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Rare Books Through Innovative Tech

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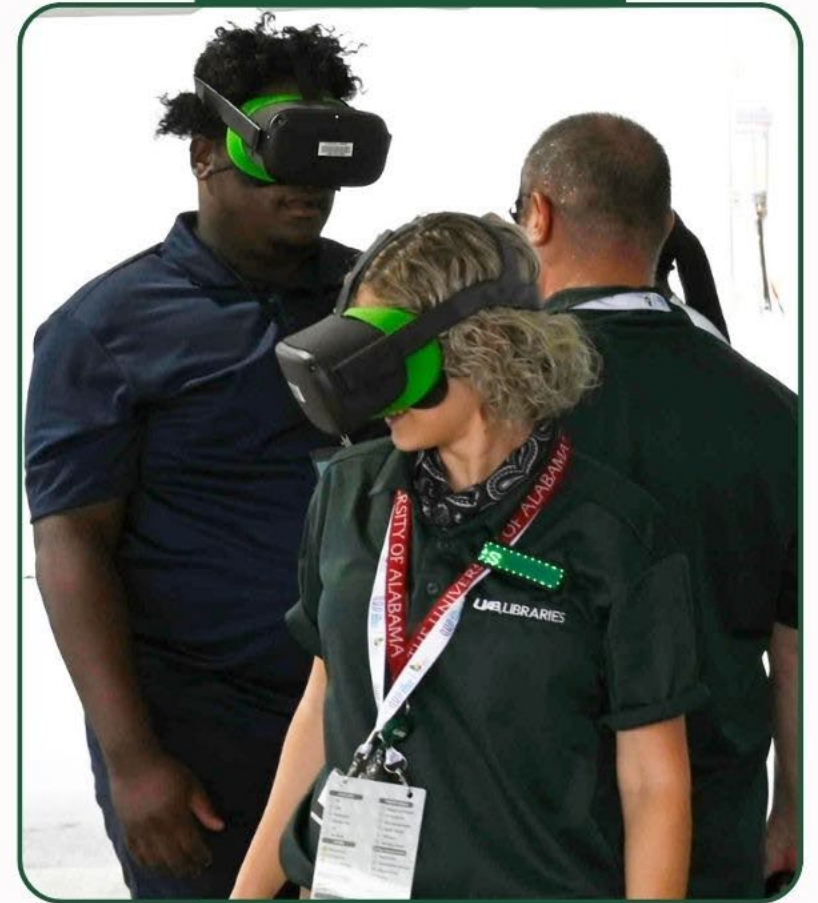
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RARE BOOKS THROUGH INNOVATIVE TECH

By Anna Kaetz, Digital Strategy &
Metadata Librarian, UAB Libraries



Objectives

Objective 1

Highlight the purpose and function of the Reynolds-Finley Historical Library (RFHL)

Objective 2

Discuss the top digital strategies for RFHL

Objective 3

Showcase some of the interactive technology used to promote collections and enhance exhibits

Objective 4

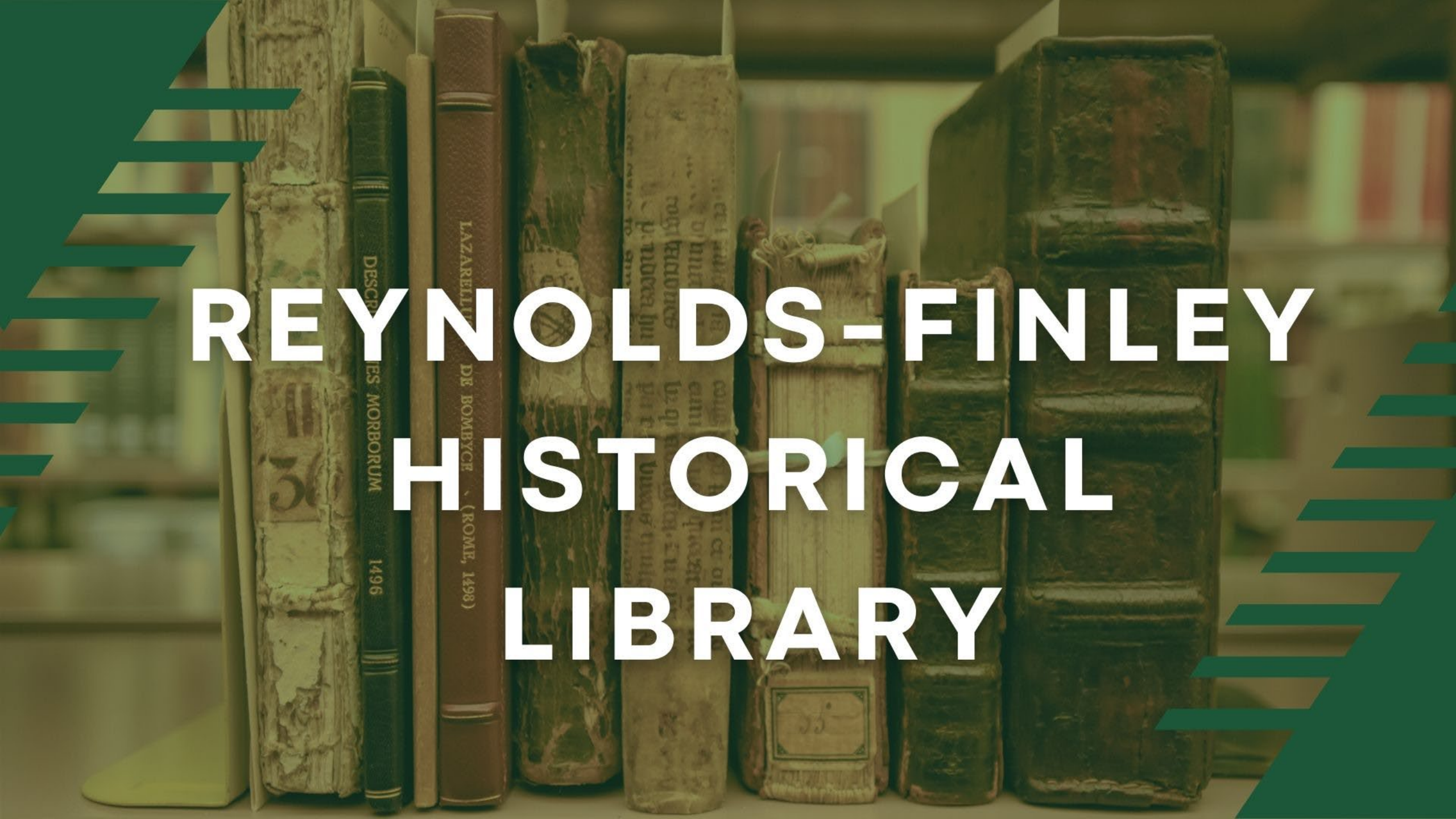
Provide usage statistics when possible for technology in exhibits

