

Contact:

Isabel Morales, isabel.morales@msichicago.org, (773) 947-6003
Warren Stokes, warren.stokes@msichicago.org, (773) 753-6230

MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY AWARDED \$225,000 TO DIGITIZE COLLECTION, PROVIDING PUBLIC ACCESS TO THOUSANDS OF ARTIFACTS

New online resource will be accessible to the public including researchers, entrepreneurs, educators and students for the first time

CHICAGO (August 6, 2020)—The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI) has been awarded a \$225,782 grant to digitize a significant portion of its 35,000+ artifacts. The Museums for America grant, awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), will allow MSI to build a new online collections website that provides unprecedented free public access to 7,000 artifacts from the Museum’s Collection for the first time ever.

“The Museum’s Collection is a hidden resource which documents an ongoing story of scientific and technological developments,” said Kathleen McCarthy, director of collections. “These artifacts will be accessible globally, allowing us to better serve current and new audiences like never before in MSI’s 87-year history.”

A selection of artifacts in the digital collections will include high-resolution 360-degree photography, 3D models, and in-operation videos. In addition, a key part of this project will be preserving the story of an artifact’s functionality to make it more useful for researchers, entrepreneurs, educators and students.

In addition to academic researchers and the public, students and teachers will be a key focus for the digital collections, integrating digital artifacts and sets into MSI-developed NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards)-based teacher training and educator resources. It will also increase access for underserved audiences and those with physical and sensory disabilities with a goal of using digital resources to enhance learning and support guests’ in-museum experiences.

The two-year project will begin in September, with help from Chicago Public Schools teachers who will provide input on which artifacts to include in the digital collections. This first round of artifacts will embody “bold beginnings” and represent transformative inventions, experiments and explorations that have shaped our lives.

About MSI’s Collection

MSI is home to more than 35,000 artifacts—from an “unassuming metal can” used in experiments by Robert Millikan to determine the charge of an electron, work that won a Nobel Prize, to an 1880s form of sustainable energy, a treadmill for dogs used to power farm equipment. It includes transportation artifacts such as the captured WWII German U-505 submarine; experimental glider models designed and commissioned by Octave

Chanute, aviation pioneer and mentor to the Wright Brothers; and a Jones Live Map Meter, a 1910 analog precursor to GPS. These artifacts and the thousands of others document the human ingenuity used to explore our world, solve big challenges and build a better future.

The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI), one of the largest science museums in the world, offers world-class and uniquely interactive experiences that inspire inventive genius and foster curiosity. From groundbreaking and award-winning exhibits that can't be found anywhere else, to hands-on opportunities that make you the scientist—a visit to MSI is where fun and learning mix. Through its Welcome to Science Initiative, the Museum offers a variety of student, teacher and family programs that make a difference in communities and contribute to MSI's larger vision: to inspire and motivate children to achieve their full potential in science, technology, medicine and engineering. The Museum is grateful for the support of its donors and guests, who make its work possible. MSI is also supported in part by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, visit msichicago.org or call (773) 684-1414.