Digital Strategy for the Museum of Dufferin

Executive Summary

This digital strategy outlines the steps the Museum of Dufferin will take to enhance its digital presence, improve visitor engagement, and support its mission of preserving and promoting the local history of the region.

The strategy will be aligned with the Museum's current goals for increased in-person attendance, improved care of collections, and more visitor-centered experiences. This document will focus on setting clear objectives, outlining essential areas of focus, specifying technology and staffing needs, estimating costs, and defining metrics to monitor success.

Current Digital Landscape

The Museum of Dufferin currently leverages a range of digital tools and platforms to fulfill two key functions of Museum work: storage/asset management and communication. These tools serve as vital components in preserving the Museum's collection and enhancing its ability to engage with its many and varied audiences.

Storage and Asset Management

1. **Past Perfect Web Edition**
   The Museum utilizes the Past Perfect Web Edition software for the digital preservation and presentation of its extensive archives and object collections. This software facilitates the management and cataloging of artifacts, ensuring that historical items are preserved in a secure and accessible format. The platform offers a web interface, providing online access to these records through the Museum's website. Visitors can explore the Museum's collection remotely, contributing to the Museum's goal of making Dufferin's history accessible to a wider audience. As the collection grows, it remains important to continue investing in proper digitization and management practices to ensure that all objects can be easily found, identified, and contextualized.

2. **Digital Archive**

   The Museum also hosts the Digital Archive, a custom platform specifically designed to make historical resources related to Dufferin accessible to researchers, historians, and the general public. This platform houses a diverse

range of primary sources, including local newspapers, photographs, letters, and other archival materials. The archive provides an essential service for those interested in exploring the history of the region, allowing them to access these materials online from anywhere.

Communication

1. **Website**

   The Museum's primary digital communication channel is its WordPress website. This site functions as both an informational resource and a platform for marketing and engagement. It houses details about the Museum's collections, exhibits, events, and educational programs, as well as practical information such as hours of operation, location, and ticketing. The website also serves as the central hub for the Museum's online presence, linking to external platforms like social media and digital archive systems. Going forward, the Museum could explore opportunities for improving the website's user experience, such as integrating virtual tours, offering more interactive features for visitors, or enhancing its accessibility.

2. **Social Media**

   The Museum maintains an active presence on social media through both Facebook and Instagram. These platforms are used for both digital marketing and audience engagement. Social media plays a crucial role in extending the Museum's reach, connecting with a broader, more diverse audience, and driving traffic to the website. As social media platforms evolve, there may be opportunities to further expand the Museum's presence or engage more directly with audience feedback through interactive polls or live streaming.

3. **Technology in Exhibition Galleries**

   The Museum has integrated a variety of digital technologies into its exhibition gallery spaces to enhance the visitor experience. This includes the use of video and audio installations, which provide dynamic storytelling and deeper context to the artifacts and exhibits on display. Video projections, for instance, may offer opportunities to showcase objects not on display or interviews with those who remember the content of the exhibition first-hand. This technology not only enriches interpretive experience but also engages multiple senses, making exhibits more immersive and accessible to a wide range of visitors.

In summary, the Museum of Dufferin's current digital landscape successfully integrates storage, asset management, and communication to support its core mission. The Museum's digital infrastructure offers a solid foundation, but there is ample opportunity to expand, innovate, and further enhance the user experience across its digital platforms.

Strategy

The primary objectives for the Museum of Dufferin's digital strategy are based on our overarching goals of the Museum's Strategic Plan (2023-2027).

As the Digital Strategy should support and align with the Museum's larger goals and priorities set out in the Strategic Plan (2023-2027), the five main goals provide context and foundations for the goals of the digital strategy:

1. **Become a Storyteller:**

    The goal to "Become a Storyteller" emphasizes the importance of connecting with audiences through engaging narratives. The digital strategy supports this goal by seeking to improve and leverage the Digital Archive and Past Perfect Web Edition to present the Museum's collections in a compelling and accessible way online. By digitizing and sharing historical resources, the Museum becomes a storyteller, not just through physical exhibitions but also in the digital realm. Additionally, technologies such as video and audio installations and the development of digital tours in the exhibition spaces will help improve the storytelling experience for visitors.

