Christianity in Egypt

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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences in candidacy for the degree of Master of Fine Arts Computer Graphics Design

CHRISTIANITY IN EGYPT

SINCE THE JOURNEY OF THE HOLY FAMILY TO THE PRESENT DAY

Submitted by: Nevine Isaak

May 2013
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Signature of Author                                          Date
Christianity in Egypt is an interactive kiosk application focusing on Christian Holy Places since the Journey of the Holy Family into Egypt to the Present Day. It covers four main topics:

- Places visited by the Holy Family
- Places of famous Saints
- Churches
- Monasteries

In my design, I used a map of Egypt and a timeline to visualize the spatial and temporal coverage of Christianity in Egypt from the first century and till now.

For each Holy Place, the user can learn the following:

- **Description**: information to describe the place.
- **Construction**: information about the construction of the place.
- **Location**: information about the location of the place and part of Egypt’s map with the selected place located on it.
- **Gallery**: the place’s images with tooltip for each image.

For each image in the gallery, the user can learn more details about its significance and interact with it visually. For example, the user can zoom in, zoom out, rotate right, rotate left, and reset. Also, non computer-friendly users can have a guided tour inside the gallery’s images.

Positive usability testing showed that Christianity in Egypt application is consistent, intuitive, and user-friendly enough that users can interact and learn easily about Christian Holy Places in Egypt.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement

Egypt is a cornerstone of old world history. It is famous for its unique civilization. Therefore, as a part of the natural evolution of Christianity in the old world, Christianity touched every single place in Egypt. Due to the current state of Egypt, the rich and glorious Christian Heritage is not shining to the whole world as it should be. So, I decided to shine a spotlight on it by using a spatial and temporal coverage for the Christian Holy Places in Egypt. Thus, I can show my audience that the current face of Egypt now is not the only face it has. Egypt has a many glorious and sincere faces.

1.2 Project Description

This project is an interactive kiosk application that could be used in museums and libraries. It covers four main topics about Christian Holy Places in Egypt; places visited by the Holy Family, places of famous Saints, Churches, and Monasteries. A visual presentation of the spatial and temporal coverage of Christianity in Egypt through an interactive map and timeline. The timeline starts with the first century until the present day.
1.3 Target Audience

- Male and female
- People interested in Coptic History
- People interested in Egyptian History
- People who wish to visit Egypt and the Christian Holy Places but cannot due to the current political/social situation.
- Second generation Egyptians who were born and are living in USA and have not visited Egypt.
1.1 Summary

I did my research by using four sources:

- **Books:** Reading books about Christian heritage in Egypt, the treasures of Coptic art, Coptic museum, old Churches, Coptic Monasteries, and the Holy Family's journey into Egypt.
- **Websites:** Examining current efforts regarding websites that talk about certain Holy Places in Egypt and the visit of the Holy Family into Egypt.
- **Coptic encyclopedia:** which has eight complete volumes.
- **Personal experience:** as a Coptic Egyptian and a fan of Christian heritage in Egypt. I visited most of the Holy Places in Egypt and Coptic museums as well.

Based on my sources, I believe that my thesis topic is a new contribution in this area because there are no consolidated efforts targeting Christian Heritage in Egypt in digital format and specifically covering the Christian Holy Places in Egypt.

My thesis integrated the resources that I found with the technologies of Computer Graphics Design through my skills in order to visualize my data set and convey my message about the Christian heritage in Egypt. Therefore, I have enriched the Christian Heritage with visualization of the data. And, I have enriched the Computer Graphics Design with a new and solid project to use.
3.1 Work Process

3.1.1 Research

I started the work process by research. As mentioned earlier, I used four sources to collect my initial data and information about the Christian Holy Places in Egypt. Then, I decided to pick the source of my thesis data to be the books authored by my content advisor Dr. Gawdat Gabra who is an international expert in Coptic Studies. I also obtained permission to use his books and its content in my thesis project. By researching deeply in his books and making many discussions about the content, I believe that I collected a solid base of information that prepared me ready to start my thesis project.

3.1.2 Identifying Targets

In my thesis, I specified the main targets and the appropriate solution for each target.

3.1.2.1 Coptic Theme

In my research, I discovered that Christianity in Egypt is the real extension of the Pharaonic culture. For example, the word “Coptic” now refers to Christian Egyptian people but it is a Pharaonic word and it means “Egyptian”. Actually, Coptic people are the native Egyptians and the pure children of Pharaohs (Gabra, Gertrud, and Hedstrom 14). Also, Coptic people still have in their daily life many traditions that are inherited from the Pharaonic culture. So, I decided to use the Coptic
theme in my thesis as it focuses on the Christian Holy Place since the Journey of the Holy Family until now.

Therefore, I used a Papyrus paper as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.1.1) as a background to my project with the Coptic Cross as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.1.2) that has a unique shape. I also used the most famous colors in the Coptic art, which are beige, brown, and dark red.

Figure 3.1.2.1.1 Papyrus paper
3.1.2.2 Scalability

Scalability means that I can add and delete data easily without affecting the designs. So, I designed the application screens to be dynamic with respect to the content in the user interface. Thus, I used XML file to hold and maintain the data set as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.2.5).