Objective 5

Discuss next steps and potential projects for RFHL



RFHL



**REYNOLDS-FINLEY
HISTORICAL
LIBRARY**

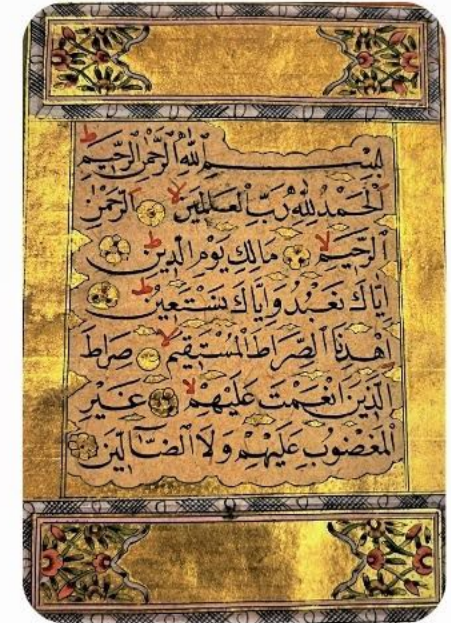
Reynolds-Finley Historical Library



A collection of over 20,000 rare books and manuscripts related to the history of the health sciences



This collection holds many important works, including 7 Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts dating back to the mid-14th century and 31 Incunabula



A diverse collection that highlights various perspectives including a Middle East collection, an African-American Medical collection, and more

Mission of RFHL

- 1) Actively supports the advancement of pedagogy and especially as it pertains to the history of the health sciences, the medical humanities and the history of the book and print culture
- 2) Supplements the university curriculum by hosting classes and supporting student projects focusing on the collection
- 3) Engages users through tours, events, research support and exhibits featuring the collection
- 4) Provides funding via a fellowship for both the UAB community and for traveling researchers to use collection resources



Digital Strategy Goals for RFHL

1)

To ensure the physical
preservation and security
of the collection

2)

To provide access to RFHL
through robust digital
collections and virtual exhibits
for remote users

3)

To investigate and implement
emerging technologies to better
showcase the collection

4)

To utilize interactive technology
in exhibits and displays to
enhance user engagement



