

VIRTUAL MUSEUMS DEFINITION

A virtual museum is a digital entity that draws on the characteristics of a museum, in order to complement, enhance, or augment the museum experience through personalization, interactivity, and richness of content. Virtual museums can perform as the digital footprint of a physical museum, or can act independently, while maintaining the authoritative status as bestowed by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in its definition of a museum. In tandem with the ICOM mission of a physical museum, the virtual museum is also committed to public access; to both the knowledge systems embedded in the collections and the systematic, and coherent organization of their display, as well as to their long-term preservation. As with a traditional museum, a virtual museum can be designed around specific objects (such as an art museum or a natural history museum), or can consist of online exhibitions created from primary or secondary resources (as, for example in a science museum). Moreover, a virtual museum can refer to the mobile or World Wide Web offerings of traditional museums (e.g., displaying digital representations of its collections or exhibits); or can be born digital content such as, 3D environments, net art, virtual reality and digital art. Often, discussed in conjunction with other cultural institutions, a museum by definition, is essentially separate from its sister institutions such as a library or an archive. Virtual museums are usually, but not exclusively delivered electronically when they are denoted as online museums, hypermuseum, digital museum, cybermuseums or web museums.