Actually, I created the designs with no data stored on it. The designs only contain placeholders for the data as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.2.1), (Figure 3.1.2.2.2), (Figure 3.1.2.2.3), and (Figure 3.1.2.2.4). So, data is loaded and unloaded from the XML file.
Figure 3.1.2.2.1 Dynamic content in UI

Figure 3.1.2.2.2 Dynamic content in UI
Figure 3.1.2.2.3 Dynamic content in UI

Figure 3.1.2.2.4 Dynamic content in UI
Figure 3.1.2.2.5 Data in XML file
3.1.2.3 User Friendly

In my designs, I focused on consistency and tried to reduce the numbers of clicks by applying hovering and tooltip effects as much as it serves the design as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.3.1), (Figure 3.1.2.3.2) and (Figure 3.1.2.3.3).

Figure 3.1.2.3.1 Tooltip

Figure 3.1.2.3.2 Tooltip

Figure 3.1.2.3.3 Hovering over location button
3.1.2.4 Egypt’s Glorious Face

By data selection, I chose places that express the glorious face of Egypt.

For examples:

- Places that have monuments from the visit of the Holy Family into Egypt like Sleeping Mary Church as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.4.1), which has a cave that is believed that the Holy Family stayed in it (Gabra, Gertrud, and Hedstrom 124).

- Places of famous Saints in Egypt like St. Antony and St. Paul Monasteries as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.4.2), and (Figure 3.1.2.4.3) (Gabra, Gertrud, and Hedstrom 208, 220).

- Unique places like St. Simeon Monastery, which was caved and constructed inside the Muqattam’s Mountain in Cairo, Egypt as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.4.4) (Gabra, Gertrud, and Hedstrom 188).

Figure 3.1.2.4.1 The Holy Family’s cave
Figure 3.1.2.4.2 St. Antony’s Monastery

Figure 3.1.2.4.3 St. Paul’s Monastery
Figure 3.1.2.4.4 St. Simeon’s Monastery
3.1.2.5 Spatial Coverage

A map of Egypt is used to select locations that are in highly populated areas as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.5.1).

![Figure 3.1.2.5.1 Egypt's map](image)

3.1.2.6 Temporal Coverage

By using a timeline and selecting places that covers different periods of time since the first century till now as shown in (Figure 3.1.2.6.1).

![Figure 3.1.2.6.1 Timeline](image)
3.1.2 Design

The visual design and content were designed to appeal to the previously mentioned target audience. This stage had to be ahead the development and data selection for the project in order to maintain the consistency across the whole project. In the sections following the Work Process, I will provide a comprehensive page-by-page description for my screens and the functionalities involved in each screen.

3.1.3 Development

I wrote the ActionScript code and the XML format for the thesis project. Actually, I wrote hundreds of lines of code and about 3000 lines inside the XML file as shown in (Figure 3.1.3.1), (Figure 3.1.3.2), and (Figure 3.1.3.3).

```actionscript
// ------------------ Tool Tip Buttons Next Page ------------------
nextPage_mc.visible = false;
next_btn.addEventListener(MouseEvent.ROLL_OVER, onNextPageRollover);
next_btn.addEventListener(MouseEvent.ROLL_OUT, onNextPageRollout);
next_btn.addEventListener(MouseEvent.MOUSE_MOVE, onNextPageMouseMove);
pagination_mc.previousPage.visible = false;
pagination_mc.previous.addEventListener(MouseEvent.ROLL_OVER, onPrevPageRollover);
pagination_mc.previous.addEventListener(MouseEvent.ROLL_OUT, onPrevPageRollout);
pagination_mc.previous.addEventListener(MouseEvent.MOUSE_MOVE, onPrevPageMouseMove);

function onNextPageRollover(e:MouseEvent)
{
    nextPage_mc.x = mouseX;
    nextPage_mc.y = mouseY;
    nextPage_mc.visible = !smallRightArrowCover_mc.visible && next_btn.visible;
    setChildIndex(nextPage_mc, getChildIndex(tint_mc)-1);
}

function onNextPageRollout(e:MouseEvent)
{
    nextPage_mc.visible = false;
}

function onNextPageMouseMove(e:MouseEvent)
{
    if (nextPage_mc.visible == true)
    {
        nextPage_mc.x = mouseX;
        nextPage_mc.y = mouseY;
    }
}
```
3.1.5 Data Selection/Editing

After finishing the design and development stages, designs were ready to accept data. So, I started data selection and editing for both text and images depending on my research and fulfilling my targets.

In data selection, I tried to express the glorious face of Egypt and demonstrate the spatial and temporal coverage for Christianity in Egypt.
In photo editing, I exerted much effort and used my strong qualifications in photo editing to have a clean and consistent work at the end as shown in (Figure 3.1.5.1), (Figure 3.1.5.2), (Figure 3.1.5.3), (Figure 3.1.5.4), and (Figure 3.1.5.5).

