

NMI Capstone - Spring 2009

MyAquarium: Mobile Hub

Project Report



New Media Institute

Grady College of Journalism
and Mass Communication

The University of Georgia

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Table of Contents

- Description of Problem - WIBCI
- Proposed Solution
- What We Made - MyAquarium Mobile Hub
 - Exclusive Content
 - Themed Tours
- How We Did It - Project Process
- What We Used - New Media Technologies
 - QR Codes
 - Social Networking
- What We Overcame - Challenges
- Where It Could Go - Future Potential
- Who Helped - Project Partners & Client
- Who We Are - Team Bios

Wouldn't It Be Cool If...?

... we developed a unique way to advertise a product through a mobile device.

... we developed a mobile site that increases attendance and return visits to the Georgia Aquarium.

... we developed a way for the Georgia Aquarium to interact with visitors to create a personal and interactive experience.

The New Media students were looking for a way to create mobile advertising that was compelling, inexpensive, and non-intrusive. Advertisers have not yet fully developed a traditional, widely accepted model for promoting an idea or product to people on their mobile devices. For many individuals, their smart phone is the most personal platform available. Mass text messages can be invasive and irritating, and traditional banners on Web pages will not show up as well on mobile devices. It is also frustrating to deal with the constant scrolling required on Web sites that have not been created for mobile use. The students were looking for an interactive and entertaining way to keep people engaged with a product on a mobile device.

Proposed Solution

Once the NMI students were linked up with the Georgia Aquarium and Vert Mobile, they sought to create something that users would appreciate and that would clearly promote their client in an effective way.

The mobile website would offer necessary information about the Aquarium along with entertaining features like fun facts, trivia, quizzes, exclusive content and tours. The mobile hub is something guests can use inside of the venue and can continue to use long after they leave. It also guarantees anyone with a smart phone can spend an extended period of time interacting with exclusive and entertaining information about the Aquarium.

It deepens their relationship with the attraction and makes guests feel closer to the Aquarium by experiencing it in a variety of ways. The mobile hub offers one more way for guests to feel connected to and to receive information about one of their favorite attractions, the Georgia Aquarium.

What We Made: MyAquarium Mobile Hub

A Mobile Website for the Georgia Aquarium

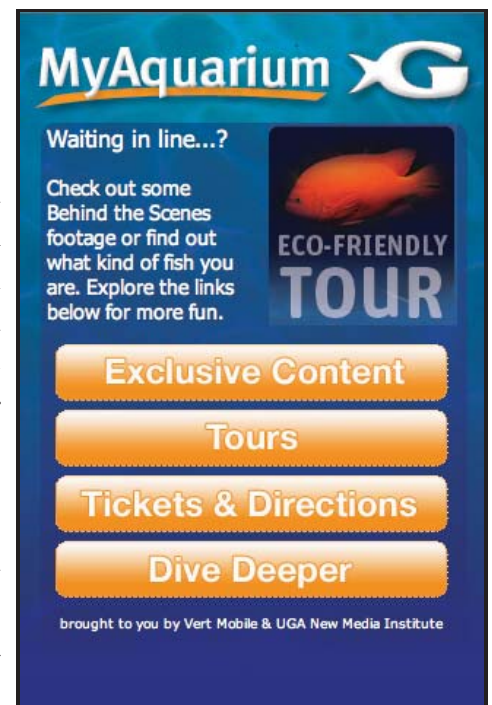
For a New Media Capstone class, five students created a project centered around mobile advertising for the Georgia Aquarium. With the help of Vert Mobile and Graphics Island, they designed a WAP that could be used in-venue to increase attendance and return visits. MyAquarium is a parsed down version of the main Aquarium site that is packed with information valuable to Aquarium fans in user-friendly way to mobile users. Those who visit the mobile site can also find a plethora of exclusive content, and the interaction will lead them to develop a more personal relationship with attraction.

The largest aquarium in the world - in your pocket

Our mobile site offers an exciting new outlet for the Aquarium to reach current and potential customers.