**TECHNOLOGY
IN RFHL**

DESCRIPTIONES MORBORUM

1496

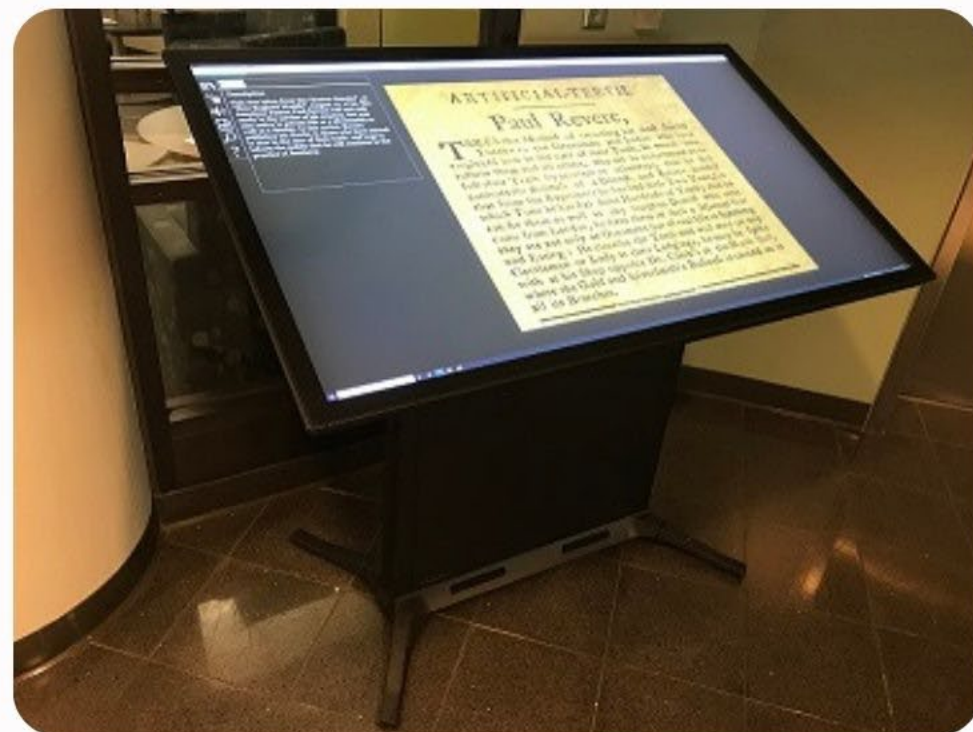
LAZARELLUS

BOMBYCE (ROME, 1498)

TURNING THE PAGES



Hortus Sanitatis...



U&B
LIBRARIES



Turning the Pages

- A software that allows users to interactively flip through rare books via a touchscreen
- A useful tool to provide an interactive experience to users while also preserving the physical material
- Can supplement digitized materials by embedding different media formats such as video/audio clips, transcriptions, photographs, etc.
- Can run on a web browser or in offline kiosk mode depending on internet access
- The software package includes a separate accessible platform designed for the visually impaired

