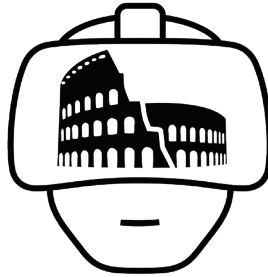


Chapter 10



PRESERVED PAST



What's the Non-Obvious Trend?

Technology offers new ways for us to preserve history, changing the way that we learn from, experience and shape the past.

What if we had the ability to capture any real world experience and preserve it forever?

The desire to save and remember the present has been around for most of recorded human history. In the past 100 years we have gotten far more visual with this desire, thanks to photography and video, but none of these have come close to offering a really immersive historical experience.

For a deeper immersion, you could always visit ancient ruins or participate in a historical reenactment – but these still only offer a limited view. When it comes to recording our own lives, we can come a bit closer to reliving history because we evoke our own memories of actually being there through selfies and videos captured mostly on our phones.

But what about the places around us and the history that they hold

which is usually hidden from view? If you consider the ambition of Toronto based virtual reality innovator The Third Fate – we would find more opportunities to immerse ourselves in the past if we got better at capturing and saving the present.

The award winning design studio has used its 360 degree capture technology recently to preserve once-in-a-lifetime experiences like artist Bjarke Ingel's BIG Maze at the National Building Museum in Washington DC as well as everyday cityscapes like Manhattan's Columbus Circle. The studio's vision is to use technology to preserve structures slated for demolition or renovation, buildings in decay, changing landscapes, new builds and exhibitions.

If you think about it, this desire to use technology to record the present so we might experience and enjoy it far into the future isn't that different than the reason any of us record our lives through selfies and videos. There is a beautiful power in the *Preserved Past*, and this trend is about much more than just recording an experience. Technology may be able to help us make sure we don't leave the past behind as well.

Drones, virtual and augmented reality, 3D imagery, and cutting edge design are all being applied to preserve the past in various ways. The beautiful side effect is that these initiatives are also making the past easier to experience and access on demand, often alongside the present.

This is the *Preserved Past* – a world where we can access, experience and learn from our shared past more easily and with a new level of immersiveness, insight and connection.

Living History

The easiest place to start an exploration of this trend is with museums because they are already destinations that curate the past. Around the world, forward looking museums are evolving to rapidly becoming more than dusty buildings where artifacts are stored behind glass cases. At the Acropolis Museum in Greece, for example, one team is using technology to bring a collection of architectural and sculptural remains to life with augmented reality (AR) to restore colors and lost features.

At The Dali Museum in Florida, an exhibit called "Dreams of Dali"

allows visitors to use a virtual reality headset to step inside and explore the artist's 1935 painting *Archeological Reminiscence of Millet's Angelus*. Every detail of the painting has been lovingly recreated for anyone to experience as if they were entering the strange abstract world of Dali's mind in real time.

Of course, recreating historical artifacts or taking a tour inside an artist's mind are not the same as speaking with someone directly. The problem usually is that this type of conversation is impossible to have – but one project is even creating a solution for that constraint with an unusual idea.

The effort is called New Dimensions In Testimony (NDT) and was developed as a collaboration between several groups at the University of Southern California (USC) to add a human face to one of the darkest times in human history.

The demo project features real Holocaust survivor Pinchas Gutter being asked to answer nearly 2,000 questions about his experience and life. While being interviewed, the project used 50 cameras arranged in a rig to capture a three-dimensional recording of him telling his story across an entire week.

These responses were then indexed using natural language processing software and a hologram was created with his likeness for people to interact with. The result is a fascinating and slightly unnerving experience of actually having a conversation with a Holocaust survivor ... something we can still do today, but that will be impossible a mere 10 or 15 years from now.

What all this innovation illustrates is that the history which we once learned from books and the occasional school field trip to look at paintings on museum walls is becoming interactive, deeper and vastly more personal than ever before.

Augmented Reality Travel

Experiencing the past is also becoming more widely available to people outside the confines of museum exhibits.

