

PLAYBOOK

Re-Opening Museums & Cultural Attractions

Succeeding in the Post-COVID Era
with Thoughtful Digital Tools

In March 2020, museums and cultural organizations across the world closed their doors due to Coronavirus. Now, almost half a year later, many institutions are in the early phases of reopening. In order to initiate a successful reopening, digital tools and solutions will be a critical component to addressing new challenges around admissions, the visitor journey, and recovering visitors and revenue.

As the leading voice of 40+ webinars on the cultural sector during and after Coronavirus, Cuseum is here to support you along your reopening journey. This playbook is the culmination of hundreds of hours of research, real-world experience, and conversations with museum professionals around the world.

We hope this new resource provides you with guidance and insight throughout your journey of reopening and adapting to whatever new challenges come your way.

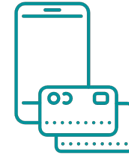




75,000+

Webinar Views

Cuseum webinars have received over 75,000 views by thousands of museum professionals around the world.



2,000,000+

Digital Membership Cards Served

Cuseum is proud to have launched over 2 million digital membership cards through over 100 partner organizations.



500+

Expert Voices

Cuseum is in continuous contact with over 500 leading professionals across the cultural sector, who are constantly providing feedback and guidance on new challenges, trends, and industry needs.



100+

Museum Apps Launched

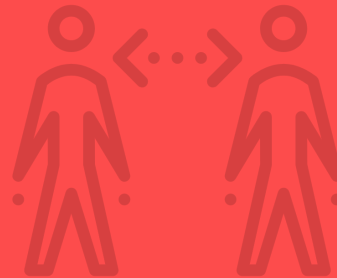
Since its inception, Cuseum has launched over one hundred museum apps. As museums move towards contactless experiences that remain engaging and immersive, mobile and apps will likely play an increasingly important role during reopenings and in the years to come.

QUESTIONS

This guide will dive into fresh challenges, changing consumer expectations, and new types of digital tools and conveniences, all of which are being driven by COVID-19. It will also examine the transforming visitor journey, re-evaluating touchpoints that take place at cultural organizations from start to finish. Finally, it will unpack “contactless” experiences, and what this may look like in the cultural sector.



How will COVID-19 change the ways that
VISITORS and **MEMBERS** and **DONORS**
engage at museums and attractions?



How can museums and attractions
prepare for an era of
SOCIAL DISTANCING ?



How can museums and attractions
ensure the safety of their
VISITORS and **EMPLOYEES** ?

What steps can be taken to ensure your guests feel safe and satisfied as they're welcomed back to your museum, post-COVID?

As museums prepare to reopen, there are two key elements to welcoming visitors back: safety and comfort. Safety is the number one priority. Organizations will need to take a number of steps to rethink service design and the visitor journey in order to enforce social distancing, limit physical touchpoints, and limit risks. Additionally, organizations will need to take steps to ensure guests feel comfortable and satisfied. This may involve a renewed emphasis on and a reimagining of the customer experience, as well as finding ways to delight visitors.

What tools and solutions are available to help address new challenges posed by COVID?

Traditionally, museums, gardens, zoos, aquariums, and other cultural organizations have included many touchpoints. These touchpoints began at the admissions desk, with the exchange of tickets, membership cards, credit cards, and cash. They continued throughout the museum, as visitors borrowed audio guides, interacted with shared touch screens, and interacted closely with staff. Now, tools like digital membership cards, timed tickets, digital guest passes, and mobile tours available on your personal mobile device are becoming essential to redesigning the museum experience for the “contactless” age.



Thinking through the visitor journey.

The visitor journey can be conceptualized in three phases: pre-visit, visit, and post-visit.

Right now, people are doing significantly more research before they ever set foot in cultural institutions. The level of safety measures and precautions in place at museums will play a critical component in the decision to visit.

