SPARKLE

case

D**OO**RS Digital Incubator for Museums

Who | Institutional Profile

Institution	Arboretum Volčji Potok
Location	Volčji Potok, Slovenija
Short Description	Arboretum Volčji Potok is the most visited botanical institution in Slovenia. With its 85 ha large estate, it offers peace and tranquillity to everyone who enjoys spending time in nature. Over 3,500 different sorts of plants and trees are planted in Arboretum Volčji Potok.
	Arboretum Volčji Potok is a cultural monument of national importance, due to its outstanding garden architectural heritage and its collection of trees and shrubs – an arboretum in the basic sense of the word.
	Most visitors visit Arboretum during the spring flower shows, where they can walk among millions of daffodils, tulips and other spring flowers. But the park also offers a wonderful experience all year-round with exhibitions in greenhouses, art exhibitions and different seasonal exhibitions. Arboretum therefore has many points of interest and a long history. There are castle ruins that provide interesting historical facts. Five different ponds inside the park, streams, different sorts of trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals provide habitat for free-living animals - forest animals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and insects.
	Arboretum Volčji Potok's mission is a permanent and uninterrupted management of a cultural monument of national importance and the presentation of its cultural values. It is a curator of the collection of trees and shrubs, providing educational programmes for children in kindergartens, primary schools and high schools. Presenting the park to the public and stakeholders is one of the organisation's constant priority activities.
Ownership	Arboretum Volčji Potok is publicly owned.
Size	95.0 FTEs | 305,197 yearly visitors

Approach to Digital	*Input by Klara Raković*
	Arboretum Volčji Potok utilises digital tools to:
	- inform and educate the public and create possibilities for the public to communicate with it and to participate (website, social media, e-park guide); - digitalise and therefore improve visitor experience (e-ticketing, e-commerce, e-feedback survey); - collect and analyse data about its collection of trees (digital cadastre, digital collection of plants in the park).
	Digitalisation in Arboretum Volčji Potok is happening in different areas of the organisation, the goal being ultimately to digitally connect different areas in order to improve visitor experience and gather better data. In turn, this will improve how Arboretum Volčji Potok operates and delivers value to its customers.
	Arboretum Volčji Potok is focused on digitalising and connecting all the steps of the customer experience, such as e-ticketing and e-commerce, encouraging visitors to give feedback about their satisfaction and staying connected with them after the visit via social media.

Arboretum Volčji Potok is also digitalising information about its collection of plants via digital list of plants and photographs of distinguishing characteristics of all its varieties of plants and roses. Arboretum Volčji Potok is also inventorying the plant collection and managing green areas via digital cadastre of trees. The digital cadastre will be integrated with a digital collection of photographs of distinguishing characteristics of the trees. Visitors will be able to access the digital cadastre with their smartphones as well as the map and inventory of the trees.

Arboretum Volčji Potok is also digitalising a lot of its exhibitions – creating digital photos and videos of the exhibitions and uploading them on its website and Youtube channel while also uploading live videos and virtual live guide tours in foreign languages.

Arboretum Volčji Potok recognises and understands the power and benefits of digital technology and believes in its continuous exponential potential to capture creativity, save time, improve visitor experience and reach more people. One hurdle is the rigidity of the organisation's employee structure, so there are limitations on hiring more experts with skills in digital technology. Therefore, existing employees must incorporate more digital tools into their work process as a result of the organisation's developing digital strategy.

Our expectation is that using more digital technology in different areas and connecting digital processes will steadily imprint the use of technology in the mind of every employee. This will therefore make it easier to introduce digital tools in other work processes, with employees feeling more comfortable with working with them.

What | Case

Project Title	Creating an E-park Guide with Gamification Elements to Boost Visitor Participation
Timeframe	November 2022 – September 2023

| Concept & Approach | We approached the creation of the concept by having in mind what our goal for the e-park guide is - to educate children about plants and animals that can be found in the park.

We first made a list of animals, interesting trees in the park and facts about the landscape architecture that we wanted to present to children/families. Because of the results of the visitor survey, which showed a shorter attention span than we initially anticipated, we divided the e-park guide´s tour into four different phases. For each phase we chose four interest points (below is a map we created to pinpoint where and in which phase (different colours) the interest points are). |
Arboretum Volčji Potok |

Because this e-park guide is geared towards children, we felt that the story would be most appealing to children if it was also told from a child's point of view.

