

A Teacher's Experience of the VISITOR app



As a teacher with over 20 years experience in three countries in both Primary and Secondary settings, I thought I have seen and done most things. But I have never explored a virtual museum that I could create and edit myself. So, I was intrigued with the opportunity to try out the VISITOR app which does just that.

Photo by [NordWood Themes](#) on [Unsplash](#)

In the app the user controls an avatar, which can be male or female. The avatar is located in a virtual museum space which consists of seven rooms plus a Director's office. Each room can be arranged with digital reproductions of museum artefacts, and each artefact has questions to answer when you move up next to it. The Director rewards you based on your scores in the museum rooms.

The museum itself is clean and bright and has exterior windows which look out onto a futuristic cityscape complete with flying shuttles. All of this adds to an immersive feel. The only thing that might not be considered realistic is the lack of other visitors, though this is actually welcome and gives the impression that the museum has been opened just for you!

The avatar standard gait is also realistic, but rather slow. This can be speeded up, however, by holding down Control along with the directional arrows, and almost certainly children would use this faster pace.

On the walls, the teacher can import images of paintings that she wants her pupils to experience. There she can insert a piece of text about this painting, which can be adapted depending on the age and attainment of the children. The teacher can then set age-appropriate quiz questions for the children to answer.

This app is a good way to help pupils engage with museum artefacts in an interactive way. It doesn't replace other ways of fact-finding and reading comprehension, such as Internet search engines and traditional textbooks, but it does bring these skills into a gaming culture that all children will be familiar with. The ubiquitous nature of online gaming with the likes of Fortnite, Overwatch and so on, even for quite young children, mean that schools do well to acknowledge that this is a cultural reality.

The version I played is still in development so we can expect to see further enhancements in time. When you get the chance, give it a go!

Mr. Chris Gilbert