Mobile is a unique vehicle for information and entertainment in that it connects people to the Aquarium in a very personal way. Visitors who engage in the WAP experience develop a relationship with the public attraction, which can often seem crowded, commercialized and impersonal. Fans become “Facebook friends” with the staff, are privileged to exclusive content not seen by every visitor, and have the opportunity to experience the aquarium in an exciting new way every time they visit on one of our themed tours. All of this is delivered on what seems like an added appendage to the body of savvy 21st century consumers: their smart phone.

The mobile site is a hub for all things Aquarium: ticketing, directions, trivia, maps, parking, and links to donate, invite a friend, and get connected to the Aquarium through various social media networks.



Exclusive Content: Get Behind the Glass

Users can get a free peek behind the scenes of one of Atlanta’s biggest attractions. They can find clips of the feeding of beluga whales and the Aquarium’s conservation efforts of loggerhead sea turtles.

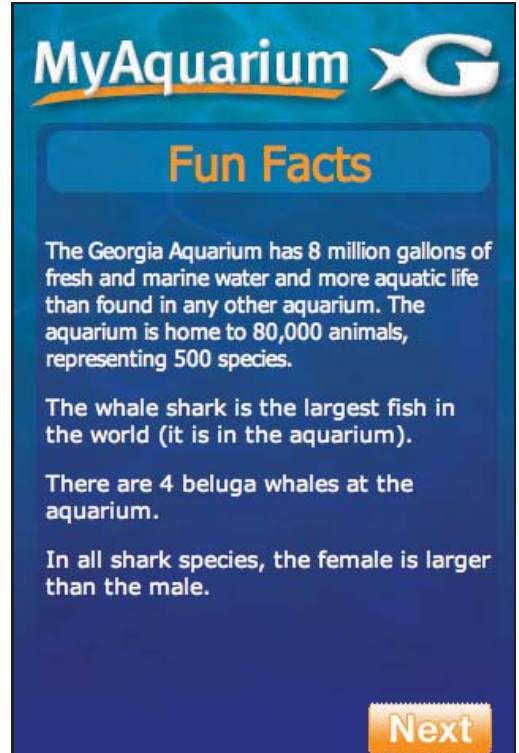
Our “snack size” videos are perfect for the momentary lulls while waiting in line. They also bring visitors closer to the attractions by providing a deeper understanding of the Aquarium. While taking in the massive view of the Cold Water Quest exhibit, users can watch clips showing the kinds of fish that are used to feed the Beluga Whales and learn more about the feeding habits of these arctic creatures.


Videos are not the only bits of content privy to mobile users. Visitors can also read interesting facts about the animals, test their knowledge of Aquarium trivia, take a quiz to determine which fish they are most like, and much more.

Beluga Whale Feeding Video



Aquarium Fun Facts



MyAquarium 

Fun Facts

The Georgia Aquarium has 8 million gallons of fresh and marine water and more aquatic life than found in any other aquarium. The aquarium is home to 80,000 animals, representing 500 species.

The whale shark is the largest fish in the world (it is in the aquarium).

There are 4 beluga whales at the aquarium.

In all shark species, the female is larger than the male.

[Next](#)

Themed Tours:

The Aquarium Like You've Never Seen Before

Our hub offers a new way to look at the exhibits in the Aquarium. Take a tour through the eyes of a conservationist or go on a thrilling journey with the creepiest creatures in the ocean.

The unique tours offer strong incentives for repeat customers. Not only is it a new way to experience their favorite attraction, it makes them feel more connected as they learn information not provided to the average visitor.

Inexpensive for both users and producers, these tours are a feasible and fresh way to replenish interest and keep customers coming back.

Conservation Tour

Beluga Whales ■ Coral Reef ■ Loggerhead Turtles ■ Otters ■ Whale Sharks

The tour designed for the hub is centered around conservation. The Aquarium is committed to conserving natural resources. Skilled researchers are on staff working in the high-tech facilities to advance the scientific community's understanding of endangered species at the venue such as whale sharks and sea turtles. The Aquarium serves as a source of information for scientists and for guests who want to learn more about their environment from water conservation to ocean pollution. The mobile hub seeks to employ this information through the Conservation Tour.

MyAquarium XG

Beluga Whales



Nico (above) is the largest whale at the Georgia Aquarium. As part of its 4R Program, the Aquarium rescued Nico from substandard living conditions at a privately operated amusement park in Mexico City.