The park where Arboretum Volčji Potok is now located was first a private property and the owner of the property created the landscape that Arboretum Volčji Potok is most known for (the French garden and two English parks). He lived in the park with his three children. For that reason, the story in the e-park guide is told by them – the father and his three children. Each of them takes the visitors through their favourite part (phase in e-park guide) of the park and presents them with the most interesting animals, trees and historical facts about the park. If they don't complete the entire e-park tour in one go, they can continue the tour the next time they come to the park.

The e-park guide is accompanied by historical photographs from the time the family lived in the park. There are also photos of particular trees and spots in the park the visitors must find, based on clues provided to them.

They learn about interesting animals and plants through narration of the four characters and different games and riddles. They navigate through the park with the help of written directions, photos and riddles within each phase and with Google map to get from the location of one phase of the e-tour guide to the other.

When completing each phase they get rewarded with a special IG filters which they can post to their social media and after completing all the phases they can enjoy a free ride with an electric train through the park.

Benefits & Impact

This project connected different departments within the organisation and created a new workflow. The team working on the project established communication with different departments and learned new things about the organisation. For example, employees working in the EU projects learned interesting facts about the park by joining a tour guide on a school tour through the park.

This project connected us to other organisations, too – other museums and companies also creating new networking channels. It also established new communication channels with our visitors as the e-tour guide provides another option for our visitors to connect with our organisation and give their feedback.

This project has also made a lasting impact on our organisation. It has taught us a lot about understanding our visitors and how we should expand our thinking about them. It has made us take a closer look at the data we are currently gathering about them and how we use it. This project and the mentors involved with the DOORS project has taught us a lot about segmentation and personification of visitors and presented good practices of visitor research. All this knowledge and food for thought will definitely have a long-term impact on our future thinking about our visitors.

This project also taught us about taking a more holistic approach when planning a project – to take into consideration possible impacts of the project on different departments; to take a closer look for possible improvements of the work process, to think long term when planning a project...

Limits & Drawbacks

Despite the fact that creating an e-tour guide with gamification elements seems pretty straightforward and easy, it turned out it is not quite as simple as initially thought.

Because this was a one-off project for a lot of the departments included (experts on trees, historical facts and landscape architecture), it was a struggle for them to allocate time for it.

Since developers of the application have specific knowledge and skills and our experts have specific knowledge about the topic of the application it has proven quite difficult – especially as not all parties involved were in-house - to combine the knowledge of all of them, while also challenging them and motivating them to think creatively as the application was developing.

As the project was coordinated by the project manager, who doesn't have the knowledge which the experts and the developers have, it was hard to do quality control during development – especially when wanting to include creative ideas about the gamification elements. These ranged from brainstorming ideas with experts to getting feedback from developers as to what works and what doesn't in practice and what is better accepted by general users of applications and e-tour guides. It also slowed down the process, when every little change had to be checked and approved by our experts, who also had a hard time allocating time to do so.

Additionally, what wasn't taken into account at the start, was that a wonderfully written scenario that best explains things doesn't translate smoothly when put to the test in the field – as during the tour there may be something else that catches the eye of most visitors first or there might be some other question arising during the presentation and explanation of certain things. Furthermore, some visitors take a longer look at a particular object than others – which also needs to be taken into account. Therefore, the scenario had to be changed several times.

The application had to be tested many more times than initially expected, because employees who planned the route and wrote directions of the route found a lot of things self-explanatory and immediately knew where to go, while those who have never been to Arboretum Volčji Potok found directions confusing. Testing the application revealed this problem, which also had to be improved.