2. **Centre the Visitor Experience**

    Enhancing the visitor experience is central to the digital strategy, particularly with the Museum's website and social media presence. A user-friendly website serves as a gateway for visitors to engage with the Museum both before and after their visit, offering them easy access to exhibit information, event details, and virtual tours. The use of digital technologies, such as interactive displays and audio guides in gallery spaces, further enriches the physical experience, making it more immersive and accessible. This aligns with the Museum's goal of *placing* the visitor at the center of its offerings.

3. **Reach Out into the Community**

    The digital strategy contributes to expanding the Museum's reach through targeted digital marketing efforts on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, as

well as through content shared on the Museum's website. These platforms allow the Museum to connect with both local and global audiences, promoting awareness of its offerings and events. Additionally, the use of digital content in the Museum's galleries, such as videos and audio that provide deeper context for exhibits, can help engage and educate community members, drawing in diverse groups who may not have otherwise visited in person.

4. Safeguard the Collection

The Museum's digital strategy aligns with the goal to "Safeguard the Collection" by prioritizing the digitization of collections. The use of Past Perfect Web Edition for digital preservation ensures that the Museum's collections are securely stored and maintained for future generations. Digitizing materials and making them available through our online archive not only helps preserve historical records but also enhances access to these materials for researchers and the public. This goal helps secure the Museum's collections both physically and digitally.

5. Build Capacity and Foster Resiliency

To "Build Capacity and Foster Resiliency", the Museum's digital strategy focuses on expanding its digital infrastructure and improving staff workflows. This includes enhancing digital marketing efforts to increase brand recognition and audience engagement, as well as implementing a *Customer Record Management system* to streamline visitor interactions. These improvements help build long-term resilience by allowing the Museum to adapt to new challenges, such as fluctuating visitor numbers, by providing alternative ways for people to connect with the Museum and its offerings—whether online or in person. The implementation of these tools helps future-proof the Museum's operations and allows for more flexibility and responsiveness to both opportunities and challenges.

1. Digital Strategy: Define Goals and Main Objectives

1.1. Digitization of Collections

Improve the Museum's collections database by increasing the volume of digitized materials and making these accessible to the public through the Museum's online collections management software, Past Perfect Web Edition.

1.2. Increase Visitor Attendance and Memberships

Increase in-person attendance and membership to the Museum through the implementation of a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system that streamlines customer interactions and increases opportunities for visitor engagement. Use digital marketing, digital content, and digital outreach to drive physical attendance to the Museum, as well as increase memberships, school program bookings, and event rentals.

1.3. Enhance Digital Marketing Efforts

Enhance digital marketing efforts by creating targeted campaigns to boost awareness of the Museum of Dufferin's offerings and increase brand recognition through social media, email campaigns, and paid advertising. Expanding the Museum's reach by improving online engagement and offering digital content that attracts diverse audiences.

2. Digital Strategy: Identify Essential Areas of Focus

2.1. Collections Documentation and Digitization

Objective: Continue digitizing and documenting the Museum's collections to enhance accessibility and promote public engagement and research.

Action Points:

- Expand the existing Past Perfect Web Edition database, aiming to digitize and upload more artifacts, photographs, library holdings, and archival materials.
- Digitize the remaining collection, targeting a completion rate of 20% of remaining items by 2028.
- Continue the process of inventorying the entire collection. This involves ensuring that collections are tagged, indexed, and searchable for ease of access online, including updating their locations in our digital database, photographing objects without images, and updating their descriptions online before publishing them to the public-facing website.
- Transferring the outdated Digital Archives Database to two streamlined digital platforms, Past Perfect Online and Vita Collections.
- Scanning and digitizing local newspapers from Dufferin that are currently unavailable in the public realm and integrating this into the Vita Collections online database.

2.2.   Increase Visitor Attendance and Membership

Objective: Increase in person attendance at the Museum to rebuild membership base.