Secondly, there is the onsite visitor experience. This is being altered in significant ways – seamless, contactless experiences are being implemented end-to-end to create a satisfactory and safe environment.

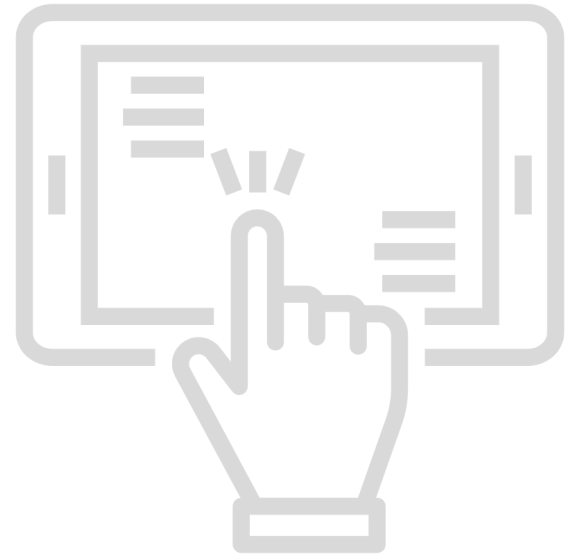
Finally, there is the post-visit. Visitors are sharing their experiences online, on social media, and sites like TripAdvisor, Yelp, & Google. This creates an environment where cultural organizations need to take extra measures to ensure a positive visitor experience.



TODAY'S "TOUCH POINTS"

Today, visitors commonly encounter numerous physical touchpoints throughout their entire museum visit.

- Ticketing Kiosks
- Credit Card & Cash Payments Terminals
- Physical Tickets & Membership Cards
- Shared Audio Guides
- Touch Screens & Interactives



- ⓧ No wall labels
- ⓧ No text panels
- ⓧ No guided tours
- ⓧ No touchscreens
- ⓧ No interactives
- ⓧ No printed maps
- ⓧ No printed brochures
- ⓧ No exchange of physical materials



RISK & CHALLENGES

Spread of virus due to encounters with physical equipment / devices.

In recent years, museums and cultural organizations have come to include a wide range of immersive experiences. These include shared audio guides, hands-on exhibits, shared touchscreens, and more. Now, many of these pose significant safety risks.

Spread of virus due to close proximity with other visitors.

Popular exhibits and galleries can lead to severe overcrowding in museums. Visitors may come in close contact with each other in admission lines, when viewing displays and artworks, and when trying to read wall labels with small print, which may bring guests within close proximity.

Anxiety and guest management challenges due to crowded rooms and galleries.

In addition to producing real safety risks, overcrowded rooms can lead to significant anxiety among visitors and staff alike.

Financial and legal liability due to risks to employees.

In a typical museum visit, face-to-face interactions with staff can make for a positive experience. From a friendly chat at the admissions desk to an informative encounter with a docent, personalized interactions used to be a special part of visiting a cultural organization. Now, close contact between guests and staff can pose health risks to employees and liability for institutions.

Decline in attendance (and \$\$\$) due to lack of preparedness.

In order to welcome guests back safely and successfully, it is important to be prepared and adapt. If guests feel unsafe or have negative experiences due to lack of preparedness, this could significantly affect near-term and long-term attendance numbers.

PREDICTIONS & SOLUTIONS

Physical touchpoints will be phased out in favor of digital mobile/BYOD solutions.

