

HOW MEDICINE BECAME MODERN: BEYOND THE WALLS

James Edmonson

Chief Curator, Dittrick Medical History Center and Museum, Cleveland, Ohio USA

The Dittrick Museum resides in a mixed community; located on a university campus, we are also situated among some of the poorer neighborhoods of our city. Having been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities grant (NEH) for an in-gallery touch screen exhibit, we wanted to take the history of medicine into a digital space.

The *How Medicine Became Modern* interactive chooses objects that tell unique stories that open up a window into lived experience and also the ethics of treatment and care then and now. The Carbolic Acid Sprayer, for instance, allows a visitor to delve into the history of germ theory's acceptance -why did it take so long, and how did the assassination of a US president bring antiseptic medicine into public discussion? Other artifacts featured in the interactive ask questions about gender and medicine, vaccines and treatment, and much more.

In order to really engage our public, though, we felt it was necessary to use technology to both enhance the museum visitor's gallery experience, and to take the museum itself out of our building in a virtual way. For the gallery visitor, we have developed the *Dittrick Museum navigator* app that offers an audio commentary by museum staff that complements the permanent static museum displays. Additionally, we are taking the museum "outside" by installing a clone of our interactive touch screen exhibit, *How Medicine Became Modern*, at the new Health Education Campus of Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Clinic. This site will accommodate the students of CWRU's school of

medicine as well as those of the Lerner College of Medicine of the Cleveland Clinic. It will also be home to the dentistry, nursing, and physician assistant programs of Case Western Reserve University (CWRU). These student populations may be the core audience, but members of the general public visiting the clinics associated with the Health Education Campus will also be able to experience the Dittrick in a virtual fashion by interacting with the touch screen display. In this presentation I will talk about how, as a small museum, we are using new technologies to connect with new audiences and to promote public discussion of health and medicine "beyond the walls."