Action Points:

- Develop short-form videos, behind-the-scenes content, virtual tours, and themed blog posts about exhibitions and collections to garner public interest in the Museum.
- Share historical stories, artifacts, and educational materials on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook.
- Implement a CRM system that streamlines customer interactions and increases opportunities for visitor engagement.
- Use technology to create engaging interactives within Museum exhibitions, including videos, audio, and touchscreen capabilities.

2.3.   Online Marketing and Social Media

Objective: Strengthen the Museum's marketing efforts to increase visibility and engagement across multiple digital platforms.

Action Points:
- Develop and execute an annual digital marketing plan with targeted goals, including paid digital advertising (Facebook/Instagram Ads).
- Increase social media activity, with a focus on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube for visual content, storytelling, and event promotions.
- Utilize email campaigns to keep members, donors, and visitors informed about events, exhibitions, and special offers.
- Collaborate with local schools, businesses, and community organizations to promote Museum's offerings through their digital platforms.
- Better promote the Museum's digital tools, such as the Learning Hub, on the Museum's website.

2.4.   Opportunities for Improvement

Objective: Improve accessibility of the Museum of Dufferin's physical content with digital elements.

Action Points:

- Improved visitor interaction within the Museum by adding digital features to permanent exhibition spaces and new interactive technologies to our rotating exhibitions.

- Use technology to improve accessibility within the Museum's gallery spaces, including noise cancelling headphones, audio tour options, and tactile elements to exhibits.

Objective: Improve customer and donor management and tracking for improved

Action Points:

- Streamline several software and technology subscriptions to remove redundancy, reduce cost, and improve productivity.
- Implement a CRM that allows for the tracking of important KPIs that will enable the Museum to more effectively target specific audiences, connect to potential donors, and improve marketing campaigns.

Objective: Improve marketing and brand awareness of the Museum and its activities.

Action Points:

- Improve SEO practices to increase organic traffic to the Museum's digital platforms.
- Conduct keyword research to ensure that content on the website aligns with terms potential visitors and researchers are searching for, particularly those related to Dufferin's history, exhibits, and events.
- Implement SEO best practices for blog posts and digital content that highlight key collections and upcoming exhibitions.
- Produce high-quality digital content, such as virtual tours, video walkthroughs of exhibitions, and interviews with curators or local historians, to engage audiences online and increase brand recognition.
- Regularly share visually appealing photos, video snippets, and stories of the Museum's collection on social media to drive audience interest.
- Highlight user-generated content (UGC), such as visitor photos or social media mentions, to encourage active community engagement.

3. Required Technology, Skills, and Staffing

3.1. Technology Requirements

Digital Collections Management:

- Continue utilizing Past Perfect Web Edition for collections management.
- Add Vita Collections to allow a transition from the outdated Digital Archive Database and improve access to digital newspaper collections.

- Replace microfilm readers (2026) with new models to increase efficiency of digitizing materials as old models are no longer compatible with current computer software.

Digital Marketing Tools:

- Improve the use of tools like Google Analytics, Hootsuite (for scheduling social media posts)
- Add a centralized CRM for email campaigns that are audience specific

CRM Software:

Find software that works best for all the Museum's needs. The chosen CRM should include the following features:

1. **Donor Management**
   a. **Tracking Donations:** A CRM should allow Museum of Dufferin to track donations from individuals and organizations, categorizing them by amount, frequency, and campaign type.
   b. **Donor Communication:** Automated reminders for donors regarding upcoming renewals or end-of-year donation requests. Ability to segment donors for personalized messaging.
   c. **Donor Recognition:** Record milestones like major gifts and track donor recognition in newsletters, programs, and events.
2. **Membership Management**
   a. **Membership Tiers:** Ability to manage different membership levels (e.g., individual, family, senior, group memberships) and renewals.
   b. **Automated Renewals & Notifications:** Automatic membership renewal reminders and the option to renew memberships online via the website.
   c. **Member Benefits Tracking:** Manage member-specific benefits, such as discounts, event invitations, and exclusive content.
3. **Volunteer Management**
   a. **Scheduling and Tracking:** Ability to schedule volunteers and track their hours easily.
   b. **Information Storage:** Store information about volunteers, including their emergency contacts, Police Record Checks, and other relevant information.
4. **Event and Booking Management**
   a. **Bookings:** Centralized platform for managing bookings for school programs, event rentals, and tours. Ability to track availability, process payments, and send confirmations and forms.

       b. **Program Registration:** Manage and track participation in Museum programs, events, and virtual workshops. Automated reminders and registration confirmations.

       c. **Customizable Event Pages:** The CRM should allow the creation of personalized booking pages for different types of events (e.g., group tours, school programs, rentals).