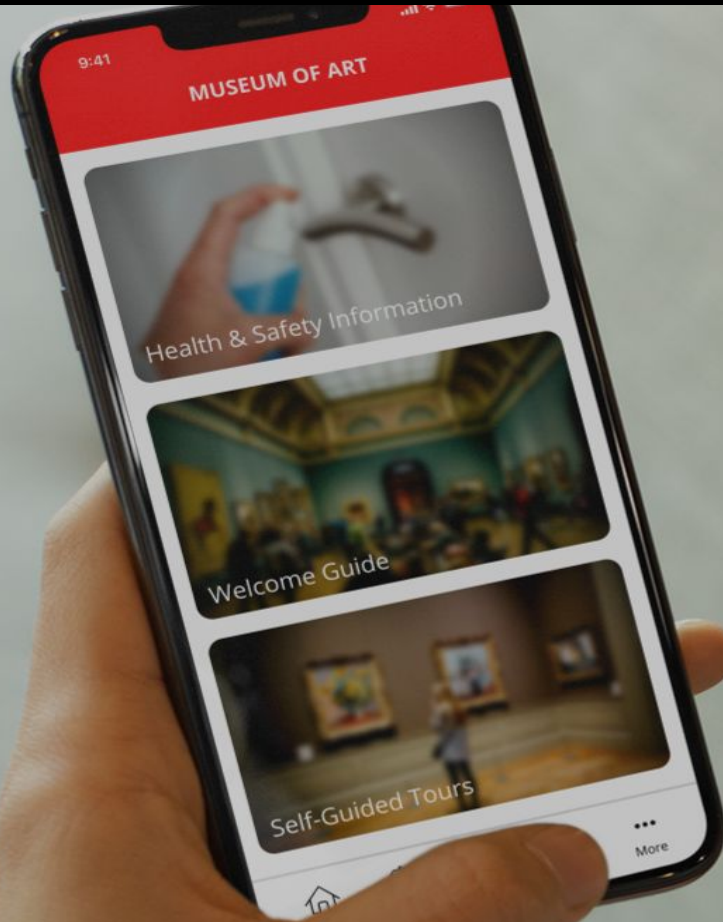
Going into the future, physical touchpoints are being phased out in favor of digital mobile and “bring your own device solutions.” Increasingly, museums are allowing visitors to get everything in the palm of their hand. From mobile apps, websites, to progressive web apps, information and experiences that would have previously required a physical touchpoint will be brought to visitors without the tactile element.

The rise of “contactless” experiences, payments, and technology.

Additionally, contactless experiences, payments, and technology are on the rise. Purchasing tickets, food, and merchandise; museum admissions; and learning experiences are being made possible through personal mobile devices, as organizations seek to eliminate face-to-face contact and limit touchpoints.

Service design will be introduced that encourages and enforces social distancing.

Finally, museums are iterating new types of service design that encourage and enforce social distancing. Cultural attractions of all kinds are re-imagining the visitor experience to ultimately make it better, healthier, and more conscientious.