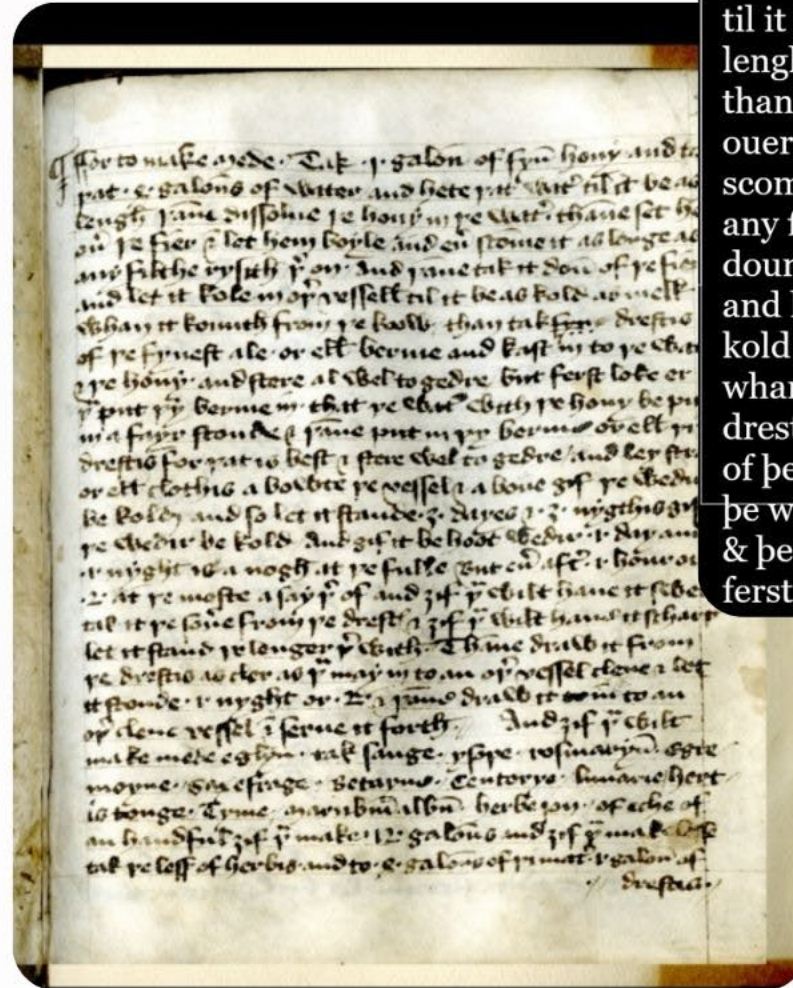
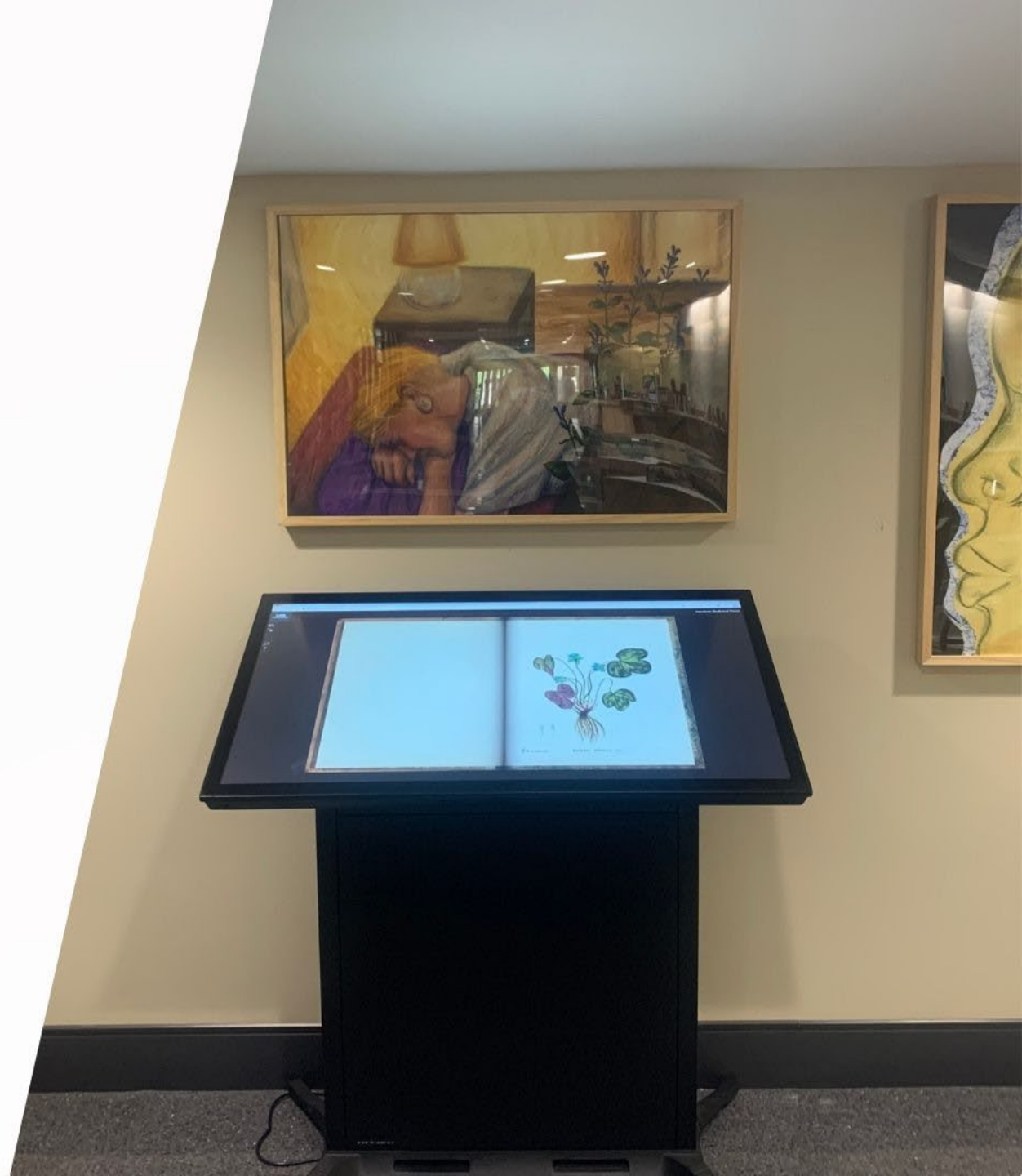


Image taken from a thirteenth-century manuscript, *Tractatus de Magnetate et Operationibus eius*, by Petrus Peregrinus, held in RFHL

Description	Transcript
Leaf 20 recto	//ffor to make mede. Tak .i. galoun of fyne hony and to pat .4. galouns of water and hete þat water til it be as lenth þanne dissolve þe hony in þe water. thanne set hem ouer þe fier & let hem boyle and ever scomme it as longe as any filthe rysith þer on. and þanne tak it doun of þe fier and let it kole in oþer vesselle til it be as kold as melk whan it komith from þe koow. than tak drestis of þe fynest ale or elles berme and kast in to þe water & þe hony. and stere al wel to gedre but first loke er

TURNING THE PAGES IN LIBRARY EXHIBITS

- Adds an additional dimension to materials by allowing users to better explore the physical items exhibited
- Projected on a large screen kiosk to attract more attention to the exhibit
- In offline mode, provides usage statistics to better track user engagement
- Within an exhibit that featured TTP, over 700 interactions (item/video selection, item load, page turning, etc.) were registered



Turning the Pages in Traveling Exhibits



World Games UAB Libraries booth, 2022



Exhibit booth installed at the Southeastern Medieval Association Conference, 2022

