



Profiles of Technology
IN TENNESSEE

Technology Helps Bring Appalachian Musical Heritage to Life at East Tennessee State University

Name:

Carroll Reece Museum at East Tennessee State University

Internet:

www.etsu.edu/reece/

Products/Services:

Interactive musical exhibit

Location:

Johnson City/Washington County

Leadership:

Theresa Burchett, Museum Director

Innovative Insight: *“Music has gone through so many phases, from people’s living rooms to radio to 45’s to records to ultimately CD’s; as music has progressed, so has the ability to communicate it to the world.”*

The Importance of

Broadband: *“Technology increases our ability to reach all different types of people. We’re going to be able to reach an audience that we’ve never been able to reach before.”*

Future Goals: The Museum is working to bring their entire 20,000 piece general collection to the public via the Web site.

Johnson City, TN - An interactive exhibit years in the making is making its debut at The Carroll Reece Museum at East Tennessee State University. The exhibit is possible thanks to technological advances that didn’t exist when the display’s concept was born more than 30 years ago.

“The History of Country Music in the Tri-Cities” interactive kiosk features an 18-page scrapbook designed to look like an old photo album. Visitors can access rare footage, photographs and musical performances with the click of a mouse. The display features two and a half hours of footage including performances by well-known country musicians whose roots can be traced back to Appalachia.

“There’s footage of Ralph Stanley, the Stoneman family, the Carter family,” says Theresa Burchett, the museum director. “Most of these videos have rarely been seen by anyone.”

The idea for the kiosk was conceptualized in the 1970’s by ETSU’s Dr. Richard Blaustein, a local author, musician and former director of the Center for Appalachian Studies. Over the years, the footage was transferred from old slides to VHS and finally digital format for the current exhibit.

“It’s not unusual that this exhibit went through so many transformations over the years to become what it is now,” says Burchett. “Music has gone through so many phases, from people’s living rooms to radio to 45’s to records to ultimately CD’s; as music has progressed, so has the ability to communicate it to the world.”

The Museum is also working to bring their entire 20,000 piece general collection to the public by way of broadband technology. “One way we would love to make our complete collection more accessible is by putting every piece online,” says Burchett. They currently display “Virtual Exhibits” on their website and also feature an “Archives of Appalachia” function that allows visitors to access information dating back to the 1700’s.

“Technology increases our ability to reach all different types of people,” says Burchett. “We’re going to be able to reach an audience that we’ve never been able to reach before.”

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