



## Autodesk Powers 3D Explorer for Smithsonian Institution

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*First-of-its-Kind 3D Educational Tool Allows the Public to Interact with Rare Artifacts and Scientific Specimens Like Never Before*

WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 13, 2013-- [Autodesk, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ:ADSK) and [the Smithsonian](#) today debuted the [Smithsonian x3D Explorer](#), an interactive 3D educational tool accessible to anyone via the web. Autodesk built the tool exclusively for the Smithsonian to democratize access to prized specimens and to bring their stories to life. The public can now experience priceless objects digitized by the Smithsonian like never before, from seeing “behind the glass” to holding 3D printed replicas.



A 3D digital model of this buddha provides a detailed look at the inscriptions that were otherwise difficult to read on the original artifact. (Photo: Business Wire)

3D technology is beginning to revolutionize museums in the same way it has revolutionized entertainment, manufacturing, and architecture, and the Smithsonian aims to be at the forefront of this transformation.

“Capturing digital 3D models of our vast and complex collections of artifacts is a major priority,” said Gunter Waibel, head of the Smithsonian Digitization Program Office. “Working with Autodesk we can now share our collections with more people than we could ever reach before. It is our hope that the Smithsonian x3D Explorer will enhance education and research in ways we haven’t even imagined.”

Autodesk actively supports a variety of museums and national heritage organizations with its reality computing technology to help preserve and protect cultural heritage artifacts, structures and even fossils. Creating detailed 3D models means that some of the world’s most prized artifacts and scientific specimens housed in the Smithsonian collection will be preserved and made available to the world, enhancing education and research for generations to come. Less than 1% of the Smithsonian’s collection is on display at any time, and some objects in their collection will never be on display. The ability to showcase objects digitally opens up a world of education and exploration like never before. While a significant amount of the organization’s “flat” objects such as photos or documents have been digitized, most Smithsonian collections are of 3D objects. Autodesk worked with the Smithsonian to create an entire web experience: a museum online complete with a gallery, guided tours, research data, and a 3D object explorer. The x3D Explorer launches with 3D models of 21 representative objects from its collection.

“We’re honored to have played a role in preserving such invaluable pieces of history and humanity,” said [Amar Hanspal](#), senior vice president at Autodesk. “We hope that exploring these priceless artifacts, heirlooms, fossils and scientific specimens in 3D will generate more public interest and learning around science and technology – especially among students.”

The Smithsonian’s x3D Explorer’s stunning 3D models of historic treasures and scientific specimens are available for anyone for free to view, study, interact, visually manipulate, and share. Many of the 3D models are available to download for personal and educational use, including the ability to produce physical objects using 3D printing. For example, classrooms around the globe can now work with educational replicas of these artifacts, and hopefully encourage further interest students to explore the vast collections of science, technology, engineering and anthropology that is captured at the Smithsonian.

The Smithsonian Digitization Program Office is chartered with digitizing as much of the Smithsonian’s collections as possible, and the scale of the collection presents a significant challenge. The office relied on [Autodesk ReCap](#) and [Autodesk Maya](#) solutions to easily and quickly capture artifacts with photos and turn them into detailed 3D models that can be viewed in “Hollywood style” quality with the x3D Explorer.

### About Autodesk

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