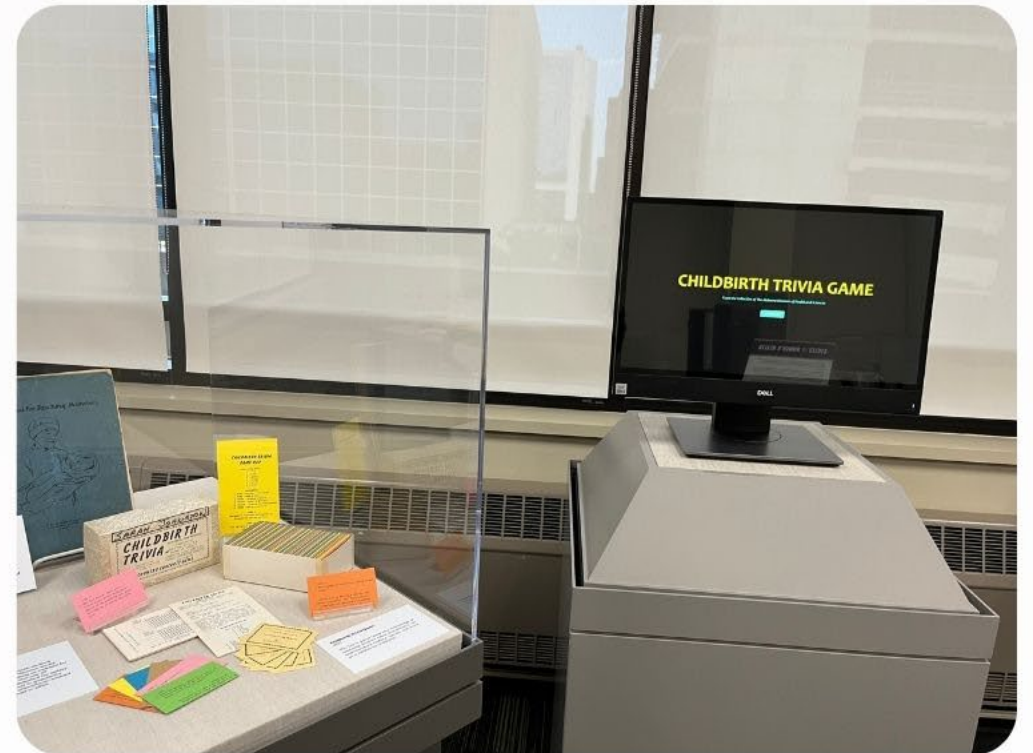
- TTP allows us to work events, offer exhibit booths, and feature rare materials
- Provides an interactive look at the materials, while also ensuring the security of the collection
- Provides more opportunities to showcase the collections and how technologies can be useful in their exploration