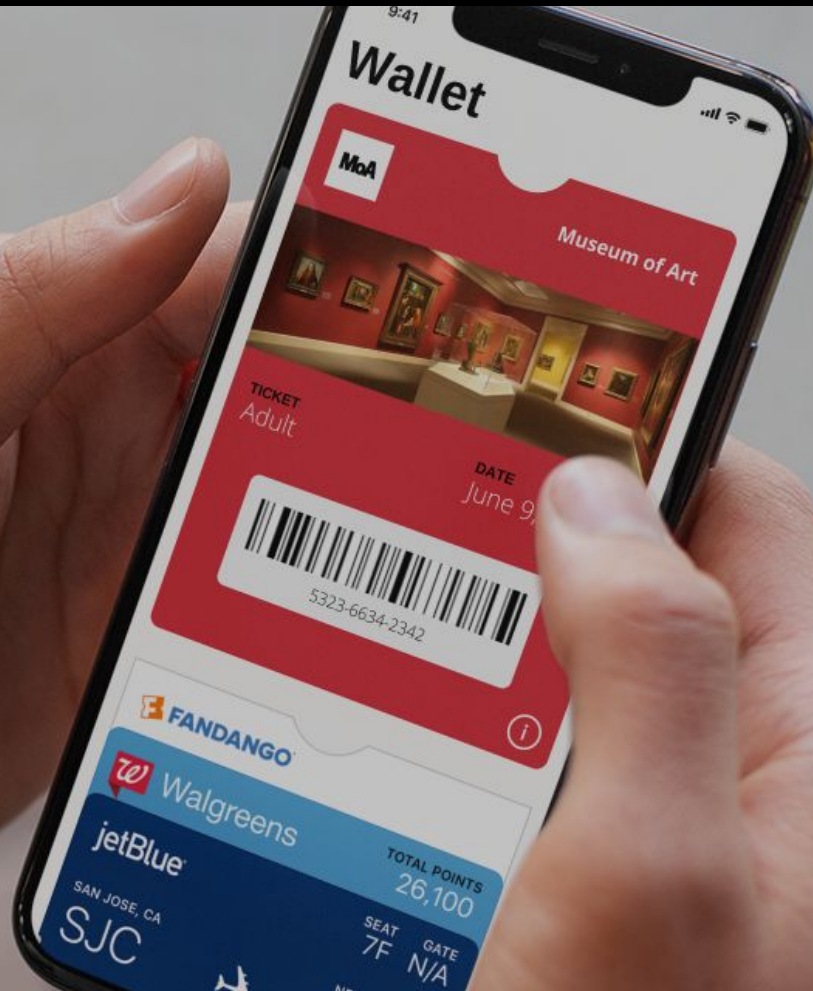
MOBILE-FIRST

A mobile app or mobile engagement solution can serve as a mechanism to prepare guests for their museum visit, ensure a positive experience onsite, and engage people post-visit. It can be designed to span the entire spectrum of the visitor journey. By providing health and safety information, maps and guidance, immersive learning experiences, and the opportunity to donate or become a member, a mobile app can provide everything visitors need in the palm of their hand before, during, and after their visit.



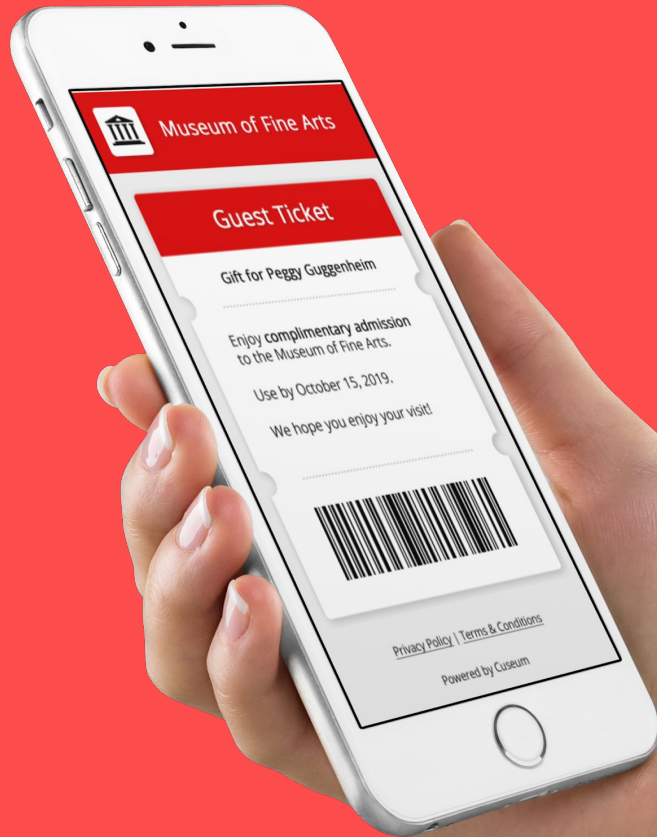
DIGITAL MEMBERSHIP

As more and more aspects of the museum experience go digital and mobile-first, membership cards are another aspect to consider. Digital membership cards can be a convenient and contactless replacement for traditional paper or plastic cards. Additionally, as organizations find themselves with less staff, fewer financial resources, and more work to do, digital membership cards can streamline the membership fulfillment process, saving hours a day and thousands of dollars a year. This can also free up time to focus on offering personalized interactions and touches with your valued membership base.