Figure 3.1.5.1 Example for photo editing: Two photos for the Holy Family before editing
Figure 3.1.5.2 Holy Family’s photo after photo editing

Figure 3.1.5.3 Al-Muharraq’s Monastery’s photo before and after photo editing
Figure 3.1.5.4 The Hanging Church’s photo before and after photo editing

Figure 3.1.5.5 St. Pshoi’s Monastery photos before and after photo editing
3.1.6 Adding Data

After finishing data selection and photo editing, I started to add data text and images to the XML file as shown in (Figure 3.1.6.1) so that I can see it in my application in the run time.

Figure 3.1.6.1 XML file before adding data
3.2 Final Project

3.2.1 Introductory Screen

One of the biggest challenges in my thesis was the introductory screen. I planned to keep it simple and user-friendly as much as I can. I believe that I reached my goal.

The introductory screen as shown in (Figure 3.2.1.1) contains:

- Thesis’ title: “Christianity in Egypt since the Journey of the Holy Family”
- A scene depicting the entry of the Holy Family into Egypt.
- Start button: the user can start to interact and learn about the Christian Holy Places.
- Tour button: the user can watch a guided tour inside the gallery.

![Introductory Screen](image)

Figure 3.2.1.1 Introductory screen
3.2.2 Main Page

The main page has three main components as shown in (Figure 3.2.2.1):

- **Topics** as shown in (Figure 3.2.2.2)
  - Places visited by the Holy Family
  - Places of famous Saints
  - Churches
  - Monasteries

- Egypt’s map contains the locations for the Holy places with a tooltip for each place as shown in (Figure 3.2.2.3).

- Timeline as shown in (Figure 3.2.2.4) starting from the first century till now. The user can filter places in topics and on Egypt’s map by the date of construction.

![Main page](image-url)
Figure 3.2.2.2 Four topics to learn about it

Figure 3.2.2.3 Tooltips for places located on the map

Figure 3.2.2.4 Timeline with dragged brackets and numbering for the years
3.2.3 Popup Pages

As a result of choosing one of the topics to learn about from the Main page, a Popup page will appear as shown in (Figure 3.2.3.1), (Figure 3.2.3.2), (Figure 3.2.3.3), and (Figure 3.2.3.4) with some choices for the user to select and learn. The first figure below (Figure 3.2.3.1) is an example of the Holy Family’s Popup page, which has some choices for Holy Places visited by the Holy Family. So, the user can choose one of these places to learn about or click on close button to return back to the Main page.

Figure 3.2.3.1 Holy Family’s popup page
Figure 3.2.3.2 Saints’ popup page

Figure 3.2.3.3 Churches’ popup page
Figure 3.2.3.4 Monasteries’ popup page
3.2.4 Holy Place Page

The holy place page as shown in (Figure 3.2.4.1) contains:

- The selected place’s name
- The selected place’s image
- Four hover buttons as shown in (Figure 3.2.4.2) so that the user can read and learn information about the selected place like:
  - Description
  - Construction
  - Location
  - Gallery

Figure 3.2.4.1 Holy place page
Figure 3.2.4.2 Four hover buttons in St. Catherine’s Monastery page
3.2.5 Viewer Page

As a result of choosing one of the images from the gallery, the Viewer page as shown in (Figure 3.2.5.1) will open with more detailed information.

Viewer page contains:

- Place’s name
- The selected image
- Selected image’s title
- Navigator: small version of the selected image at the top left corner
- Some buttons with interactive functionalities for the selected image:
  - Details as shown in (Figure 3.2.5.2)
  - Zoom in as shown in (Figure 3.2.5.3)
  - Zoom out
  - Rotate right
  - Rotate left as shown in (Figure 3.2.5.4)
  - Reset
- The gallery images stripe as shown in (Figure 3.2.5.5)
- Arrows to help the user to go back and forth between the images as shown in (Figure 3.2.5.6)
Figure 3.2.5.1 Viewer page

Figure 3.2.5.2 Details popup to teach the user about the selected image
Figure 3.2.5.3 Zoom in button is clicked to help the user to explore the details of the selected image.

Figure 3.2.5.4 Zoom in and rotate left buttons are clicked to help the user to explore the details of the selected image.
Figure 3.2.5.5 Gallery images with tooltip for each image to help the user to choose

Figure 3.2.5.6 Previous and next arrows to help the user to go back and forth between the gallery’s images and pages
3.2.6 Tour Page

Tour page as shown in (Figure 3.2.6.1) is a guided tour inside the image gallery of the places. The gallery’s images fade in and fade out every 20 seconds. The user can choose to close this page and return back to the introductory screen at any time. Also, I used this Tour page as a screen saver to my project. So, if the user does not interact with the application for 3 minutes, the application will go for the screen saver tour. The user needs only to mouse-click or press any button on the keyboard to be directed back again to the introductory screen.

Figure 3.2.6.1 Tour page
4.1 Audience Feedback

I obtained user feedback through an evaluation form. The evaluation form asked about:

- Design: Visual style is appropriate for content
- Design: Visual style is consistent
- Information: organization of content and architecture
- User Interface: User Navigation (how do I get there?)
- User Interface: Readability of typography on screen
- Interactivity
- Usability
- User Friendly
- Overall Design

I received positive feedback from the evaluation results, such as:

- The users liked that they have different ways of navigation to learn about certain place by selecting from topics or by using Egypt’s map and the timeline.
- The users liked a lot the visual style and how it is appropriate for the content.
- The users appreciated how intuitive the application is in the sense of the guidance provided in different situations. For examples, some buttons and arrows are active and inactive in accordance with the user interaction.
• The users liked how the content is divided into four sections: description, construction, location, and gallery. So, they can learn easily.

