



Places People Can't Go



HELLO!

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1.

Solution

Experiential and immersive storytelling:

**A letter “desk” with tactile
objects that transports
visitors to another place
and time**



2.

Target Audience

**People with varying
levels of mobility,
endurance, and vision.**



3.

Competitive Analysis

The National World War II Museum

New Orleans, LA

The National World War II Museum in New Orleans has an archive of letters as part of their collection. They regard these letters as “time capsules in envelopes” as they depict the lives of soldiers through the correspondence they had with family and friends. The letters give first hand accounts of the events and feelings of soldiers. Providing valuable information outside of oral histories which are told years later when the soldier is in a different mindset. In addition, letters tell untold stories from those who may not have returned home or from those who do not wish to tell their stories after the war.

Yours Truly

Alcatraz

San Francisco, CA

In 2014, Ai Weiwei, Chinese Contemporary artist and activist, created an interactive installation at Alcatraz in San Francisco, CA titled “**Yours Truly**” as part of his larger exhibition *@Large Ai Weiwei* on Alcatraz. It was located in the cafeteria at Alcatraz, which consisted of long lunch-style benches for a lot of people to sit, and invited visitors to write letters on postcards illustrated with different types of flowers to a list of over 100 political prisoners across 20 countries. At the time of the exhibition, there weren't any writing options for those with mobile or visual disabilities.

The Letter Writing Project

New York, NY

Rubin Museum 2020, Whitney 1998

Lee Mingwei's **"The Letter Writing Project"** invites visitors to enter a booth and write letters of remembrance to a deceased or absent loved one, or write letters of forgiveness and gratitude. The work reflects on trust, the exchange of unspoken words, and the possibility of making amends. The opportunity to write a letter to someone the visitor has not had the chance to can spark a reflection of emotions.



4.

Final Deliverable

- ▶ Final sketch and design specifications, including dimensions and materials of desk
- ▶ Create immersive audio versions of letters
- ▶ Build out website for letter prompts and audio
- ▶ Illustrations of tactile objects to be included in conjunction with the selected letters
- ▶ Develop QR codes to take visitors to website



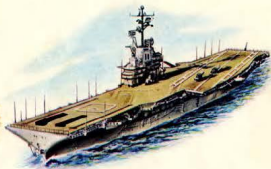
5.

User Journey



Figure 1.1 Replica of a desk to be used at an exhibit. This is not an exact replica and is only to be used for visual purposes.

W.A.H.
5-2 D.V.
U.S.S. Intrepid CVS-11
F.P.O. - NEW YORK,
N.Y.



H-11-66
2115

USS Intrepid, CVS-11

Dearst Mother,

Well I had to run the other night, when I called I forgot that our time is an hour different from yours and I thought I had an hour off and didn't have but five minutes. Why didn't say anything because I was five minutes late for a muster the night I called.

We have been in some rough waters due to a storm out in the Atlantic. I haven't been sea sick yet but gosh it gets rough at times. We are about 2300 miles out now and are supposed to pull in at Naples the 17th, 18th of this month, Subic Bay next month the Canal Quez I don't know and then Viet Nam.

Living conditions on here are miserable. Too crowded! The working hours too long, I work from 11 AM to 8 PM every day. I'm about to get adjusted to it but it's rough. I've met 6 of my buddies from Memphis but still haven't received any mail but I don't think we are to have mail call until we get to Naples.

How is zero and the cats? It won't be long until school is out and mee is already what 16 years old the 1st. Has she been to the 4th club yet? What kind of garden do you have this year? I'll bet the grass is growing fast these days.

We keep going into different time zones and I will lose another hour sleep tonight because we gain an hour.

How is pee wee's nervous troubles these days? How is ole George making out with school? Tell pee wee we are going to Subic Bay next month. Today was shot day but I didn't have to take any. We are to pull in Naples and a two of my buddies from Memphis are going out with Squadron VA 195 to Rome and see the city. I'll bet that will be fun.

I have to go to getting lots and I have to get up at 3:30. Write and tell me the news of Leo, M. L. and around the country.

Love Always
Aubrey

Figure 2.1: Collection of the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. Gift of William Aubrey Harvison family. A2017.64

Dearest Mother,

Well I had to run the other night, when I called I forgot that our time is an hour different from yours and I thought I had an hour off and didn't have but five minutes. They didn't say anything because I was five minutes late for a muster the night I called.

We have been in some rough waters due to a storm out in the Atlantic. I haven't been sea sick yet but gosh it gets rough at times. We are about 2300 miles out now and are supposed to pull in at Naples the 17th & 18th of this month, Subic Bay next month, the Suez in the next month and then Vietnam.

Living conditions on here are miserable. Too crowded. The working hours too long. I work from 4 AM to 8 PM everyday. I'm about to get adjusted to it but it's rough. I've met 6 of my buddies from Memphis but still haven't received any mail but I don't think we are to have mail call until we get to Naples.



Figure 3.1: Woman with red painted fingernails holds her iPhone up to a QR Code to take a photo of the code.



Website

- ▶ Will contain audio for each letter and tactile object
- ▶ Transcriptions of letters
- ▶ Curated prompts

Prompt

Reflect and share a time in your life where you experienced a change that was difficult for you to adjust to.



6.

Challenges & Roadblocks

- ▶ Size and height of desks
- ▶ Figuring out how to make a desk that can engage larger audiences
- ▶ Writing utensils at the desk to accommodate for the abilities of all users
- ▶ Adapting a letter desk to various sites
- ▶ How to tell a story that is compelling and accurate
- ▶ Learning that letters from certain periods may be difficult to understand due to changes in language
- ▶ There might not be enough descriptive content of a place in a letter



7.

Wins (so far)

- ▶ Move towards having the writing experience done virtually through a website where visitors can respond to prompts related to the artifacts.
- ▶ Also considering having visitors use their own social media accounts to respond to the prompts
- ▶ Communicated with sites to source content for idea
- ▶ Received letters for possible storylines from intrepid



8.

**Plans for the rest
of the semester**

- ▶ Continue to go through and source content from the Intrepid
- ▶ Select letters and objects and develop narrative
- ▶ Build website
- ▶ Make QR codes
- ▶ Create audio and transcripts for letters
- ▶ Research process of creating embossed letters



9.

Questions

Questions for Feedback

1. What are your thoughts on the user journey interaction with the letter “desk”?
 - a. Are the instructions clear?
 - b. Do you understand the process?
 - c. Does the journey make sense?
2. What did you like? Was there anything you didn't like, and what would you do differently?

Questions for Mentors

1. Do you see any other accessibility issues/challenges in any parts of the project that we need to address?
2. What other knowledge/insight do you have to ensure visitors can locate and access QR Codes?

THANK YOU!