

## **Re-Thinking Technology in Museums**

University of Limerick (Ireland), 29-30 June 2005

Organised by Luigina Ciolfi, Michael Cooke, Tony Hall and Liam Bannon

### **Facts and Figures**

The CONVIVIO Workshop “Re-Thinking Technology in Museums” was held at the University of Limerick (Ireland) on the 29-30 of June 2005.

The call for participation in the workshop was disseminated among communities such as HCI, CSCW and Interaction Design research, museum curation and museum education. We received a total of 40 paper submissions, of which 21 were selected –after a thorough review process- for presentation and discussion in the workshop.

36 Participants in total registered for the workshop, from a variety of academic insitutions, museums and commercial organisations from 9 different countries (see attached workshop programme and list of participants).

Given the high quality of the papers submitted, the organising committee decided to collect them into an actual publications, for which we secured an ISBN number. Copies of the proceedings were deposited according to copyright regulations in several libraries.

The workshop featured an invited speaker, Patrick Cooke, chairman of the Irish Museums Association and curator of the Pearse Museum and of Kilmainham Jail in Dublin, and paper presentations followed by discussion over the two days.

### **Main Issues**

The papers presented at the workshop deal with a range of topics going from strategies for planning the design of exhibitions, to case studies of museum objects that can “tell their own story” when handled, electronic guides which deliver personalised tours and interactive “visitor books” for creating a memory of exhibitions. The discussants emphasised the necessity of developing more complete approaches to the design and evaluation of these technologies driven by a concern for the visitors’ overall experience. The discussants expressed the need for a venue for exchanging and critiquing this research, other than existing museum technologies conferences. A particular emphasis was put by the presenters on the need to develop novel approaches to design and reflection grounded in an understanding of experience, and to compare alternative perspectives (such as the ones adopted by industry, by museum curators and by university researchers).

All the participants expressed their appreciation of the possibility of discussing and debating as part of a group of people with different backgrounds and expertise.

### **Conclusions**

According to feedback received from participants, there is strong interest in this event to become a conference, which would allow for a longer time-frame, thus more time for discussion.

In this respect, the Irish Museum Association is interested in providing some support for another similar event next year.