Other Technologies Used in Exhibits

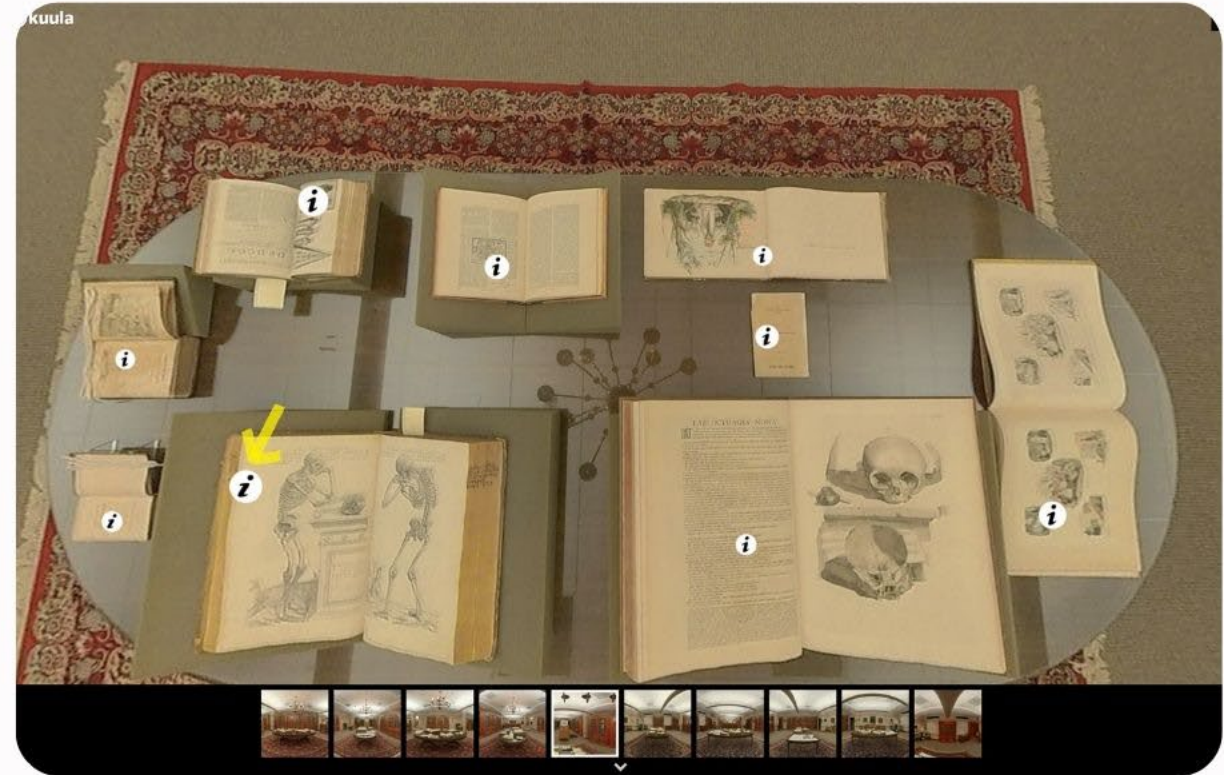


*Mental Health:
A Complicated History
(tracked over 80 responses)*

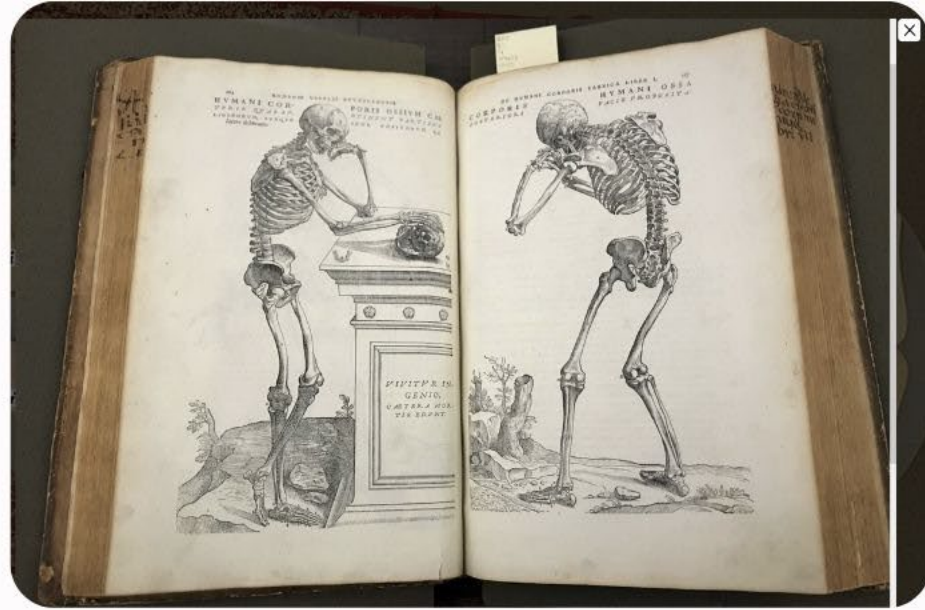


*Snapshots: Glimpses into the
History of Women's Health
(still on display)*

VIRTUAL TOUR OF RFHL



Halloween: A Spooky Tour



- A virtual exhibit that allows users to explore the library space and collections via a web browser or VR headset

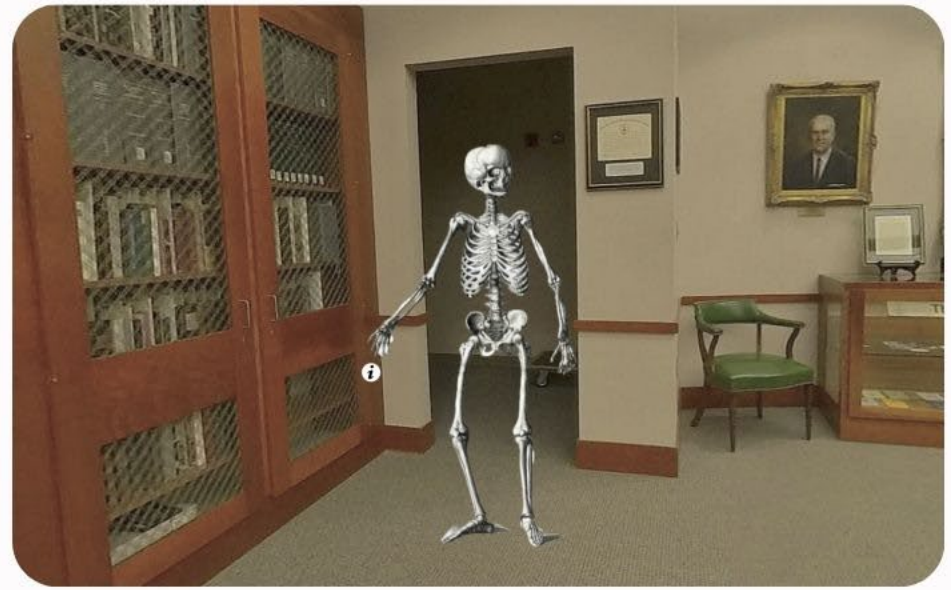


This image comes from "Album Comique de Pathologie Pittoresque" (1823) by Charles Aubry. Filled with comical cartoon illustrations regarding pathology, this image reveals a maiden skeleton in a spooky graveyard scene being waited upon by two gentlemen.

