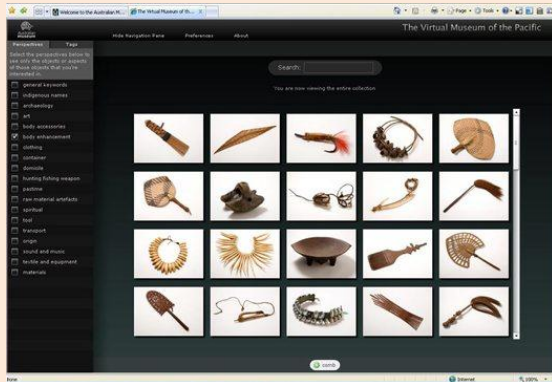


## ***Virtual Museum of the Pacific (VMP) Project***

Australian Museum



### *Reconnecting with Culture Online*

The Australian Museum is reconnecting diaspora and creator communities from the Pacific with intangible and material heritage lost in the colonial period. The museum holds about 60,000 ethnographic objects from Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia and is

working closely with Pacific communities to enhance engagement and access using these collections.

More recently, the museum has collaborated with the University of Wollongong to provide an interactive web-based access tool - the *Virtual Museum of the Pacific* - that will enable the Museum to unlock its world-renowned Pacific Collection to a global audience and allow a range of stakeholders to interact with these collections.

The building blocks of the Virtual Museum of the Pacific are high quality digital images, including some three-dimensional images, and comprehensive data records about the objects from the collection database. The images and data will be accessed through innovative navigational tools, which will cluster similar objects based on associative descriptors such as materials, techniques and provenance and display them using an attractive interface.

The social media component of the platform will enable Pacific Island community members, researchers, and the general public to add comments, discuss objects and upload their own stories, images and even videos. The Museum is aiming to build strong collaborations with Pacific Island communities and cultural institutions as well as investigate local technologies (such as improved internet access) to support engagement in this virtual platform.

Although this project is still a pilot, the collaboration is revealing interesting insights and it is already clear that the perspective of the communities of origin will enrich our understanding of cultural items in the collections.

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/BlogPost/Science-Bytes/Virtual-Museum-of-the-Pacific>