DIGITAL TICKETS

In transportation and entertainment, digital ticketing has become the norm. From airlines, sporting events, to concerts, mobile tickets are more popular than ever. With the move towards contactless experiences, digital ticketing is likely to become a norm in the cultural sector as well.



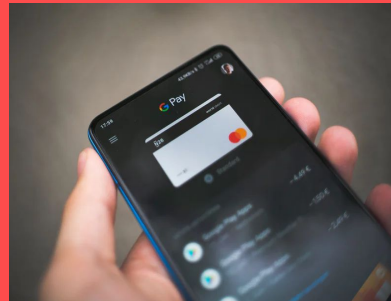
DIGITAL GUEST PASSES

Finally, digital has the power to activate your referral network. Through digital guest passes, you can ensure your members are able to invite their friends and family to visit your museum and easily distribute their passes, bringing more visitors through your doors who can become members and donors. This will be critical as you rebuild your audience and regain your attendance numbers after extended closures.



WHY NOW?

Audiences are looking for instruction and are **more receptive** now than ever.



Reopening is the ideal time to introduce new technology, solutions, and experiences for your audience.

In the era of Coronavirus, consumers have come to expect new protocols and regulations everywhere they go.

From mask policies, capacity limitations, contactless payments, social distancing requirements, and more, consumers are accustomed to receiving new information and adapting quickly. Now is an opportunity to offer your visitors something new – you have their full attention.

WHY NOW?

Consumer expectations and **digital literacy** have evolved significantly.



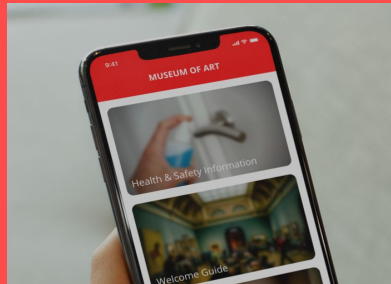
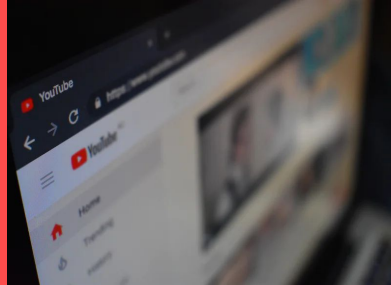
Before the pandemic, a significant deterrent to moving “mobile-first” was the fear of alienating less technologically literate patrons.

Since Coronavirus began, the entire world has been thrust further into the digital era. People of all ages have adapted to using a variety of video chat software, ordering groceries on their mobile phones, and making online purchases.

Coronavirus has been a forcing function, and much of the world has adapted quickly to the digital future. Mobile solutions are far less likely to be a deterrent than they ever have before.

WHY NOW?

You now have the **content**.



When museums across the world shut down due to the threat of Coronavirus, many doubled down on their efforts to produce digital content to keep audiences engaged.

Upon reopening, this content can be repurposed for a mobile app. Traditionally, the biggest hurdle to launching a new mobile app has been creating all the content – now, it's likely that museums have already created materials that can be effectively adapted for the onsite “contactless” experience.



PRE-VISIT

ON-SITE

POST-VISIT

PRE-VISIT

Planning > what safety precautions will be taken?

More so than ever, visitors are doing extensive research before they ever set foot in a museum. Potential guests are concerned about precautions, regulations, and the level of safety and risk. **Promote the steps you are taking to ensure a safe experience for all.**

Ticket Purchase > timed ticketing?

The method of ticket purchase is also important to consider for your reopening. Now, many organizations are introducing timed ticketing systems that allow visitors to purchase tickets in advance for a specific time slot. This has the benefit of preventing long lines and facilitating contactless admissions. **Consider the many benefits of introducing timed ticketing to manage museum capacity, reduce interactions between guests and staff, and better understand attendance patterns.**

Social Reviews > TripAdvisor, Facebook, Yelp, etc.?