Next

MyAquarium XG

Beluga Whales

The beluga whale is listed in the vulnerable category of The World Conservation Union Red List. This means they are facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

Georgia Aquarium researchers have been to Russia to study a beluga whale population that had not yet been studied by science. The study was conducted from a remote island in the Sea of Okhotsk by the GAI, Ocean Park Hong Kong, and the Russian Academy of Science.

Next

MyAquarium XG

Beluga Whales

Beluga whales live about 25-30 years and are commonly known as "the canary of the sea."

The body of the beluga whale averages between 10-15 feet in length and has separate layers of blubber to help keep warm.

Beluga whales typically eat between 20 and 35 lbs of food per day.

Return to Tour **Watch Video**

The beluga whale is one of the most popular attractions at the Aquarium. Conservation efforts and fun facts about this friendly creature were included in the Conservation Tour.

How We Did It: Project Process

Five New Media Institute students began discussing a potential mobile project for the Georgia Aquarium in mid-January. For two weeks, they discussed what kind of mobile venture would work best to increase attendance and repeat visitors. What do people want to do on their mobile device while at the Aquarium? What do they want to know before they arrive at the facility and after they leave? When they finally had an idea of what they wanted to do, they drew up a navigational map for the mobile media hub they envisioned.

In the next week, the students presented the idea to the rest of the class and to visiting professionals. They received critical feedback and fielded tough questions that truly put their vision under a microscope.

Matt Griffin, a graduate student within the New Media Institute, linked the students up with a start-up business he is involved in, Vert Mobile, a premier, full-service mobile marketing & advertising agency based in Atlanta, Georgia. The newly bolstered project became a joint venture between Vert and the New Media Institute. Backed with the expertise of Vert professionals, their project began to really get off the ground.

For the next two weeks, the students perfected the titles of each page. They determined how the site should flow and how much text should be on each page. With the help of Graphics Island, they decided on a color and font scheme for the overall look of the mobile site. A template was designed and perfected that would mimic the sleek design of an iPhone application.

On February 22, the five students visited the Aquarium along with one member of 'Graphics Island' and the Vert team. They met with marketing director, Dave Santucci, who gave them a better idea of what the Aquarium wanted to see out of this project. Santucci set them up on a behind the scenes tour where they had the chance to take notes, film the attractions and experience the Aquarium through the eyes of its visitors.

Upon returning to Athens, the group created short video clips using the footage from the tours. They plugged pictures and text content into the templates and linked all of the pages. They spent the rest of the semester testing the site, editing and perfecting the pages to be user-friendly and aesthetically pleasing. The mobile hub was officially up and running as of April, just four months after the idea was first conceived.

What We Used: New Media Technologies

To construct the actual mobile hub, the group used Adobe Dreamweaver CS3. Due to the popularity of the iPhone, they decided to adhere to 320 x 480 screen size. After developing a template, group members were able to plug all of the content into the template and upload each individual page to the mobile hub's domain name. They designed large buttons reminiscent of iPhone buttons for users to easily navigate the site. The pages were linked together and to other social networking sites users might want to access.

Allan Lansche and Travis Fowler used a Sony DCR-HC1000 camera while touring the Aquarium to gather footage for the hub. The Aquarium contributed some professional clips taken at the facilities to supplement the footage taken at the Aquarium. Once Lansche and Fowler returned to the lab, they edited each of the clips on Apple's editing software, Final Cut Pro. They converted the videos from Quicktime movies to three formats: .mov (which can be viewed on a desktop computer), .g3p (which can be viewed on any smart phone), and .m4v (which can be viewed on an iPhone). Using the code provided by the Quicktime software, they embedded the files on the mobile hub so that the site can determine the proper format on which to deliver the videos depending on the device accessing the site.

Allison Weiss used the Adobe Creative Suite CS4 to create the mobile site's template and business cards for the group, working mostly with Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and Dreamweaver. Ivy Chang used a Canon 30-D camera with a 50-millimeter f/1.4 lens to take snapshots of the Aquarium for the site. She also used Adobe's Lightroom and Photoshop to enhance and edit the pictures.

