

A Comparative Study of the Attitude of Museum Administrators in Thailand and the United Kingdom Towards the Role of On-site Digital Interpretations

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ABSTRACT

The use of on-site digital interpretations in museums is growing. While many have discussed the interpretations from different perspectives, few have looked at the attitudes of museum administrators towards the roles of digital interpretations – and, in particular, that between Asia and Western countries. This paper compares the attitudes of museum administrators in Thailand and the United Kingdom to digital interpretations. The author carried out in-depth, semi-structured interviews with museum administrators at four museums in the two countries to collect primary data. Significant differences in the attitude of the two groups of administrators were found. The Thai administrators used the digital interpretations to appeal to and attract today's youth, who have a strong affinity for digital technology. In contrast, the administrators in the United Kingdom used the digital interpretations to help visitors better understand the context of exhibits. For the most part, they did not suggest using digital interpretations as a means to attract visitors. These differences might have their roots in the different sociocultural contexts of the countries. Museums in Thailand targeted young people, who are not traditionally interested in visiting museums. Museums in the United Kingdom targeted the general public, who have a habit of visiting museums. These findings provide new insights on digital interpretations for museums and academia.

Keywords: Attitude, Museum administrators, Thailand, United Kingdom, On-site digital interpretations, Sociocultural context