More than ever before, potential visitors are heading to TripAdvisor, Yelp, Facebook, and Google reviews to learn about your organization. How you execute reopening and create a positive experience will impact the contents of these reviews and whether future guests decide to visit. **In addition to taking necessary precautions and keeping a line of communication open with your community, make sure to monitor review sites for any concerns.**

PRE-VISIT

ON-SITE

POST-VISIT

ON-SITE

Entry & Registration

Museum entry will increasingly be characterized by contactless experiences, through mobile tickets, digital membership cards, voice and gesture activate kiosks, and more. **Check out how [Digital Memberships](#) can make entry contactless for your members.**

Virtual Queueing

Virtual queuing will also serve as an alternative to waiting in a physical line by allowing visitors to join the line ahead of time digitally, and receive a mobile alert when it's their turn. **Consider virtual queuing along with solutions like timed ticketing.**

General Orientation

General orientation helps visitors to familiarize themselves with the museum space and decide what types of things to see. Mobile apps and websites can help facilitate this process quickly. **Check out how a [Mobile Engagement](#) app can offer your visitors all of this information in the palm of their hand.**

Guest Flow

Guest flow can be addressed digitally and physically. Through solutions like painted arrows and taped off areas, as well as through mobile guides and even AR (augmented reality) wayfinding, museums can help manage guest movement in the safest way possible. **Consider collecting data on guest movement patterns and popular exhibitions so you can better understand how to manage visitor flow.**

Content & Engagement

Organizations are moving their content off of wall labels and offering educational value through mobile platforms. This also prevents congregating around the walls and is critical to enforce social distancing. **Start thinking about how all of the content you created during lockdown can be repurposed for the onsite experience.**

Commerce & Conversion

With budgets hit hard by the Coronavirus, it will be more important than ever to generate new revenue streams, simplify the donation process, and convert visitors into members and members into donors. **If possible, create signage to encourage your visitors to make a donation via their smartphone before they leave.**

PRE-VISIT

ON-SITE

POST-VISIT

POST-VISIT

Follow Up

One of the most important aspects of the post-visit is the follow-up. If you've gathered information about your guests and you're able to follow-up or retarget them, that can drive engagement. If you're tracking member visitation patterns, this is also a chance to boost member retention. **If you can, send a thank you or follow up email to all of your recent visitors.**

Review

The onsite experience will ultimately affect visitors' decisions to write a review on TripAdvisor, Yelp, Facebook, or Google. Review sites will ideally help evangelize your organization, and you can facilitate that by encouraging your visitors and members to leave a review. **We recommend asking members to leave a review, as these are often your biggest supporters.**

Recommend

Finally, visitors and members have the ability to recommend your organization to their friends and family. Global research consulting leaders like Forrester, Gartner, McKinsey, and Deloitte regularly emphasize the importance of word-of-mouth reviews. You have the opportunity to turn every visitor into an evangelist for your organization by focusing on the visitor and member experience and establishing a "loyalty loop." **To make it easier for members to invite their friends and family to your museum, you may consider giving out digital [Guest Passes](#).**

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Safety is the #1 priority.

Safety is top of mind for everybody, and the safety of staff and visitors needs to be a top priority for cultural organizations. Additionally, visitors are concerned about their personal safety and the safety of their families.

Communicate your commitment.

It's important not just to create a safe environment, but to take steps to communicate that commitment to safety. Organizations are articulating the steps that they are taking to ensure the safety of those visitors and to make those visitors feel comfortable.

What new opportunities have emerged from the challenges?

Despite the challenges it has posed, Coronavirus has also presented significant new opportunities for cultural organizations. From seamless experiences, an enhanced visitor journey, to more accessible learning resources, museums have the potential to come out of this crisis stronger and more resilient.





Start a task force. ...if you haven't already.