Each of the members of the Aquarium group familiarized themselves with QR codes by downloading the software and creating their own barcode. QR codes were then used throughout the mobile hub to navigate from one exhibit to another. A QR barcode was also placed on the backs of the group's business cards to make distributing information about the project as easy and quick as possible.

Extended Information:

- QR Codes
- Social Networking

New Media Technology: QR Codes

Cutting Edge Research Meets Cutting Edge Technology

The Aquarium is known for having leading experts in the field of research and animal care, so it makes sense they would utilize one of the hottest new technologies.

Quick response (QR) codes are two-dimensional barcodes that can be decoded at high speeds and read with camera phones. Users with a camera phone equipped with the correct reader software can scan the image of the QR code. This causes the phone's browser to launch and redirect to the programmed URL. QR codes were developed initially by the Japanese corporation Denso-Wave in 1994 and used for tracking parts in vehicle manufacturing. Now they limitless potential and appear in magazines, on signs, buses, business cards and just about any object that users might need information about.

The codes are planned to be posted at the entrance and at various attractions within the Aquarium. Users who have downloaded the free reader software will take a picture of the code with their phone and the hub, MyAquarium, will automatically pull up on their browser. Codes posted on specific attractions will link to that animal's page on our mobile site's tour, offering fun facts and exclusive videos.

Although the tours and information linked up with the QR codes can also be accessed through links on the mobile hub, the QR technology provides an exciting new way for visitors to interact with the Aquarium.

To download free QR code reading software, visit www.mobile-barcodes.com.



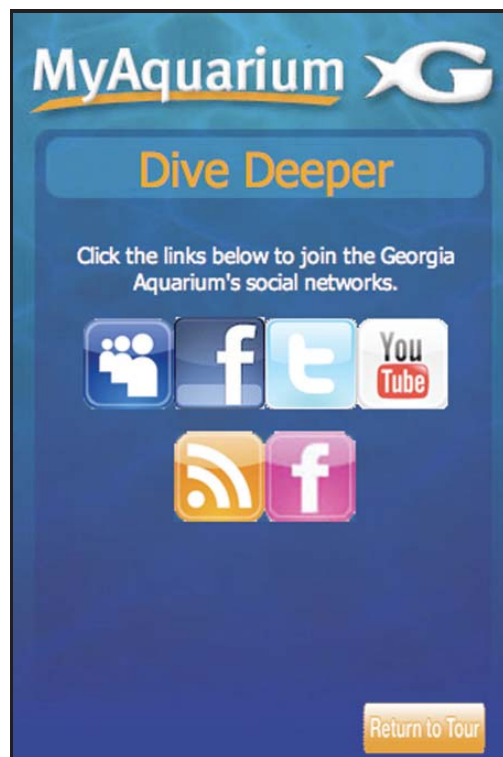
New Media Technology: Social Networking

Maintaining a Lasting Relationship

Dive Deeper provides users the opportunity to digitally connect with the Aquarium outside of the facility via a variety of social networks. Visitors can carry this relationship with them as they return to their homes and can continue to interact with the Aquarium long after they leave. We hope this network will encourage visitors to return as they develop a more personal relationship with the attraction. It will also give the Aquarium instant access to thousands of customers.

Users can keep up with the Aquarium on whichever social medium they choose – Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, MySpace and RSS feeds – and receive updates, read blog entries and have access to coupons and specials. The Aquarium has nearly 1,000 photos on Flickr, 229 subscribers to its YouTube channel, 3,027 followers on Twitter, 5,347 fans on Facebook, and 766 friends on MySpace. At any given moment, the Aquarium can instantly blast promotional information to thousands in their target audience: individuals who are interested in the Georgia Aquarium.

Placing access to these social pages was important to our project because it deepens the connection between attraction and user and provides a vital bridge for communication and information to pass back and forth.



- flickr®
- YouTube™
- facebook
- twitter
- myspace.com
a place for friends™
- RSS

What We Overcame: Challenges

■ Planning

One of the first and biggest challenges facing this group was figuring out exactly what people wanted from their mobile devices while in the Aquarium. It needed to be entertaining and informational, but also should promote the Aquarium and encourage repeat visits. It took two weeks of discussion and planning to map out the project. It seemed as if hundreds of ideas were suggested and most had to be abandoned because they were either not feasible in this setting or time frame or had no purpose for their client.