5. **Integrated Communication Tools**

       a. **Email Marketing Integration:** Integration with email marketing platforms (e.g., MailChimp) for targeted campaigns based on donor, member, or visitor status.

       b. **Multi-channel Communication:** Ability to communicate through multiple channels, including email, SMS, and social media.

       c. **Data Segmentation:** Ability to segment contacts by demographics, donation history, or event participation for more personalized communication.

6. **Reporting and Analytics**

       a. **Donation Reports:** Generate reports to analyze donation trends, identify major donors, and measure the success of fundraising campaigns.

       b. **Membership Metrics:** Track membership growth, renewal rates, and member engagement.

       c. **Booking Reports:** Report on booking statistics (e.g., number of school groups, rentals, and tours) to assess program success and inform future marketing.

3.2. Skills and Staffing Requirements

Video Content Creation:

- Hire a videographer consultant to produce videos for larger campaigns, such as galas and events;
- Hire summer students and include the creation of digital media and blog posts to their job duties.

Collections Digitization:

- The Curator, Archivist, and the Assistant Curator will continue with the digitization process and database management.
- Summer student positions within the collections and archives will have digitization as a main component of their work term.

Communications Specialist:

- A full-time staff member dedicated to managing online marketing campaigns, social media, and outreach.

Technical Support:

- Using the County of Dufferin's IT department and the contracted services of Cinnamon Toast we will continue to develop the Museum's website and monitor its security, accessibility, and maintenance.

Digital Training:

- Invest in staff training and skill development for digital platforms and software to improve efficiency and digital literacy.

4. Cost Estimates and Timelines

4.1. Budget Breakdown

Item	Estimated Cost
Digital Marketing (40% of annual marketing budget)	$6,000
Customer Management Software	$8,000
Digitization of Collections	$5,000
Content Creation (Video/Graphics)	$5,000
Staff Training	$7,000
Total Estimated Annual Budget	**$31,000**

4.2. Customer Relations Management Cost Considerations

1. **Software Subscription:** Most CRM platforms work on a subscription model, with costs varying based on features and the size of the user base. We expect to pay between $1,000-$8,000 per year depending on the CRM selected.
2. **Implementation Costs:** If the CRM requires customization, we expect additional costs for setup, data migration, and training, which could range from $5,000 to $15,000.
3. **Ongoing Costs:** We would need to also consider additional costs for ongoing training, maintenance, and software upgrades.

4.3.   Timeline

Year 1 (2026)

Digital Infrastructure Enhancements:

- Enhance the Museum's website by improving its user experience and accessibility. This will include integrating interactive features, and improving SEO practices to increase organic traffic aligned with key terms related to Dufferin's history and exhibits.
- Launch a comprehensive digital marketing campaign on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube), focusing on brand awareness, storytelling, and engaging digital content like video walkthroughs, behind-the-scenes looks, and virtual exhibit previews.

Collections Digitization:

- Begin or continue the digitization of collections, focusing on prioritizing the digitization of 20% of remaining collections. This includes scanning and uploading photographs, local newspapers, and other materials not yet accessible online.
- Transition of the outdated Digital Archive Database to more efficient platforms like Past Perfect Online and Vita Collections. Ensure seamless public access to these digitized materials.

CRM System Selection and Customization:

- Select and implement a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system that will streamline donor management, membership renewals, and event bookings.
- Begin consolidating existing data (membership, donor, and booking information) to prepare for full-scale transition and use in Year 2.

Exhibition Digital Technologies:

- Begin integrating interactive digital features into the Museum's permanent and rotating exhibitions. This may include adding video/audio installations and touchscreen displays to enhance the visitor experience and engagement as well as new audio tours.