Also, I received valuable feedback from the evaluation results, which helped me to enhance and add to my project, such as:

• Adding a guided tour for the gallery’s images. So, I can target specific section of audience who are not computer-friendly.
• Adding breadcrumbs to the project so the user can keep track of his location easily.
I have learned and enriched my skills in the following sense:

• Focusing more and more on the user:
  o Studying whom my target audience is.
  o What are my target audiences needs and interests?
  o How can I convey my thesis’ message to them?

• Enriching my interaction design skills:
  o Focusing more on consistency.
  o Adding different ways of navigation to the user.
  o Guiding the user.

• Studying my design decisions carefully.

• Enriching my development skills:
  o Managing different design components from the coding perspective.
  o Organizing big amount of data inside my XML file.
  o Writing generic and clean code that can adapt with changes in my designs.

• Persistence

• Time management
I have a plan in the future to my project, which is to scale up the project horizontally and vertically. Horizontally; by adding new Christian Holy Places in Egypt. Vertically; by adding more sections for each place.

In conclusion, I believe that I succeeded in the design and develop an interaction application focusing on Christian Holy Places in Egypt. Also, I covered different places from different periods of times and different living areas in Egypt. I expressed the glorious face of Egypt. Finally, I designed a consistent, intuitive, and user-friendly project that is attractive and easy to use by my target audience.
6.1 Thesis Proposal

Thesis Proposal for the Master of Fine Arts Degree

Rochester Institute of Technology
College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
School of Design
Computer Graphics Design

Title: Christianity in Egypt: Christian Holy Places from the journey of the Holy Family to the present day.

Submitted by: Nevine Isaak

Date: October 22, 2011

THESIS COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

Associate Professor Chris Jackson, Computer Graphics Design

_________________________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of Committee Chair  Date

Professor Marla Schweppe, Computer Graphics Design

_________________________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of Committee Member  Date
ABSTRACT

Egyptian Heritage is rich with glorious monuments and cultural ideas. Not only did being a history fan motivate me to shine a spotlight on the Christian Heritage of the Egyptian Civilization, but also, my affiliation and internal conviction about how deep the Christianity of Egypt is. Both temporal and spatial coverage is going to be tackled in order to show for the audience that the current face of Egypt now is not the only face it has. Egypt has much more glorious and sincere faces that can easily be unveiled if; and only if; we relate back our current behaviors to our original roots. For instance, Christian Egyptians are now called “Coptic” in the current Egyptian society which is a word from the Ancient Egyptian language that means “Egyptian”. By having such a simple example we can emphasize that the Christian Egyptians are the pure descendants of the ancient Egyptians. Thus, I will try to reveal many of relationships between the past and the present throughout the geographical map of Egypt.
This project will be an exploration view over the temporal and spatial charts of Christianity in Egypt. It will use the Christian Holy Places that carry a historic nature to locate on them the places and events that have a deep impact on the evolution of Christianity in Egypt.

Interactive and instructional media are going to be deployed in order to facilitate the access to the information and the navigation of the whole data set selected for this project. This project will be an Interactive and Instructional Piece of Multimedia that could be used as a standalone application or as a prototype for an Internet website.

Components:

The next figure will visualize how different components will interact together in harmony to generate a solid project about the Christianity in Egypt. I have 3 areas of inputs: Dataset, Technical Tools for Computer Graphic Design and Human Interaction Design. I will use each area in the amount needed to achieve the desired taste for the final output of my thesis.

The data set available for this project is rich in the sense of the amount of information and its value. But, on the other side, Christianity in Egypt lacks the digital content whether in archives or over the Internet. So, one of the obstacles for this project is to choose and digitize materials. Then, extra steps of cleaning and touch-ups may be made upon need. This thesis is going to contain selected pieces from the following sources:

1. Historical Churches.
2. Historical Monasteries
3. Journey of the Holy Family
4. Famous Saints
In order to attract the audience to complete a full navigation cycle to the project content, I need to emphasize on the ways that provide ease of access to the information in this project. Human Interaction Design for the user interface will be considered like the following methods:

2. Timeline for visual filtering for the places spotted on the map.
3. Visual Categorization and Filtering; e.g.: Places related to specific saint, or places visited by the holy family.
4. Image Navigator for the images of gallery that support: thumbnail preview, image zooming, image panning, and visual navigation inside the image.

Technical tool set is going to be used to achieve the previous. The project could be published as a webpage as well as a kiosk application. From the fact of the nature of the data set used in this project, I will need to deploy my expertise in image cleaning and touch-ups to make it suitable for the final output of this project.
Target Audience:

The following is a list of potential audience for this project. Usually, I target a combination of 2 or more categories in the following list. This is due to different ways provided so far for manipulating the data set and the diversity of the data set. But, this does not prohibit each category to be an interest by itself.

1. People interested in Egypt.
2. People interested in Christian history.
3. People interested in Heritage Documentation.
4. Virtual tour for Tourists.
5. People interested in digital material more than legacy ways of knowledge.