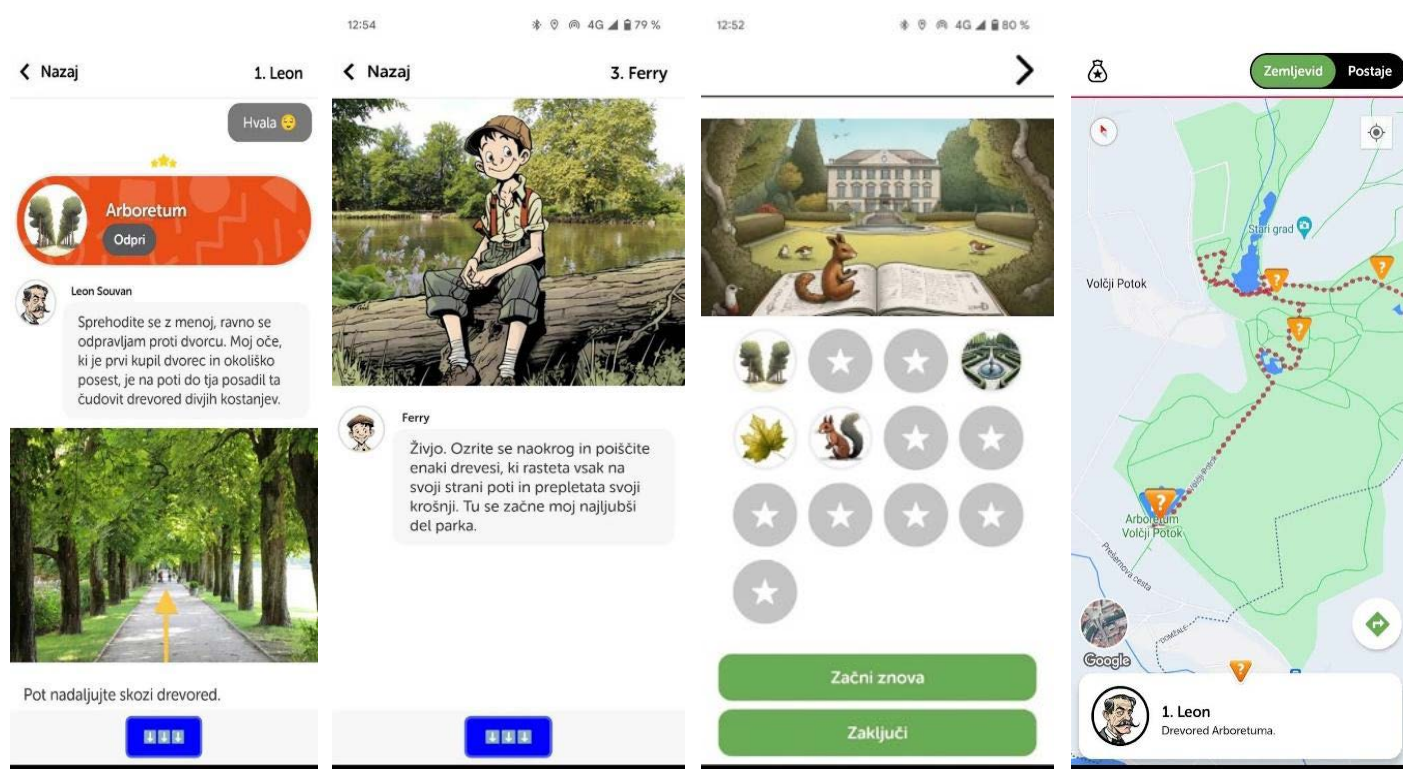| Future Prospects	After presentations of ideas during DOORS workshops, we have expanded our idea of the application from looking at it as implementing digital solutions to looking at it as part of the whole customer experience. We recognised the possibility of upgrading the user experience of the e-park guide into a comprehensive family experience. This starts at home on the sofa, where it is possible to buy an e-ticket online, and receive an e-mail with an e-ticket accompanying a link to a free e-park guide application, all this before visiting the park.
	We have also expanded our idea so that the e-park guide can be used as a tool for audience analysis and creating a new communication channel, through which visitors can give their feedback. Users at the end of using the application will be invited to follow us on Facebook and Instagram. With this, we want to extend the experience of the park and improve and encourage the Arboretum's two-way communication with visitors, so that the experience does not end when the visit is over. The idea of an e-park guide has also expanded to marketing, as posting stories on social media will create a user-generated promotion.
	As we have now prioritised generating content for families, who represent a big percentage of the park's visitors, we will at a later date provide an e-park guide customised to other target groups. As two people or even the same person can be at the same location but within a different context (with a different companion, different motivations for using the e-park guide), to effectively support the visitor, the location-based application will provide information and services adapted not only to the user's location, but also her/his other context-related information. Later on, visitors will be able to choose whether they want content for families, adults or other e- park guides based on the preferences.
Key Take-Aways	• Have a meeting before choosing your developer and let them explain to you how they will bring your vision to life. • Really take time to predict everything that could possibly go wrong in the project and make arrangements accordingly. • Determine all the stages of the project and the outcomes of every stage. • Determine very specifically everyone's roles and responsibilities. • Determine who needs to approve the work during the project.
Involved Parties	Nexto (app development)

E-park guide, Arboretum Volčji Potok

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