■ QR Codes

The confusion over QR codes was and continues to be a big issue. The codes are not yet mainstream and require users download a program they likely have never heard of to their mobile device. Many are untrusting of new programs and unlikely to take the time to invest their time or storage space in it. It also requires education because not many know exactly how the codes work or understand the purpose. Eventually, the codes would be posted to the attractions and various places in the Aquarium and would have information about the codes underneath the code symbol. The challenge lies in convincing users to try the software and it is not likely everyone who uses the mobile hub will also use the QR codes.

■ Videos

The group also had difficulty putting the videos on the mobile hub. The videos sent by the Aquarium came in multiple formats, and Fowler and Lansche had to determine the best format for the mobile site. They ran into a roadblock when the .m4v video, the iPhone format, would not fit the parameters of the editable region on the template. After much trial and error, Lansche and Fowler eventually got each video on the hub.

Each of these challenges caused a significant amount of stress at the time, but by learning to deal with each situation, the group learned more about media and how to effectively use technology to solve problems.

Where It Could Go: Future Potential

The Georgia Aquarium mobile hub has potential beyond what this group was able to accomplish in one semester. The team settled on goals that could be attained in a four-month period, but kept an ambitious vision for what the hub could be in the future. They built it so it could and grow.

■ Exclusive Content

There is plenty of room for additional exclusive content. The hub administrator could potentially offer a new clip each month, which would entice users to return to the hub regularly and keep this attraction fresh and exciting.

■ Themed Tours

The themed tours are a big part of the in-venue experience. The tours do not take long to develop – there are only three pages for each of the five sections of the Aquarium – and the Aquarium could put out new tours every couple of months. In February, the Aquarium had a *Motion of the Ocean* marketing campaign for Valentines Day, and they could extend that to a lovers-themed tour. In October, they could offer *Creepiest Creatures of the Sea*, a themed tour focused on the scariest animals at the Aquarium in time for Halloween.

■ QR Codes

The QR codes could be marked in-venue with a name that is significant to the Aquarium and encourages more people to interact with the technology. Information about how to download the software could be broadcast on the flat screen televisions in the Aquarium and outline what QR codes are and how to use them. A link to the software could also be added to the mobile hub so users will not have to manually find a program they can use to read the QR codes.

■ Out of Venue

The Aquarium could link up further information to the hub and offer as many options as their main Web site. The hub has been developed so that users could eventually purchase tickets online, learn about specials and ticketing packages, donate money to the Aquarium, and have their parking squared away all before they arrive at the venue.

■ Mobile Invite

One of the original ideas the team was unable to complete due to time issues was a mobile invite service. A camera would be set up in-venue for guests to take a photo of themselves in the Aquarium and send a template email to their friends and family using their mobile device. The email would have the picture, a personal message, and an encouragement for the recipient to visit the Aquarium.

Project Partners: Vert Mobile



Vert Mobile, LLC

Kevin Planovsky

Principal, Account Strategy

Matt Griffin

Principal, Creative Technology

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Vert Mobile is a premier, full-service ad agency providing strategy, media, and creative services for everything mobile. They make brands look their smallest, and best by effectively leveraging the reach, targeting, and interactivity of the wireless web. Vert can handle anything from basic SMS campaigns to complicated mobile websites, display advertising, or mobile games and apps.

Vert is enabling brands to diVERT from the traditional by creating, managing, and analyzing VERTically integrated wireless and mobile adVERTising and marketing that consistently conVERTs consumers through impeccable service, oVERTly creative solutions, and an unwavering commitment to ROI.

The mobile advertising platform is like no other type of media. Extreme targetability, real-time measurement, and mass reach require a different way of thinking about engagement and interaction. The Vert team has been working with wireless communication for over 4 years and understands how to speak to the mobile consumer.