If you haven't started a task force yet, do it! Current challenges require consideration and focus that can best be created through a dedicated internal group that meets frequently.



Never stop learning.

Reopening during Coronavirus will be an iterative process, so never stop learning and adapting. New information and best practices are being developed in real-time, so be prepared to adjust and keep going.



Take incremental steps.

It's easy to get overwhelmed by the big picture, so start small! Think big, but begin with incremental steps. From there, you can continue to learn, pivot, and modify your solutions.



Invest in training... you're now in the hospitality business.

More than ever before, cultural organizations are part of the hospitality and travel business. New opportunities and new challenges will arise when it comes to interacting with guests, so be prepared. To be enabled to de-escalate situations, enforce new rules, and bring delight to guests, frontline staff will likely need to receive new training.



Unusual times call for creative solutions.

Since Coronavirus lockdowns began, museums and cultural organizations have innovated in commendable ways. From virtual events to new engagement opportunities, organizations are finding creative solutions to bring experiences to people at home. The current moment will continue to be a driving force of innovation in the cultural sector.

Reopening can be filled with challenges, but we encourage you to think through the various approaches and solutions that can help you along the way. We hope that this playbook will help you address the new obstacles (and opportunities) presented by COVID-19 and its impact on visitor needs and expectations.

And, don't forget: your community is here for you! The museum and cultural space is filled with knowledgeable, passionate, and supportive colleagues who you can leverage as a resource. We're all in this together and through helping each other prepare and adapt, we can collectively boost the outcomes for the entire cultural sector.

Finally, we're always here to help and share resources.

Free to reach out to Cuseum at hello@cuseum.com if you have any questions.

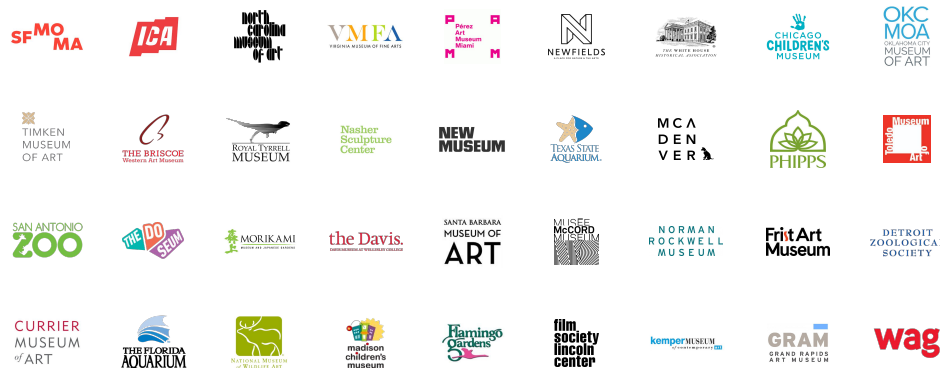


ABOUT CUSEUM

Cuseum helps organizations drive visitor, member and patron engagement using digital tools. Cuseum's software platform makes it easy for museums, attractions and nonprofits to publish mobile apps, generate digital membership cards and leverage data insights.

TRUSTED BY LEADING ORGANIZATIONS

Cuseum's solution are leveraged by world-class organizations around the globe.



INTERESTING IN LEARNING MORE? We'd love to hear from you!



Dan Sullivan
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Blackbaud
Technology Partner

tessitura
NETWORK



Partner
Network

ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

Cuseum provides a unified solution.



MOBILE ENGAGEMENT

Quickly, easily, and affordably power **mobile guide apps** to better engage your visitors.



DIGITAL MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Deliver **digital membership cards** and campaigns to your loyal members and patrons.



GUEST PASS REFERRAL

Leverage existing members to attract new visitors and members using a **referral portal + digital guest pass**.



DIGITAL TICKETS

Reduce costs and offer a seamless, safe, and digital way for your visitors to receive their tickets right on their mobile phones.