I aim from my project to give my audience a chance to learn a solid and diverse view about the Christian Heritage of Egypt. This will add up to the materials of the world knowledge in general. But, politically, I want to convey to my audience the value of Christianity in Egypt and how deeply the impact it causes for our present. Christians are not only surviving regardless of what they suffer from, but also they are as effective in their societies as their glorious heritage.

I believe that my target audience is going to appreciate such a project for a plenty of reasons. The lack of digital; and even non-digital, resources that document and cover the Christian Heritage in Egypt is one of the major advantages for doing this project. Also, the multi-approach for knowledge navigation that is going to be implemented will demonstrate a comprehensive experience of Egypt in these old eras. Finally, I can say that the nature of Digital Media attracts by itself new audience to the field of heritage if tackled in the right way.
Computer Graphics:

I will primarily use Adobe Flash Professional to build my thesis relying heavily on ActionScript, and Adobe Photoshop will be used in image cleaning and touch-ups to make it suitable for the final output of this project. I will use XML-Driven Data manipulation to achieve the project specifications. It could be published through Adobe Flash Professional as a webpage as well. If so, I will use some technologies like HTML and CSS to style this published web page.

Technology:

• Flash Player.

Testing Procedure:

I will perform functional and user experience tests by myself after I am done from each component in my project. Also, this test will be done at the final outcome of the project.

I will also try to get more feedback by testing it with Coptic history lovers and Egyptian Christian people who already visited these places in Egypt. They will be gently asked to fill out a short survey. Keeping in mind that this is a thesis project for now, changes may be added later in order to reach the target user.

The Association of the Friends of Ferdinand de Lesseps has donated a rare collection of digitized material to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. The collection includes documents, photos, films and maps. This was the principal drive behind building this online archive, in order to avail all the information and make it accessible to the public. In addition to the donated collection, books from the BA collection related to the history of the Canal's excavation as well as a description for the inauguration festival, are made available on this website.


The Description de l'Egypte was the outcome of the collaboration of more than 150 prominent scholars and scientists who accompanied Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798, and some 2000 talented artists and technicians. For over 20 years, they systematically examined almost every aspect of contemporary and ancient Egyptian civilization, producing 20 volumes of text and plates of unmatched accuracy and detail. Historically, these engravings became the most comprehensive record and inventory of Egypt’s land and monuments.

Today, with the efforts of the BA International School of Information Science ISIS, the preservation of the valuable collection has been possible. The 11 plate volumes, owned by the l'Institut d’Egypte, have been fully digitized, integrated on virtual browser and made accessible to the public through this pioneering endeavor.


This is a trial to establish the biggest digital library for valuable cultural and historical materials related to the modern history of Egypt; starting from the era of Mohammed Ali in year 1805 and ending with the era of President AlSaddat in year 1981.
These materials have been collected and digitized from collections of the private libraries of principle politicians and Egyptian authors. Also, some materials have been obtained from miscellaneous firms and groups specialized in the history of modern Egypt within the past 200 years. This is in addition to the archive of BA (Library if Alexandria).

The digital library is aimed to be the principal source for historical materials related to history of Egypt. Thus, it was designed in way that permits continuous updates with new materials once available.

**Coptic Cairo.** Federal Foreign Office, and Centre for international Migration and Development (CIM), and Braunschweig University of Art. n.d. Web. 25 September 2011.  

It provides a kaleidoscope of impressions on the Coptic Museum and historic churches in Old Cairo as well as various aspects of the Coptic heritage by means of multimedia: Panoramic views of churches, interviews with church fathers, virtual tours through the churches and Old Cairo, interactive audio-instruction for the pronunciation of the Coptic alphabet, reading of a Coptic script and photos of Old Cairo from the bird’s eye view. A selection of artifacts from the Coptic Museum exemplifies its rich holdings. Outstanding articles on Marcus Simaika - the Founder of the Coptic Museum, the museum’s history, Coptic language, monks and monasticism, art, music, customs and traditions reveal Coptic culture in all its diversity. The contributors are mainly members of the Coptic community who supported the realization of the website with great enthusiasm: The Bishop from Old Cairo, monks and nuns, fathers of churches and monasteries, professors from the Institute of Coptic Studies, curators and restorers of the Coptic Museum and Copts living abroad. All of them create a vital picture of Egypt’s Christian culture that is complex yet simple. A few contributions were made by Non-Copts who take a special interest in the Coptic culture either professionally or for its mere admiration.


Architecturally inspired by the Temple of Amon at Karnak, it houses the largest collection of Egyptian artifacts on exhibit in western North America including objects from pre dynastic times through Egypt's early Islamic era.
It provides collection-based research and learning for greater public understanding and appreciation of the world in which we live, drawing on the wisdom of ancient traditions and modern science. Its collections, public learning programs, and collaborative research are inseparably linked to serve a diverse public of varied ages, backgrounds, and knowledge.


The Royal Ontario Museum is among the world's leading museums of natural history, and of world cultures. Indeed, in combining a universal museum of cultures with that of natural history, the ROM offers an unusual breadth of experience to visitors and scholars from around the world.