Project Client: The Georgia Aquarium



Dave Santucci

Vice President,

Marketing & Communications

www.georgiaaquarium.org

225 Baker Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30313

The Georgia Aquarium is the largest aquarium in the world located in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, in Pemberton Place. More than 100,000 animals exist in facilities containing more than 8.1 million gallons of marine and fresh water. The mission of the Georgia Aquarium is to be an entertaining, educational and scientific institution featuring exhibits and programs of the highest standards; offering engaging and exciting guest experiences promoting the conservation of aquatic biodiversity throughout the world. The Aquarium's conservation and environmental mission is just as important as its status as an attraction as it is on the cutting edge of the research and care of marine life.

Who We Are: The Aquarium Group

New Media Institute Capstone Class

All New Media Institute students must complete the capstone class as the final step in earning the New Media Interdisciplinary Certificate. This capstone class requires students to create a professional project, using new technologies, with a group of their peers. Travis Fowler, Lizz Judd, Alan Lansche, Emma Peterson, and Whitney Skeeters comprised the aquarium group. Dr. Scott Shamp linked them with Vert Mobile and the Georgia Aquarium, who expressed interest in a mobile media venture, and the group began designing a mobile hub to increase attendance and repeat visits to the aquarium.



TRAVIS FOWLER *web design, video and editing*

Travis is currently enrolled at The University of Georgia where he is attaining a degree in Telecommunication Arts, as well as a New Media Certificate. Furthermore, he has achieved a minor in Film Studies. He enjoys working with technology for the simple fact that he likes to know how things work. His other passions include producing and watching films, spending time with his friends and family and riding horses.

Expected Graduation: May 2009

Contact Information: tfowler87@gmail.com



LIZZ JUDD *creative strategy, web design and content*

As a student in the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at The University of Georgia, Lizz is studying Advertising. She is focusing this knowledge, through an interdisciplinary certificate in New Media, to both current advertising applications and upcoming possibilities in media technology. She has an intense passion for advertising and is determined to succeed in every project she undertakes. She also enjoys watching old movies and playing with her dogs, Coco and Belle, as often as she can.

Expected Graduation: December 2009

Contact Information: lizzjudd@gmail.com



ALLAN LANSCHÉ *web design, video and editing*

Allan Lansche is a junior at the University of Georgia majoring in Telecommunication Arts and earning a certificate in New Media. He was born in Charlotte, NC, but attended Chattahoochee High School in Alpharetta, GA. When he is not doing schoolwork, Allan serves as a Grady Ambassador and a member of UGA HEROs. He enjoys seeing films at Cine and attending concerts of all kinds whenever he has free time.

Expected Graduation: May 2010

Contact Information: alansche@uga.edu



EMMA PETERSON *web design and development*

Emma is an Advertising major in the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication and an Art History minor at The University of Georgia. She is also working towards an interdisciplinary certificate in the New Media Institute. Her goals include fusing her passions of guerrilla and online advertising with art and technology. She also enjoys visiting museums, traveling and laughing with friends and family.

Expected Graduation: May 2010

Contact Information: epeterson10@gmail.com



WHITNEY SKEETERS *web design and content*

Whitney Skeeters came to the University of Georgia from Statesboro, Ga., to attain a journalism degree from the Grady College of Journalism. She has earned a minor in English and the New Media Institute Certificate. Her biggest passion in life is writing and she has been published in multiple magazine and newspaper publications.

Expected Graduation: May 2009

Contact Information: whitneyskeeters@gmail.com

Graphics Island is made up of two NMI students who are especially talented in graphic design, photography, and a multitude of other skills. They have dedicated the semester to help each of the groups in the capstone class and have been instrumental to the final product of this project.



IVY CHANG *photography*

Ivy is a senior at The University of Georgia where she studies Photography and New Media. She enjoys fine arts, ranging everything from music to graphic arts, and of course her favorite, photography. Capturing people and places allow her to stay connected to memories that would otherwise be forgotten. Aside from being a student, she works freelance for portrait, graduation, engagement and wedding photography.

Contact Information: ivychang@gmail.com



ALLISON WEISS *web graphics*

Allison is a fourth-year graphic design student at The University of Georgia. She has been involved with the New Media Institute for the past three years doing everything from podcasting to teaching SecondLife and is now serving as half of “Graphics Island” for the NMI capstone class. She enjoys good ideas, good design and good people. Apart from being a student, Allison is also a popular local musician in Athens, Georgia.

Expected Graduation: May 2010

Contact Information: allison@allisonw.com