

Louvre and Nintendo aim to make art child's play

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Paris's Louvre museum is seen in October 2011. The Louvre said Thursday it has teamed up with Nintendo to hand out 3D game consoles to guide visitors through its vast art collections, as part of a stepped up digital drive at the Paris museum.

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Starting in March, the world's most visited museum will gradually replace its traditional audio-guides -- used by just four percent of its 8.5 million annual visitors -- with 3DS pocket consoles.

"We are the first museum in the world to do this," Agnes Alfandari, museum's head of multimedia told AFP.

The Japanese giant [Nintendo](#) is supplying 5,000 of the latest-generation consoles, which offer 3D vision without the need for special glasses, as part of a partnership with the museum.

Visitors will be able to locate themselves within the Louvre, choose themed itineraries including special ones for children, and listen to hundreds of recorded commentaries, in seven languages, about the works on display.

Nintendo has developed the content for the consoles, with the Louvre remaining in editorial control, Alfandari said.

Museum officials believe the scheme will appeal to people who are used to playing on a console at home, and are happier using a [touch screen](#) than a conventional audio-guide.

The Louvre has also just revamped its website, the world's fourth most visited after New York's Metropolitan Museum and [Museum](#) of Modern Art and the London Tate, to make it "more welcoming," Alfandari said.

Updated smartphone and new iPad applications are also in the works and in the coming months [mobile users](#) will be able to download paid-for content to plan their visit.

"Digital development has become a strategic issue for museums," the Louvre's director Henri Loyrette, told a press conference.

"People's habits have changed. But that offers us a huge opportunity to extend the museum's territory, and build a lasting relationship with our visitors."

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