- Created using 360 images of the library space
- Used a software conversion tool called Kuula
- Kuula has an information hotspot feature, which is one of the main reasons it was the platform we used
- Enables users to explore collections via digitized images

Halloween: A Spooky Tour

- Can embed multiple media formats including video/audio clips, textual captions and photographs
- Can upload and animate web graphics and icons
- Can link to websites via hotspots or QR codes
- Since it was published in October 2021, it has been viewed 520 times



Exploring the Use of AR Prototypes

- These are two AR prototypes that feature RFHL rare book imagery
- Imagery taken from an incunabulum from 1497, *Hortus Sanitatis*, which is a natural history encyclopedia that contains over 1,000 hand-painted woodcuts
- These 2 prototypes are a result of a collaboration between RFHL and a design professor at Ohio State
- Considering different ways that this can be used in RFHL and item promotion





**POTENTIAL
NEXT STEPS**

Historical Collections Gallery



UAB Historical Collections Gallery

Second Level, Lister Hill Library, 1700 University Blvd, Birmingham, AL 35233

VIEW FROM INSIDE GALLERY

03/03/2023



UAB Historical Collections Gallery

Second Level, Lister Hill Library, 1700 University Blvd, Birmingham, AL 35233

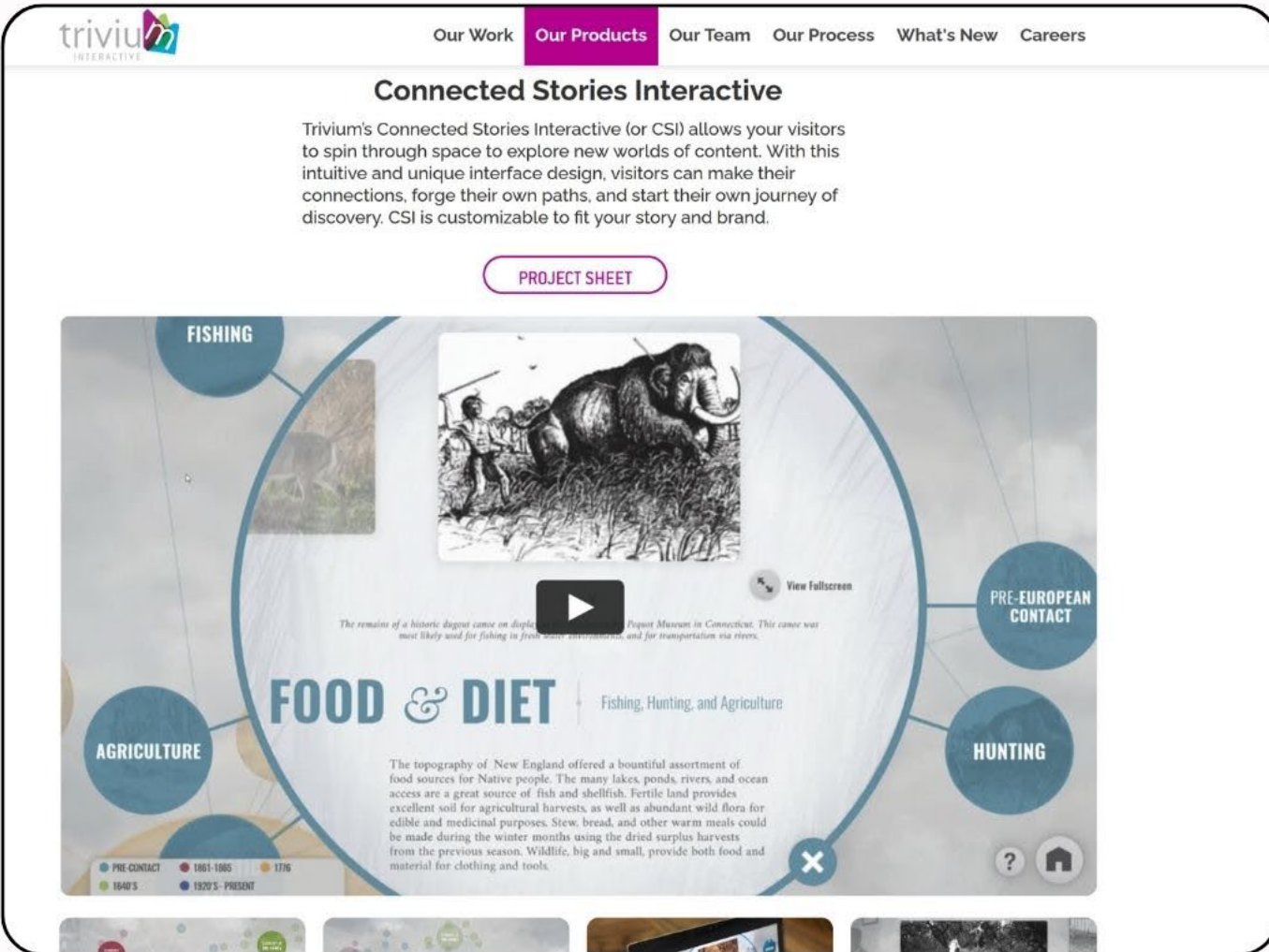
VIEW FROM LIBRARY FLOOR

03/03/2023



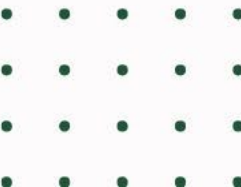
- A new gallery space to exhibit Special Collections materials and feature emerging technologies
- Will showcase the collections of RFHL, the Alabama Museum of the Health Sciences and the UAB Archives
- Will provide the opportunity to continue prioritizing the use of technology in exhibits and assess user engagement

