VISITOR
VIRTUAL MUSEUMS IN THE COVID ERA

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Training the trainers!

From July 6th to July 8th the VISITOR project held a 3-day Learning, Teaching, Training Activity in Belgium to cultivate the knowledge of trainers and education professionals who will take on the role of facilitators during the piloting of the project Results.

The training brought together the project partners and training participants who took part in a session of presentations, workshops, and Q&A sessions on the use of the 3 project resources: the digital library of museum content, VISITOR game and e-learning course.
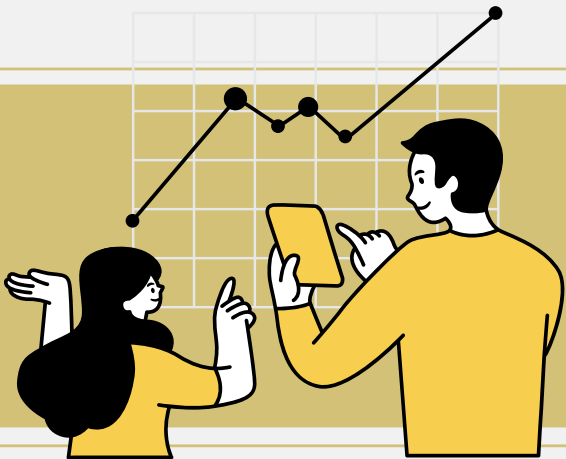
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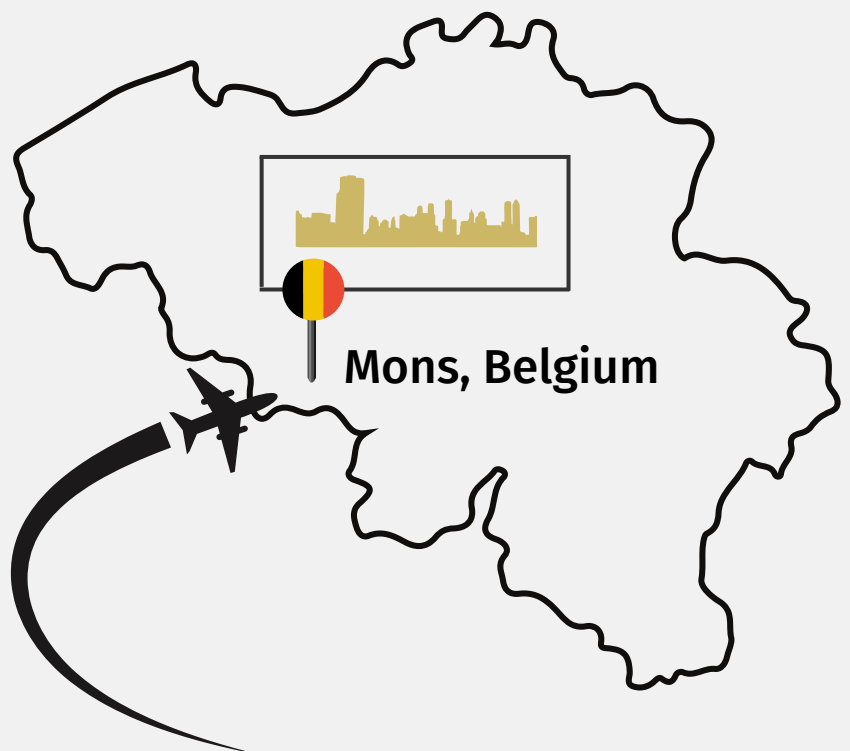
We thank the trainers for their participation and input and look forward to testing the project Results soon!

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*Check out photos from one of the training workshops below!*
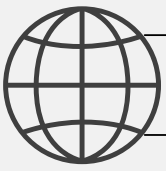
Let's hear from the expert

VISITOR has created a text-based game set in a virtual 3D museum space. The purpose of the game is to allow teachers to **use already-existing virtual museum artefacts or upload their own to design interactive quizzes in each of the exhibition rooms**.

