

THE FORT VANCOUVER MOBILE PROJECT POTENTIAL NARRATIVE SPINES FOR PHASE 1

To create an immersive and engaging environment that blends mixed-reality opportunities with historical interpretation through mobile devices, we need to begin with a strong nonfiction narrative spine upon which the content will be built. This will give the environment validity and direction, among other important positive attributes. Please read these starting points carefully. We could start with any one of these, or blend elements from one into another. Do your own research into their possibilities, if you wish, and ask questions and give me your feedback by March 7 on which you would prefer to pursue for Phase 1 of this project as well as what kind of involvement you would like to have, including your general availability and level of interest. Please send that via email to: fortvancouvermobile@gmail.com. Thank you again for your time and participation!

From www.nps.gov/fova:

“Since most of the Company employees and their families were illiterate, first-hand accounts of the daily life and social organization of the village do not exist. Thus, the primary connection we have to these people is the physical space they inhabited.”

Our mission statement on this project, meaning the primary areas in which we want to maintain focus:

M – Mobility and movement, users are moving around the space; what makes this project so fascinating and new is that elaborate digital content now can be delivered to users on demand, or by the author's command, based on an awareness of location, spatial factors and context as those evolve in real time as people move around in a mixed environment that simultaneously blends virtual and real spaces.

I – Interactive, users respond to the machine, the author, the content and each other and participate in creating the experience, including collaboration that could develop into classifiable collective intelligence ... generated on the fly.

S – Storytelling, all of this really happens as part of a larger story. Purely informational content, the signposts of the digital world, are not nearly as interesting as the ways in which mobile content can be packaged as interactive stories and games. Focus needs to remain on the story, the characters, the plot and the setting; maybe the setting in this new genre takes on more importance than in any other form before.

S – Simplicity, this should be simple to use and simple to get started and simple to engage with; usability has to remain at the forefront of a user-centered design to get people to even try this out. I don't want to challenge people with the technology. I want to challenge them with the content, and how and when they receive the content, and how that affects their experience. I don't want users to be stuck and frustrated just trying to get this thing to work.

I – Immediacy, the goal is media transparency, with the user's space not limited to the screen or reality but a perfect blend of both. Ideally, the mobile device eventually would begin to feel like another tool for navigating and understanding and

appreciating the space on a more evolved level of humanity.

O – Occurring simultaneously, a hybrid of real and virtual space interwoven; this content shouldn't encourage the user's eyes to be endlessly locked down on a screen or be so useless that users never think about it. Maybe it should be like a friend along for the journey, one you want to keep chatting with about what you are doing and seeing.

N – Numin-osity! Inspired by this journal article: Cameron, C. and J. Gatewood (2003), "Seeking Numinous Experiences in the Unremembered Past." The authors state that numinous (new term to me) experiences at historical sites are those that create deep connections with objects and places. That's part of our goal, too!

And from that, an overall description of what we are doing:

The Fort Vancouver Mobile project serves as a cutting-edge research laboratory for developments in mobile content creation that emphasize location, spatial and contextual awareness in relation to interactive and mixed-reality storytelling experiences, particularly those that take advantage of the new abilities of mobile technology to illuminate important regional and national historical narratives.

Some of the possible narrative spines for implementation in Phase 1:

[] Diversity in The Village, the Metis – While the dozen or so British employees of the Hudson's Bay Company had the relative comforts of life inside the stockade, the majority of the workers who made the headquarters of the Columbia Department function actually lived outside of the tall wooden fence. It housed workers and their families as well as fur brigades, more than 600 people at times, making it for “many years, the largest settlement between Yerba Buena, (present day San Francisco, California) and New Archangel (Sitka, Alaska).” Church records show that The Village was home to English, French-Canadian, Scottish, Irish, Hawaiian, Iroquois and people from over 30 different regional Native American groups, plus Metis (mixed European and Native American lineage), who lived and worked in the area harmoniously. They typically communicated in Chinook Jargon, which could make an interesting audio portion of the project. It also could be fruitful to try to bring the area to life dynamically with digital content that demonstrates the diversity -- the music, the languages, the customs, etc. – while tying it all together with a narrative of the development of the Metis, the blending of the cultures.

[] Archeology students and school in The Village – Fort archaeologist Dr. Doug Wilson will have five graduate students working on theses related to The Village, and there will be an archaeological field school in The Village area, throughout the summer. Since there are few written records about what happened in The Village, most of the knowledge about the area comes from archaeological finds. Using this approach, we could take users inside the archeology process, maybe through a discovery narrative, that demonstrates the ways in which knowledge is created. This could incorporate an object found in The Village during the summer and the ensuing quest to determine its context, informational ramifications and place in history. We also could develop a narrative that weaves the information known about The Village to date into an above-ground virtual archaeological process of some sort. Or put users into the perspective of an archaeologist and have them explore the site from that paradigm. The big advantage to this approach is having real people doing real things right when

we are creating content about it. This content also would be linked to the newest information available.

[] Slavery in The Village – Native American slavery in The Village during the mid-1800s could be a rich and fertile issue to explore, and it has been documented, but there also is an interesting anecdote about African American slavery at the fort, from 1849, when a 49-year-old female slave, Monimia Travers, was brought to the area by a U.S. Army officer. She at first worked for a few months at the fort as a servant for the officer's family, but in 1851 (about a decade before the Civil War), the officer decided to grant her unconditional freedom, calling her an “honest and conscientious woman” who “deserves kind and good treatment at the hands of every one.” Just four months later, Oregon publicly enforced a statute prohibiting the introduction of “negroes” in Oregon by banishing from the territory another African American and sending a warning to all others in the area that they had 30 days to leave. No record has been found of what happened to Travers. So this thread could either weave together a variety of slavery issues, or focus on just one case, illuminating the environment of intolerance that existed in this area at the time.

[] Hawaiians in The Village – During the late 1840s and 1850s, when fur trapping began to slow, mercantile opportunities arose, and a large influx of Hawaiians arrived in The Village. The settlement even began to be called “Kanaka Town” or “Kanaka Village,” the term for a “person” in Hawaiian, because of the distinct cultural shift. A protagonist possibility is a character known as Kanaka William, who served as a popular minister, rather than as a menial laborer, in The Village. He apparently was a powerful personality in the area, and as the U.S. Army was establishing its presence, and as territorial issues began to emerge, Kanaka William's house suspiciously was burned down in 1850, which conveniently gave the Army a bit more buffer space. All of this could lead to interesting narrative paths about the end of the Hudson's Bay Company's reign and the beginning of the U.S. Army presence. Hawaiian coral has been found in the area, which could be an object to lead into stories, too. Period Hawaiian songs and dances could be recreated as well. The Owyhee (Hawaiian) Church / Priest's House inside the stockade not only offered religious services, it also served as the first school in the Pacific Northwest.

[] Malaria and smallpox epidemics – In the 1830s, as more and more Europeans arrived with diseases that the native populations were exposed to, malaria and smallpox epidemics destroyed many of the region's tribes. A hospital structure has been discovered near the pond area in The Village, which might have been built as a way to quarantine the sick (or to protect medical supplies). It could be interesting to use the disease metaphor as a timer for a quest of some sort. Or to use it as an entryway to context about the state of medicine at the time.