New Interactive Software: Trivium

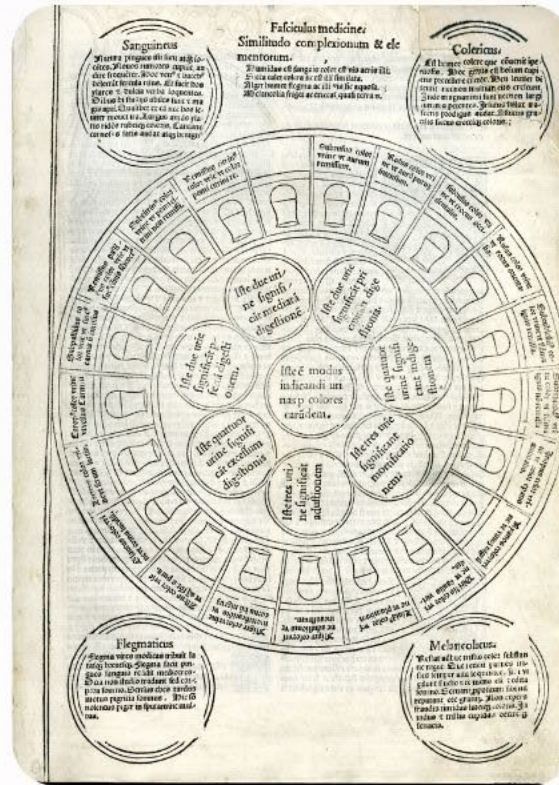
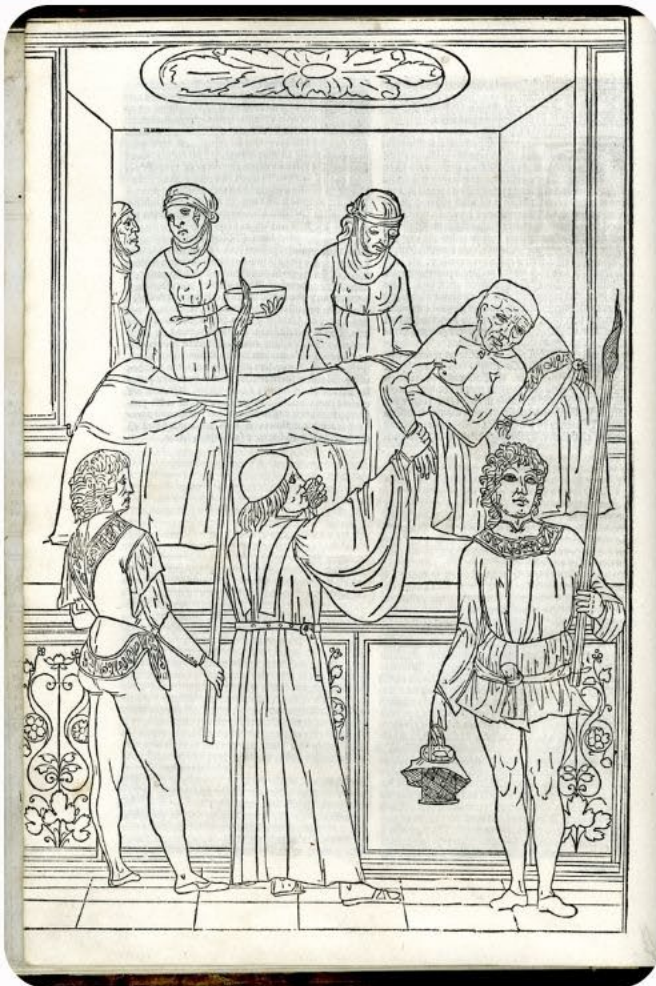


*Image taken from the Trivium website (<https://www.triviuminteractive.com/>)

- Newest software being considered for the HC Gallery Space
- A story-telling exhibit software that generates textual content
- Users can browse each information bubble (or theme) via a touchscreen
- Provides an additional interactive element for exhibits and promotional tools
- Only available in offline mode for additional security



Mini-Medieval Medical School: A VR Experience



Imagery from *Fasciculus medicinae*... (1500) by Johannes de Ketham



QUESTIONS?



(Photo Credit: Mica Ringo / Getty Images)



THANK YOU!

If you have any other questions, feel free to email me at akaetz95@uab.edu.