Year 2 (2027)

Full CRM Integration:

- Complete the integration of the CRM system with other systems such as the website, email marketing, and social media. Begin using the CRM for daily operations, including donor relations, membership renewals, and managing school program bookings.
- Provide staff training on CRM functionalities to ensure the system is used effectively for tracking visitors, donors, and members.

Expanded Digital Content Creation:

- Continue producing high-quality digital content, such as short-form videos, virtual tours, themed blog posts, and educational videos to drive engagement across social media and other digital platforms.
- Continue refining SEO practices and ensure content is aligned with audience interests, targeting potential visitors and researchers through optimized digital marketing strategies.

Collection Digitization Progress:

- Increase the number of digitized collections by 20%, focusing on uploading high-quality images and providing detailed descriptions and metadata for public accessibility. Continue the process of digitizing important archival materials, such as local newspapers.

Social Media and Email Marketing Optimization:

- Analyze the results of digital marketing campaigns, including engagement rates and website traffic, to refine strategies for reaching new audiences.
- Expand social media engagement across Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, using targeted content to attract more visitors and members. Develop partnerships with local schools, businesses, and organizations to promote Museum activities digitally.

Enhanced Visitor Experience:

- Focus on improving the accessibility of the Museum's physical and digital spaces. Integrate more interactive elements into the exhibits and use technology to improve the visitor experience, including audio guides, interactive screens, and other engaging technologies.
- Implement feedback tools and surveys to monitor visitor satisfaction and adjust digital content and offerings accordingly.

Final Digital Marketing Push:

- Create targeted paid advertising campaigns (Facebook/Instagram Ads) to increase brand visibility and traffic to both the Museum's website and physical location. Ensure messaging aligns with ongoing campaigns and Museum events.

Metrics and Evaluation:

Track and evaluate the following metrics at the end of Year 2:

- Increase in social media engagement (likes, shares, comments).
- Growth in website traffic and conversion rates for online ticket sales, memberships, and program registrations.
- Progress toward the digitization goal (20% completion of remaining collections).
- Increase in membership and physical attendance.

5. Key Metrics to Monitor

To track the success of the digital strategy, the following key performance indicators (KPIs) will be monitored:

1. **Social Media Metrics**
   a. Followers count across Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube (monthly report).
   b. Engagement rates (likes, comments, shares) on posts (monthly report).
2. **Website Analytics**
   a. Website traffic (monthly visitors).
   b. Conversion rates for online ticket sales and membership sign-ups.
3. **Digitization Progress**
   a. Number of images digitized (set target of 20% completion of remaining collections by 2028).
4. **Visitor and Member Growth**
   a. Increase in physical attendance (targeting 6,200 visitors by 2028).
   b. Increase in membership sales (targeting 100 memberships by 2028).
5. **Bookings and Rentals**
   a. School program bookings (target is 750 students annually by 2028).
   b. Event rental and tour bookings (target is 15 rentals and 30 tours annually by 2028).

6. Next Steps and Evaluation Methods

1. **Implement the Digital Strategy**
   - Begin by allocating resources to the key areas of focus outlined in the strategy.
   - Secure any technology or tools for digital marketing, website management, and collections digitization.
2. **Conduct a Needs Assessment:**
   - Review the Museum's current methods of managing donors, memberships, and bookings to identify areas of inefficiency and gaps in functionality.
3. **Select a CRM:**
   - Choose a CRM that aligns with the Museum's budget, goals, and growth plans, ensuring it can handle donations, memberships, and bookings in one centralized platform.
4. **Implement and Integrate:**
   - Begin the implementation process, including data migration, CRM customization, and staff training. This should be coordinated with MoD's other digital initiatives to ensure a smooth transition.
5. **Ongoing Evaluation**
   - Hold quarterly reviews of key metrics and assess progress against goals.
   - Gather visitor and participant feedback for continuous improvement in digital content and online programs.
   - Once the CRM is fully integrated, monitor its performance against the set metrics and make necessary adjustments to improve workflow, communication, and engagement.
6. **Adjust the Strategy as Needed**
   - Based on performance, refine marketing campaigns, program offerings, and the timeline for collections digitization.