On this website, you have access to thousands of photographs and summaries from the ROM’s collections, results of its research activities around the world, information on current programs and exhibitions, and means to download information, watch podcasts and purchase tickets to the museum and its events. You will also find information about its restaurants, stores and rental services for ROM facilities after hours.


MFA is one of the most comprehensive art museums in the world; the collection encompasses nearly 450,000 works of art.

The museum’s website provides an interactive tour utility that allows the to navigate, zoom, pan, and share images from the online collections.


The Egyptian Museum encompasses an exhibition area of over 15,000 square meters, and its current collection includes approximately 200,000 objects.

The museum is the principle source for the discovered heritage of the Ancient Egyptian civilization. The website does not provide enough information about the museum content and objects. It is very preliminary and using old techniques for manipulating images.

The website is not working. For visiting information you can check the following website <http://www.sca-egypt.org/eng/MUS_Coptic_Museum.htm>


The Greek Orthodox monastery of the God-trodden Mount Sinai is located at the very place where God appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush, beneath the Mount of the Decalogue. In the providence of God, it is at this site also that the holy relics of Saint Catherine are enshrined. This is the oldest continuously inhabited Christian monastery, with a history that can be traced back over seventeen centuries. The monastery predates the divisions of the Christian world, its origins extending to late antiquity.

This is an example of a self-maintained website for the monastery of saint Catherine in Egypt. It is isolated from other trials of heritage documentation and provides some basic information about this historical location.


Saint Samaan the Tanner was involved in the miracle of moving “AlMoktam” mountain due to the orders of the governor at that age in order to push Christian to leave their faith. It is believed that through the intercession of his prayers besides the entire Christian congregation the mountain had been moved after three days of continuous praying and fasting.

This is an example of a self-maintained website for the monastery of saint Samaan in Egypt. It is a good example focused on the evolution of this monastery and the service in this area in a good user interface.


The Holy Family tours introduce you to Christian Egypt, an ancient Christian tradition, ancient churches and monasteries, and different way of thinking which includes reference for dreams and visions of pious people, traditional Christian communities in different parts of Egypt rarely visited by non-Egyptians and the place of these Christian communities in an Islamic society. The website’s aim is to encourage all those who take part to have a greater understanding - not only of Christian traditions in Egypt - but also the relationship of Egyptian Christians in their society.

A fully illustrated book devoted to Christian houses of worship in Egypt. It is covering nearly all-significant Coptic sites throughout the country, from the ancient Coptic churches in Old Cairo to the churches in the monasteries of Wadi al-Natrun, the Red Sea, and Upper Egypt.


This book covers the history of the Coptic Museum and its galleries, the churches of Old Cairo, and Chronology for the Coptic history in Egypt.


Based on these sources I believe that my project is going to integrate a lot of the resources that I found and have the copyright to use with the technologies of Computer Graphics Design through my skills in order to visualize my data set and convey my message about the Christian heritage in Egypt. Therefore, I will enrich the Christian heritage with visualization of the data. And, I will enrich the computer graphics design with a new and solid subject matter to use.
Monetary

• $829.99 – Adobe Master Suite.
• $30.36 – Be Thou There: The Holy Family's Journey in Egypt Book.
• $41.97 – The Treasures of Coptic Art in the Coptic Museum and Churches of Old Cairo book.
• $ 35.00 – Papyrus paper

Time

• Research will be completed by September 24 2012.
• The application building will be finished by October 8 2012.
• Each stage will be completed in two to Three weeks period starting fall 2012.
• For details see attached Timeline.
Distribution Plan

• In USA:
  • Submit to SIGGRAPH.
  • Presentation in Libraries.
  • Present in Museums.
  • Present in Churches.
  • Present in Coptic Christian Communities.
  • Present in Heritage Documentation Organizations.

• In Egypt:
  • Present in American University in Cairo.
  • Present in Library of Alexandria.
  • Present in Main Cathedral of Coptic Orthodox in Cairo.
  • Present in The Coptic Museum.
  • Present in Coptic Christian Communities.
I began exploring this idea in my Authoring Multimedia Course last year with Professor Chris Jackson. The output as shown below was an Interactive project about Christian Icons in Egypt.

http://cias.rit.edu/~nsi7080/project2/publishedProjects/CopticIcons/Coptic%20Icons.html
Thesis Timeline:
Process Flow Chart:

1. Start
2. Intro. Page
3. Image Navigator Page
4. Single Location Page
   - Image Gallery
   - Location Description
5. Map Filtered Locations
6. Full Map/Timeline
7. Filters Selection
   - Time Period
   - Church/Monastery
   - Holy Family
   - Saints
8. Main Page
Copyrights:

I have the copyrights to use the listed books from the Publisher and from the Author.


From: nevine.samya@yahoo.com
Subject: Need your advice
To: gawdatgabra@hotmail.com

Hello, Dr. Gawdat Gabra

I hope that you are well. My name is Nevine Isaak. I am from Alexandria in Egypt. I am currently living in Rochester, NY, USA. My church now is St. Mark Coptic church in Rochester, NY.

I am doing my master degree in Computer Graphic Design in RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology). Now, I am thinking about a subject to my thesis for graduation. I am very interested in Coptic history in Egypt. I feel responsible to do something about Christianity and Coptic history in Egypt. I had a nice chance to see some of your books. Specially, *Churches of Egypt: From the Journey of the Holy Family to the Present Day*.

