stqry

The National Library of New Zealand

Case Study: March 2022

Collecting, connecting & co-creating knowledge

Overview

The National Library of New Zealand houses stories about the history, culture, and people of New Zealand. Their three tiered mission is to collect, connect, and co-create knowledge to power New Zealand.

The collection includes the Alexander Turnbull Collection, the National Children's Book Collection, and copies of every published book in Aotearoa history. Their He Tohu exhibition gives permanent home to the three constitutional documents that shaped New Zealand nation: He Whakaputanga (The Independence Declaration of 1835), Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) and the Women's Suffrage Petition (1893).

By preserving and protecting these collections, and making them as accessible to the public as possible, The National Library of New Zealand fulfills its mission: He whakapapa kōrero, he whenua kura (talking about the past to create a better future for Aotearoa).

In alignment with this mission, the team at The National Library of New Zealand wanted to offer their collection in multiple languages and sign language, integrating elements of audio and video storytelling to bring these stories and people to life in new ways. They enlisted the help of the STQRY platform to realize this goal.

The Challenge

Lucy Shand, Partnerships Coordinator for The National Library of New Zealand, described the challenge they were trying to overcome by using the STQRY platform.

"Our original goal was to appeal to international visitors as planning began pre-pandemic," said Shand.

"We wanted to create an interactive and engaging experience that visitors can engage with independently in their own time."

This second element became particularly important during the pandemic. They were set to approach these challenges by creating audiovisual elements based on the collection itself, creating an innovative illustration of the collection.

"Due to the different challenges presented by audio versus visual, particularly when considering accessibility requirements, it was uncertain whether the two types of guides would be compatible in the same format on the same device," she said.

"Fortunately, this was made possible by the STQRY platform and we found a common ground between both sets of requirements that works seamlessly from a user experience perspective."

The storytelling and accessibility challenges were easily mitigated by the STQRY platform, but the team also faced barriers in regard to security. "As a government agency we have specific processes and security requirements that meant it took a little longer to get everything together," said Shand.
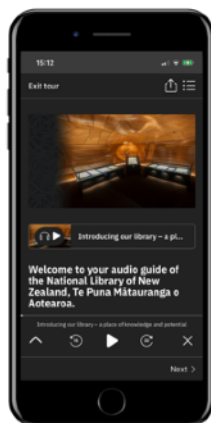
Key Features & Functionality

App Highlights

Audio Guide

On-Site Devices

Accessibility

Key Features

Language Picker

Sign Language Tours

Multimedia Content

General Site Information

Key Functionality

Interpretation

Audio Content

6 Different Languages

Online and Offline Capabilities

Educational Resources

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Lucy Shand, Partnerships Coordinator at The National Library of New Zealand

The Solution

On the security side, the STQRY team was able to help create a seamless and efficient experience for the Library. "STQRY helped us source the hardware and worked with us on loading the software onto the devices," Shand said.

On the accessibility side, the team was able to use the STQRY platform to create the app in six different languages (English, Te Reo Māori, Mandarin, Portuguese, French and German) to attract international users, and Sign Language to increase accessibility.

"We decided to include Sign Language in recognition of NZSL being an official language of New Zealand and to boost accessibility to the stories of He Tohu. In conjunction with the project, members of the Public Engagement team undertook Deaf awareness training and introductory NZSL," said Shand.

Shand and the team also worked with NZSL4U to co-design this translated part of the audio app. "Working with NZSL4U (co-design partners), Story Inc and STQRY, we were able to come to fit for purpose solutions which culminated in a really intuitive and compelling storytelling experience," she explained.

In addition to the increased accessibility of the collection, Shand and the team also found value in the self-guided nature of the app during the pandemic. "We have seen an upsurge in usage of the guide due to not running daily public tours," she said. "Having the devices has been a great alternative to in-person tours, allowing people to remain safely socially distanced in the Library space whilst still engaging with our stories."

The Result

Feedback from users and the Library's team has been overwhelmingly positive in terms of the experience of the app itself and the way it illustrates New Zealand's history.

"The app has been easy to use and intuitive and the stories told have been well received," Shand explained. "We collect voluntary testimonials plus those of staff members who have used the Guides, all of which have been really enthusiastic and positive."

She also appreciated the support of the STQRY team and the streamlined process of using the platform itself. "The STQRY platform has been really easy to use and the team have been great to work with."

By bringing the history housed in The National Library of New Zealand to life in this new way with STQRY, the team was able to create an immersive and innovative experience of their collection for visitors all over the globe.

Learn more about The National Library of New Zealand at https://natlib.govt.nz.

If you are interested in setting up a free demo, please contact us to schedule an appointment.
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