used in the practical activities of the museum, analyzing the motives of visiting, tastes and preferences of the museum public, while simultaneously performing educational functions. All materials presented online contribute to the promotion of the museum's image and, consequently, the image of the country.

In 2020, when Uzbekistan held the Presidency of the Commonwealth of Independent States, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev launched an initiative to create a Virtual Museum of Cultural Heritage of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States in order to combine the material cultural heritage of the CIS member states into a single virtual museum, where the most interesting cultural heritage objects will be presented and the opportunity will be created to organize virtual thematic tours of archaeological and architectural sites, This includes scientifically restored in 3D space, sights, monuments and museums of the

Commonwealth countries, filling it with "end-to-end" excursions showing both the connection and the differences in the cultural characteristics of the countries.

The popularization of the resource was planned by creating field exhibitions using augmented reality technology, which will allow to "revitalize" the space by connecting virtual museum objects with a real exposition and exhibition space, which can be easily transported and simultaneously presented in various cities of the states. The interface and content were planned to be developed in English, Russian and the official languages of the CIS member states, since the absence of language barriers is a key point in ensuring the accessibility of the Virtual Museum of the CIS to a wide audience.

The Department for Museum Development of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan was to become the developer of the Internet platform, design, and virtual 3D tours of the cultural heritage of the CIS member countries of the Virtual Museum. As a result, a country-by-country catalog of links to existing museums in the CIS member states was created, in particular, three museums in Moldova, two in Azerbaijan, one in Turkmenistan, twenty-four museums in Belarus, fifteen links to museums in Armenia, fourteen to Kazakh museums, and fifty-seven links representing a transition to Russian museums. Perhaps due to the fact that the Museum Development Department was reformed at the time of the project and the incarnation of the Uzbek part of the museum ceased to exist, it turned out to be not as successful as planned, taking into account the developer's initiative, since twelve of the 35 posted links to the country's museums turned out to be functional: the Museum of History, the Museum of Applied Arts, the Samarkand and Bukhara Museum Reserves, the Termez Museum archaeological Museum, Polytechnic Museum, Museum of Geology, Ichan Kala Khiva Museum, Syrdarya Regional Museum of Local Lore, Museum of Oriental Miniature, The exhibition of exhibits at the Louvre and the State Museum of Art of Uzbekistan are presented in the catalog twice.

In 2015, the newspaper Uzbekistan Today reported that since 2010, a unified national catalog of the museum fund of the republic has been under development, based on its own SKM MUZEY system of accounting and management of museum objects. "The project is at the stage of filling in the information. There are 135 state and 99 non-state museums in Uzbekistan, which house more than 2 million exhibits. Over the past four years, state museums have entered data on about 60% of the objects stored in their collections. We think that this work will be completed within the next two years," said Abbas Mirzarakhimov, head of the Department of the Ministry of Culture and Sports. - In addition, we are preparing a project according to which non-governmental museums will participate in the formation of the catalog. This way we will get a more complete source of information about cultural heritage. Art lovers will be able to access the database via the Internet after completing the work on filling in the information." It is not clear which non-state museums were meant because there is not a single

officially registered private museum in the country, and according to the report of the State Committee for Statistics, compiled on the basis of administrative data provided annually by the Cultural Heritage Agency in the summer of 2024, there were only 138 museums in the republic, including branches and 2,736,000 exhibits of the main fund of these museums.

At the end of 2025, the State Catalog <http://goskatalog.uz/> does not function so much that, upon repeated attempts to follow his link, the Internet provider begins to send a warning that "Access to your account is limited!" However, information about his fate can be found in V.Yerofeyeva's material Digitization of museums in Uzbekistan: Get ready to laugh: "In the summer of 2020, the State Catalog of the National Museum Fund of the Republic of Uzbekistan was published, which includes a list of all exhibits of the country's state museums, accompanied by a photo and an identification number., technical information and description. What is this state catalog? Such a catalog is a necessary thing in order to have an idea of the museum fund of the country, but this portal is more intended for scientists, specialists or those deeply interested in museum and archival work. From the point of view of an Internet user, an art lover, and a potential visitor, such a portal is not particularly conducive to arousing or maintaining interest in art and history. To make sure of this, it's worth spending fifteen minutes exploring the site.

Among the most notable shoals you will find:

- inconvenient to use. Since we have a single museum fund, the exhibits are grouped not by museum, but by type (paintings, weapons, numismatics). In other words, you will not be able to virtually visit a specific museum using this resource.;
- incomplete resource. Many links don't work or lead to blank pages.;
- incorrect names of museums.

For example, it turns out that a "Museum of Modern Art" has appeared in Uzbekistan, although in fact it is the Urgench Art Gallery named after Al-Khorezmi. And there was no renaming of this organization, and even if there was, it would contradict reality, since the gallery's collection is not a collection of contemporary art.;

- unprofessional or incorrect descriptions of exhibits from the point of view of the stylistics of professional language, spelling rules and syntax;
- extremely poor photo quality (crooked camera angles, very low resolution, lack of color correction).

There is a link on the website "Museums", which sends us to the Museum Portal, where you can find information about the exhibition halls of Uzbekistan. There is also a link to virtual museum tours. But upon closer examination, it turns out that this work is not finished either. It seems that several museums in each region have been digitized, but in fact this tour includes a walk through two or three halls, while mostly museums of folk and applied art or historical ones have been digitized. To make such a low-

quality work publicly available means to put another stain on the country's museum reputation."

In practice, the digitization process was accompanied by amazing events: the first "software product" - a centralized database with an access key - was installed to museums for a fee and filled in by them as much as possible (in terms of time, degree of understanding of the process and technical equipment - the deplorable results of this first process are described in Yerofeyeva's article). The work was considered unsatisfactory, three more free versions followed, where the museums re-placed thousands of objects, the process failed again for technical reasons that were not announced, and the museums did this work over and over again, until they were sent specialists who took three to five thousand photographs in each museum "on a professional" camera.. However, either the database or the server could not digest this either because they were not designed for large-size photos. As a result, only museums had access to the state catalog to continue updating the database, and public access was completely closed.

The above-mentioned functionality of the "Museums" link, previously located on the website of the state catalog at the time of December 2025, can still be seen on a specialized website. <https://museums.uz> / which belongs to the Cultural Heritage Agency and positions the site as "The official platform of museums of Uzbekistan created for the preservation and development of our cultural heritage," as well as announces that ALL state museums are present here., whereas on the interactive map and the "Museums" tab (consisting of photos of entrance groups and offers to buy tickets that do not work), you can find only 30 objects. The remaining tabs of the official platform of museums in Uzbekistan, such as the online store of museum education in the republic, the online store of museums, museum catalogs are simply non-functional, there are no virtual tours even in the menu, when accessing museums there is a failed link to purchase a ticket and the site freezes.

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