I need advice from you due to your knowledge and great experience. Also, is it valid to take the copy rights to reuse some material and photos from this book inside my thesis work(website)?

Have a nice day and thank you for your time …

Best Regards,

---

From: Gawdat Gabra <gawdatgabra@hotmail.com>
To: nevine.samya@yahoo.com
Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2011 7:30 PM
Subject: RE: Need your advice

Hi Nevine,

Thank you for your message. I am glad that you are interested in Coptic history.

I have known Abuna Shenouda since many years (Dr. Ernie Maher Ishak). Please greet him for me, and I recommend contacting him regarding your thesis.

I suggest that you may prepare your thesis considering the future project of the Coptic Monastery "of the Archangel Michael" that Abuna Shenouda would like to establish near Rochester.

Please feel free to use my books in your thesis.

All the best,

Gawdat
From: Gawdat Gabra <gawdatgabra@hotmail.com>
To: nevine.sam@yahoocom
Sent: Saturday, July 23, 2011 1:13 PM
Subject: RE: Need your advice

Hello Nevine,

Please know that in the case that you will publish your thesis or use the images from the books for commercial purposes you need to contact the AUC Press...Otherwise, you need only to mention the reference as usual.

All the best,

Gawdat

Date: Thu, 21 Jul 2011 19:17:16 -0700
From: nevine.sam@yahoocom
Subject: Re: Need your advice
To: gawdatgabra@hotmail.com

Hello Dr. Gawdat,

Sorry for bothering you again. I was surveying the issue of the copyrights and I am confused about if I should contact the publisher (AUC Press for example) as well as the author to get the copyrights permission for using your books in my thesis.

Could you please advice me about what is extra needed to be achieved by my side to be respectful and legal in my attitude?

Thanks and wishing you all the best.

Regards,

-Nevine

From: Gawdat Gabra <gawdatgabra@hotmail.com>
Subject: RE: Contacts to LUDWIG PUBLISHING INC.
Date: September 17, 2011 12:21:40 PM EDT
To: <nevine.sam@yahoocom>

Hi Nevine,

Thank you for your message and I wish you every success in your research.

The email address of Ms Carolyn Ludwig is: mrs ludwig@aol.com

It is important to let her know that your work will not be used commercially.

All the best,

Gawdat

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Nevine Isaac <nevine.sam@yahoocom>
Date: Sat, Sep 17, 2011 at 11:26 AM
Subject: PwC: Contacts to LUDWIG PUBLISHING INC.
To: mrs ludwig@aol.com
Cc: Nevine Isaac <ne7086@rit.edu>

Dear Ms. Carolyn Ludwig,

I am Nevine Isaac, postgraduate student in RIT/Rochester Institute of Technology. I am currently preparing the proposal for the thesis of my master degree in fine arts (Computer Graphic Design). Originally, I am an Egyptian Coptic citizen and I am so passionate about the history of Christianity in Egypt. So, I decided to do some research regarding the holy places that have been built in Egypt through out the history and I wish to use the book “The churches of Egypt from the journey of the holy family to the present day” as one of the major references in my final thesis. I hope to be able to use pieces of the graphics and information from that book.

My final published version of the thesis would be an interactive piece of design. As usual, my thesis would be used for demonstration purpose in front of college professors and no commercial use would be maintained using it.

I hope you could provide me the permission of using this book only in my thesis as you are the owner of the copyrights of this book.

Sincerely,

Nevine Isaac
Cell Phone: (555) 413-7082
nevine.sam@yahoocom
ne7086@rit.edu
--- Forwarded Message ---
From: Nevine Samy <nevine.samy@yahoo.com>
To: Carolyn Ludwig <mrludwig@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2011 9:29 PM
Subject: Re: Use of The Churches of Egypt

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your great cooperation.

Regards,

Nevine

From: Carolyn Ludwig <mrludwig@aol.com>
To: "nevine.samy@yahoo.com" <nevine.samy@yahoo.com>; "gawdat_gabra@yahoo.net" IsaaK
<gawdat_gabra@yahoo.com>; Mark Linz <linz@aucegypt.edu>; blludwig@aol.com
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2011 2:19 AM
Subject: Use of The Churches of Egypt

Nevine, thank you for your interest in using our book for your work. I am forwarding your request to AUC Press in Cairo to Mark Linz for their permission too. I give you ours under the agreement that you do not use our book for commercial purposes if AUC Press agrees as well.

Carolyn Ludwig
Sent from my IPAD
Dear Ms. Nancy,

My name is Nevine Isaak. I am from Alexandria, Egypt. I am currently living in Rochester, NY, USA. I am doing my master degree in Computer Graphic Design in RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology). Now, I am thinking about a subject to my thesis for graduation. I am very interested in Coptic history in Egypt. I had a nice chance to see some of Dr. Gawdat Gabra’s books.

So, I need the permission to use some materials from the following books inside my thesis. Usually, it will be a combination from the Photos and Data in a nice graphical presentation that will be included inside a college project as a website. The list of books are:

1. The Illustrated Guide to the Coptic Museum and Churches of Old Cairo.
5. The Treasures of Coptic Art: in the Coptic Museum and Churches of Old Cairo.