One of the earliest examples of this was an app called StreetMuseum

from The Museum of London first launched more than six years ago. The app allows users to walk through the streets of London and use their mobile device to overlay paintings and arts of work over the actual scene and location they are passing through in order to see what the city once looked like.

Similar Augmented Reality Tours include everything from the “Paris, Then and Now” app, to the “PIVOTtheWorld” app which offers a mobile tour of the Harvard campus with historical markers to tell the story of what the school was like centuries ago.

Augmented reality is also being rapidly adopted by brands in the Travel and Tourism sector. Best Western Hotels & Resorts launched a virtual experience where consumers can see into rooms, amenities and locations. Last year Asian hotel brand Shangri-La announced it would be doing something similar targeted at travel agents and meeting planners.

Hilton, Marriott, and Starwood (the latter two brands having recently merged) have all launched their own pilot programs with augmented reality. On the airline side, United and Lufthansa are both using VR to show off their interior cabins – while Qantas is making inflight VR entertainment available.

All these nascent efforts from so many brands inspired consulting firm Deloitte to dub 2016 the “year of experimentation” in its expansive report on the state of the virtual reality industry. But you might be wondering what does all this experimentation have to do with the *Preserved Past*?

The fascinating side effect of all this focus on cataloging experiences as they are today is just how much visual history is being created for tomorrow. All the experimentation is giving us a visual record of what hotels, public spaces, and even airplane seats look like today—and this will be interesting visual content for the future. That is, assuming someone at all these brands decides it is worth saving and preserving for the future.

The History Of Brands

It might seem like wishful thinking to expect notoriously short sighted companies to volunteer to maintain their own archives for historical value. When it comes to history, though, a growing number of brands are

taking a page from museums and already launching their own storytelling initiatives focused on retelling and preserving the past.

When 600 year old soy sauce brand Kikkoman commissioned a short documentary from director Lucy Walker to tell the story of its long history, many skeptics questioned the move. The film was called “Make Haste Slowly” and lasted a luxurious 24 minutes. The length (and topic) caused critics to wonder about its utility. After all, who would really sit down and watch a long film about the history of soy sauce?

When asked about the film, Morgan Spurlock (director of the product placement exposé film *The Greatest Movie Ever Sold*) agreed most people wouldn’t rush out to see a film on soy sauce, but also noted that “if you’re using this as a historical document, there could be some great storytelling to come out of it.”

The underlying desire to combine corporate history with great storytelling has become the ambition for other forward looking brands as well.

The motorcycle brand Harley Davidson recently launched a three part miniseries on *The Discovery Channel*. Delta Airlines is working with StoryCorps to interview customers and capture employee’s stories. Cognac maker Rémy Martin uses an interactive website to allow anyone to experience 300 years of brand history in a matter of minutes.

As more marketing teams around the globe shift their attention from promotions and advertising to storytelling and content – the brands with powerful historical stories are finding new ways to leverage their backstories and use them to engage consumers.

When longtime Coca-Cola executive Rebecca Messina left to take on the Chief Marketing Officer role at Beam Suntory – she noted “it was through our archives at Coke that I was able to create some of the best stories we created at Coke. What drew me [to the Beam Suntory job] were brands with insane histories. In a world where stories and authenticity are more important than ever, you can’t walk into a business better positioned for that world.”

Her vision which she shared in an interview with *Forbes* shortly after taking on her role is to take some of those iconic Beam Suntory brands – like Jim Beam, Maker’s Mark, Courvoisier, Yamazaki, Hakushu and Hibiki – and bring their histories to life.

The more brands I work with to add more storytelling to their marketing – the more I see them embracing their past. We are already seeing more museum-worthy campaigns and stories worth preserving far into the future as an important and fascinating homage to the good and bad role consumerism and brands have played throughout human history.

Careers Of The Future

One of the most fascinating elements of the *Preserved Past* trend is how it is inspiring new career paths and innovative fields of study. Take the emerging field of “Forensic Architecture,” for example, which involves combining everything from mobile-phone footage from regular people to the size of smoke plumes to recreate the scenes of human rights controversies or wartime actions.

The worldwide leader in the space, known simply as Forensic Architecture (FA), is led by 45-year-old Israeli professor Eyal Weizman out of Goldsmiths, University of London. He describes his chosen field as “not cold science. This is committed, engaged, citizen science ... people’s memory records, the grass records, the trees record, the plumes in the air record, the concrete records. Everything is recording in a variable way.”

So FA has pioneered ways of measuring these once dispersed records and merging them to understand what really happened in war zones, refugee crisis or natural disasters. The resulting reports are frequently used by prosecutors working on cases of human rights violations. They also create a rare portrait of the past that filters out the commonplace historical bias that comes when victors write the history of nations while looking backward after celebrating conquest.

Another industry of the future is “Digital Conservation” where teams across the world are moving quickly to catalog and save endangered archaeology from being destroyed by mass tourism and the rise of militant extremist groups.

Factum Arte is a team of “digital conservators” who are using a combination of 3D scanners and teams of young tech-savvy girls to take photos of historical landmarks before they disappear forever. In the words of Factum Arte director Adam Lowe, “the goal is 1000 people taking 1000

photos every day. The idea is you record vast amounts of cultural heritage. You have to be proactive and lay the grounds to record the data that's at risk, and do it fast."

Others like ScanLAB, a London-based studio, are using 3D technology to map underground worlds that would otherwise be inaccessible and make them accessible in digital ways. And several University based teams are exploring the practice of "Drone Mapping" as a way to create topographical maps of places that are either unreachable or extremely dangerous for humans to go. These maps are used for everything from helping guide archaeologists around shipwrecks to planning evacuation routes at large concert venues.

"Forensic architecture," "digital conservation," "endangered archaeology" and "drone mapping" are just a few of the up and coming industries that all deal in some way with creating a new model for preserving our understanding of our past. All of them are a symbol of the impact that this trend is starting to have not only on how we understand the past, but also in how many people might eventually make that journey a central part of their careers.

Why It Matters:

As a part of my work as a trend curator, I am lucky to be invited to many events where I see and engage with innovators doing things that are likely to change the industries in which they work. For the past 5 years, one of my favorite events consistently has been the Future of Storytelling held in the unique location of Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island in New York. The event gathers a menagerie of business people, creative artists, brands, technologists and other futurists engaging for four days in exploring the evolution of storytelling for businesses, change agents and creative artists. At the latest gathering, a key theme on display was how many of the technologies and initiatives driving the *Preserved Past* trend are fundamentally shifting how organizations tell their stories and engage consumers with immersive media -- augmented reality, virtual reality or mixed reality. The biggest takeaway from the event is that these tools, when used properly and not as a gimmick, can offer a powerful

new media to express, inspire and move people into action.

Over the past year, we have steadily moved from a natural fascination with the past to a multi-faceted quest to understand and preserve it on multiple levels. As new technology such as 3D scanners and drone technology start merging with mainstay disciplines like archaeology or architecture – entirely new industries and opportunities are emerging. We also have more ways than ever to preserve the history of our own lives through social media. Along the way, all of us are benefitting from the exchange with more ways to experience and understand the past as we travel virtually or physically through the beauty of the world. The past is becoming new again, which means our understanding of it can finally become deeper and it can play a bigger role in our current lives as well.

How To Use This Trend:

- ✓ **Preserve the present** – You may not have the ego to consider anything you do on an everyday basis worthy of saving for historical purposes – but we can all find ways to help support those who are choosing to spend time and effort preserving the present. Just be a consumer and evangelist for the information they save and the experiences they create.
- ✓ **Share the past** – Given the number of new tools available to appreciate the past, you can certainly make it a larger part of any travel experience and share that same experience with fellow family members or travelers. Using these tools can transform a place into a magical experience when traveling.
- ✓ **Feature your people** – Beyond telling stories of products or company history, employee stories can also offer a wealth of content to increase engagement with consumers and also making recruiting great people even easier. The stories can also help to share the evolution of an organization and be useful for PR efforts, archives, cultural lore, marketing and training purposes.