

# The Viking Ship Museum Project Proposal

## Wireless Information System for Ethnography (WISE)

Paulo Fierro and Kham Viravong

The Information Age has brought about a new epistemological paradigm. In the new form of history, the foundation is knowledge in a *holistic contextuality* or “big picture.” It is higher level criteria which are augmented on “traditional” compositional data. In accordance with FORNEM (and a brief dialogue with Dagny Stuedahl), the project will categorize action as opposed to “representations of objects” and texts. In particular, FORNEM focuses on the use of video for documentation and archiving of cultural historical empirical material. The aims and objectives of this project will therefore emerge at a later date in consensus with Dagny Stuedahl and Terje Planke. is the application of mobile information systems technology onto the historico-cultural heritage of Norway – the Viking Ship Museum found in Oslo. In particular, the enshrinement of this historico-cultural heritage into several different media, this will be complemented by the “Traduction of truth” in “traditional communication” (storytelling and “conversation”). Hence the project name “WISE.” The envisaged information system would encompass a local positioning as well as a more “global” positioning measure. The system would most probably culminate with three types of tour applications through the museum; a quick tour, a “triggered” tour as well as a more comprehensive leisurely and educational tour. These applications would be built on PDAs, as well as other mobile devices.

There is a need for the revitalization and exaltation of the treasures and monuments of the historico-cultural heritage of Norway. To demonstrate one such possibility would be to bring the historico-cultural heritage of Norway out of history into the Information Age; of mobility and portability. The totality of which is as satisfying as it is profound. The idea extends to the omnipresence of a vast amount of historico-cultural information, whose ubiquity, in its many different forms and localities, has a far-reaching influence onto the historico-cultural awareness and consciousness. This would in turn, deliberate a more holistic comprehension and comprehensibility of the historico-cultural heritage of Norway.

The first application of the envisaged system is simply an “audio tour.” A very conventional tour with few (or rather, “the bare essentials”) media designed for a structured tour of the museum. It is aptly called the “turbo tour” and is intentionally designed for tour groups with or without a tour guide with a limited time. The technology involved is simply a small mobile device (most probably PDA because it is most portable and “handy”) connected to a wireless network with a pre-programmed exhibition sequence depending on the theme and language availability.

The second application of the envisaged system would be a simple receiver triggered by locality. Again the PDA would be the most relevant device, allowing audio, visual and video to be viewed “on-demand.” The target group would be those with more time and “real interest” in the historico-cultural heritage of Norway. The triggers could be GPS or RFID or Bluetooth, depending on the available technology and time span of the project.

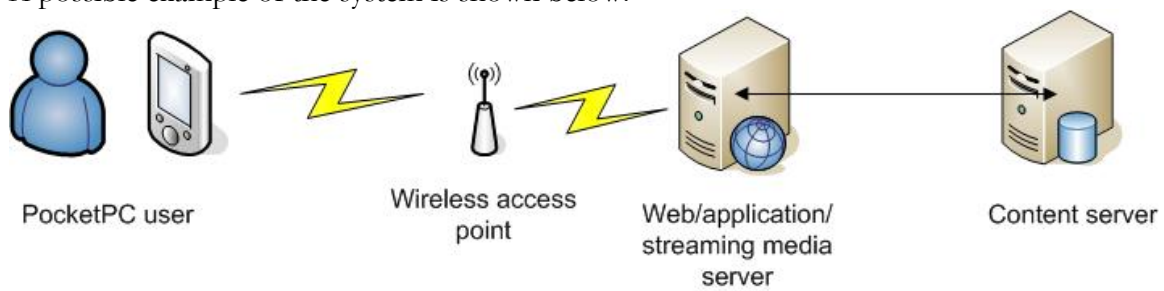
The last of the envisaged application requires the most in terms of resources. It is a comprehensive “local-area-positioning” and interactive presentation of the relevant historico-cultural exhibition-artifact in the direct vicinity. Furthermore, searching and finding historico-cultural information could be performed via educational questionnaires or simply queries. The tourist’s position could be measured at all times as well as the content queries.

I envision the project to be separated into three or four modules depending on the technology and resources available at the Viking Ship Museum and the University of Oslo

- The creation of a historico-cultural heritage database (or “infobase”).
- The construction of a virtual museum (floorplans and exhibitions).
- The implementation of a wireless network.
- The creation of “virtual tours.”

The inception of such a project is in essence ambitious and complex. Not to mention time consuming. The totality or rather, the “big picture” serves as a cynosure for the ongoing development; as any vision should. However, what is conceivably achievable in the perspective of a short course, such as INF5261, will neither realize nor materialize the system as a whole. Nonetheless, parts of such an endeavour should be manageable. I suggest further decomposition of the different modules in order to identify overlapping sections which should be materialized to serve as a guide for later development.

A possible example of the system is shown below.



In summary, the InterMedia group and the Viking Ship Museum itself must set precedence for a collective and conscious effort by providing the technology.