We spoke with one of the project collaborators, Dr Maria Aristeidou, to discuss the features of the game and the pedagogy behind it.
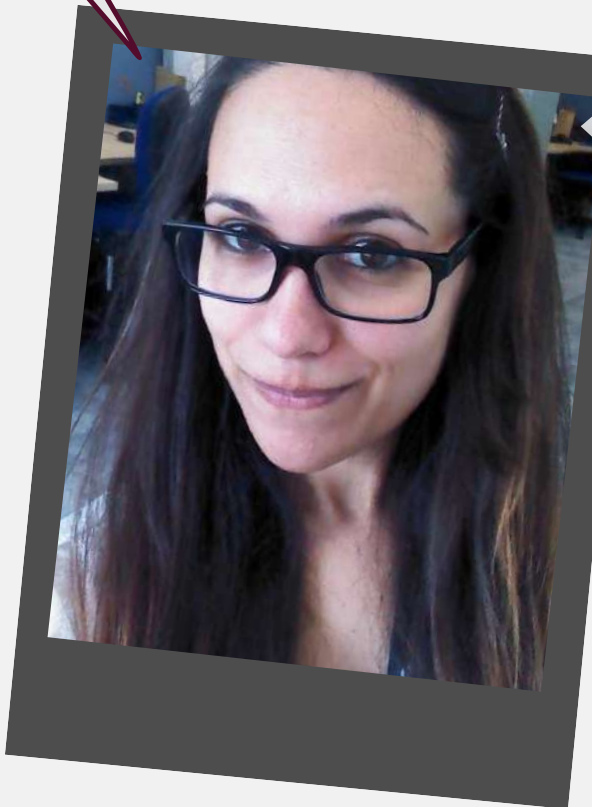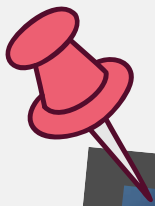
Dr Maria Aristeidou

Assistant Professor in Technology Enhanced Learning at The Open University, UK

Read on to get the scoop!

- **How have you ensured that gameplay still remains engaging for the children, instead of simply a game of comprehension?**

In VISITOR, we introduced several 'gamification' (playful) aspects to increase student motivation to engage. VISITOR challenges the players to **unlock all the rooms while learning**! Although the teacher coordinates the activity, **students are active and free to navigate and explore**, while receiving automated feedback and badges as rewards.

- **What are your two favourite features in the game?**

My favourite game feature is the teachers' option to **add their own selected pictures of artefacts** that they would like to display in one of the museum rooms. They can, of course, choose from the list with the suggested artefacts, but having the choice is always nice! My second favourite feature is **the museum map**. From there, you can view the different museum rooms and review your progress – which is essential for engaging students in visiting them all.

- **How have you made the game approachable for teachers who might be hesitant to use this tool with their classes?**

Before designing the game, the VISITOR team made sure to consult teachers in different countries about their needs and expectations of the game. As a result of that consultation, we added features that can **support teacher coordination or address a potential lack of time or confidence**. For example, we added integrated assessment tools and created learning resources and lesson plans for the teachers to amend and use alongside the game.

- **What is the greater potential and possibility of this game for pedagogy beyond this project?**

VISITOR is a simulation environment that allows teachers and students to visit museums virtually. Therefore, as with museum learning, the main aim is to i**mpact students' cognitive abilities positively, but also to improve their problem-solving skills, encourage questions and provoke imagination**. These transferable knowledge and skills can help develop lifelong learners with a love of culture and natural heritage.

Stay tuned for our e-learning course!

Wondering how to apply virtual museum activities to the needs of your classroom and curricula?

Based on a training needs analysis, the VISITOR project is in the process of developing an online training course for teachers that will **build on teachers' existing experience (or lack of experience) with using digital museum exhibits and other digital resources** with their students.
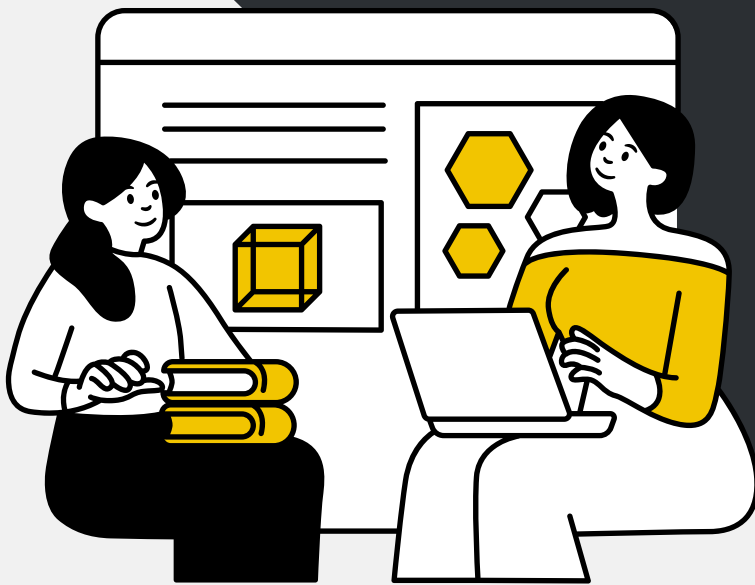
With the aim of growing the digital and pedagogical skills of teachers that would like to apply these solutions for their classrooms, the course will train teachers on how to **gather educational materials through the content of digital museums and construct a digital story around them**, leveraging both the VISITOR game and digital library of content in the process.

The course will be divided into 2 modules spanning 4 weeks. It will contain explanatory videos, presentations, a collaborative forum and interactive quizzes. The course will cover topics such as **cooperative learning and its different types, the legal and relevant use of museum content for class, and many more**!

To keep up-to-date on this project resource as well as others, please visit our website:
https://visitor-project.eu/

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