Best Regards,

Nevine Isaak

Tel.: +1 (585) 413 7082

She can of course use these photos with credit in her thesis...but not for commercial and/or internet distribution...
Early concept of the main page
Early concept of the image navigator
I have observed that the digital content is lacking Interactive and Instructional media in Egyptian history and non-interactive media in Coptic history. I will use the heritage of Coptic Christianity with the technologies and methodologies of the computer graphic design to achieve an interactive media piece. Motivated by being an Egyptian, Christian, and Coptic History lover, I will add a new organization for the content of my subject matter to facilitate the access to it.
REFERENCES


6.2 Copyrights

Below as shown in (Figure 6.2.1), (Figure 6.2.2), and (Figure 6.2.3) are copied from the emails regarding the copyrights from the publisher and the authors.

Copy from Emails:

From: nevine.samy@yahoo.com
Subject: Need your advice
To: gawdatgabra@hotmail.com

Hello, Dr. Gawdat Gabra

I hope that you are well. My name is Nevine Isaak. I am from Alexandria in Egypt. I am currently living in Rochester, NY, USA. My church now is St. Mark Coptic church in Rochester, NY.

I am doing my master degree in Computer Graphic Design in RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology). Now, I am thinking about a subject to my thesis for graduation. I am very interested in Coptic history in Egypt. I feel responsible to do something about Christianity and Coptic history in Egypt. I had a nice chance to see some of your books. Specially, Churches of Egypt: From the Journey of the Holy Family to the Present Day.

I need advice from you due to your knowledge and great experience. Also, is it valid to take the copy rights to reuse some material and photos from this book inside my thesis work(website)?

Have a nice day and thank you for your time …

Best Regards,

From: Gawdat Gabra <gawdatgabra@hotmail.com>
To: nevine.samy@yahoo.com
Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2011 7:30 PM
Subject: RE: Need your advice

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I have known Abuna Shenouda since many years (Dr. Emile Maher Ishak). Please greet him for me, and I recommend contacting him regarding your thesis.

I suggest that you may prepare your thesis considering the future project of the Coptic Monastery "of the Archangel Michael" that Abuna Shenouda would like to establish near Rochester.

Please feel free to use my books in your thesis.

All the best,

Gawdat

Figure 6.2.1 Copy from Dr. Gawdat Gabra permission to use his books in my thesis
Figure 6.2.2 Copy from Carolyn Ludwig permission to use her books in my thesis

Figure 6.2.3 Copy from Mark Linz (AUC) permission
6.3 Content advisor’s evaluation

Below as shown in (Figure 6.3.1) Copy from Dr. Gabra’s final evaluation letter for my work regarding the content in Christianity in Egypt’s thesis.

Dear Committee Members,

Mrs. Nevine Isaak has sent me a DVD containing the final version of her thesis *Christianity in Egypt*. I would like to inform you that she has been in contact with me from time to time regarding the progress of her work.

Mrs. Isaak has produced an excellent piece of work in many respects. Her choice of Coptic sites and monuments covers significant aspects of the Coptic heritage including *Sites associated with the Flight into Egypt*, *Modern Coptic Churches*, and *Monasticism*. The great event of the Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt continues to appeal to the imagination of preachers, and millions of pilgrims visit the churches that commemorate their sojourn in Egypt. Monasticism is the most important contribution of the Copts to world civilization. Moreover, Mrs. Isaak includes in her thesis a most venerated site by the adherents of Greek Orthodox Church: The Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai.

Her thesis demonstrates the richness of the artistic heritage of Christian Egypt using a variety of material culture of artifacts, icons and wall paintings in their context. The visitor to her project is also introduced to the history of each monument.

I am impressed by the excellent quality of the images used in her thesis. I am glad that the rich material of the thesis of Mrs. Isaak is easily searchable.

Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Gawdat Gabra, Ph. D.

Former Director of the Coptic Museum, Cairo
Visiting Professor of Coptic Studies
Claremont Graduate University, California

Figure 6.3.1 Copy from Dr. Gabra’s final evaluation letter for Christianity in Egypt’s thesis
6.4 Thesis Evaluation Form

CHRISTIANITY IN EGYPT (Designed and Developed by: Nevine Isaak) Evaluation Form

AN INTERACTIVE APPLICATION FOCUSING ON CHRISTIAN HOLY PLACES IN EGYPT FROM THE JOURNEY OF THE HOLY FAMILY TO THE PRESENT DAY

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Master of Fine Arts in Computer Graphics Design

User’s Information:

Name: [ ] Gender: [ ] Age: [ ]
Education Level: [ ] Profession: [ ] Email: [ ]
Nationality: [ ] Ethnicity (optional): [ ] Religion (optional): [ ]

Evaluation Criteria: (5 = very good / 1 = poor) 1 2 3 4 5

Design: Visual style is appropriate for content
Design: Visual style is consistent
Information: organization of content and architecture
User Interface: User Navigation (how do I get there?)
User Interface: Readability of typography on screen
Interactivity
Usability
User Friendly
Overall Design

Comments:


