

What can the UK Culture Sector do for Digital Britain?

A Response to the Digital Britain Interim Report on behalf of Museums, Archives and Libraries

This response is intended to support and complement the submission of the Museums, Archives and Libraries Council.

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1. A World-class Sector

- 1.1 Whether through tourism, digital publishing or community engagement, Culture is one of the UK's most active and exciting growth industries and a world-class export for UK Plc.
- 1.2 UK museums, archives and libraries enjoy a well-deserved reputation worldwide for the quality and breadth of their collections and the professionalism of the people who work in them.
- 1.3 UK museums, archives and libraries:
 - Employ 53,000 people across 10,000 organisations
 - Generate up to £1.2bn for the UK economy each year
 - Were visited more than 300m times in 2007-08
 - Include 4 of the top 5 UK tourist attractions
- 1.4 In the past decade, national initiatives such as free access to National museums, internet access in Public Libraries through the Peoples Network and online access to census data from the National Archives have brought entirely new audiences to Culture.
- 1.5 More than £170m of Government investment since 2001 has enabled the sector to take the initiative in embracing the opportunities of New Technologies and the Web. Museums, archives and libraries were among the earliest adopters of new approaches to online information and are now moving to take advantage of the next generation of Social Media.
- 1.6 We welcome this opportunity to respond to the Digital Britain report on behalf of UK museums, archives and libraries and to highlight what they can do to help drive the Digital Economy.

CASE STUDY: PEOPLES NETWORK

The Peoples Network, managed by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, has put wired and wireless Internet access into 3,500 public libraries throughout the UK.

Used by millions of people every year, the Peoples Network puts Internet access on the High Street, embedded in communities and within easy reach of everyone who wants or needs it.



www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk

CASE STUDY: CREATIVE SPACES

Creative Spaces is the result of a collaboration between 9 of the UK national museums.

Using Web 2.0 tools and social media models, it enables users to form groups and curate and comment on their own exhibitions using digitised images from these national collections.



2. Digital Cultural Content

2.1 The rise of the Digital Economy has transformed the UK Culture sector into a broadcaster and publisher of a huge range of Digital Content.

2.2 From online interactives to learning resources, audiovisual content to rich narratives and online exhibitions, cultural organisations are creating millions of digital assets with a real value for the UK taxpayer and consumer.

2.3 We welcome the recognition in the Digital Britain report of the tremendous value of Culture's contribution to the export economy and the need to ensure that this is recognised in the economic mainstream.

2.4 There is, however, a tendency in the report to view 'content' as referring solely to TV and radio broadcast output. Digital cultural content forms an important part of the vibrant economy of new content producers which do not fall into this definition, and we feel it is important to recognise the important of this growing force in the industry.

2.5 The fund of digital content available to the public through museums, archives and libraries now rivals the richness and depth of our unparalleled collections of books, artefacts and vital records.

2.6 We believe that this fund of content provides an invaluable platform from which to explore the implications of the next generation of location-based and mobile services for the wider public sector.

2.7 Our key contributions to this Agenda are:

- Rich media content
- Quality standards
- Authoritative and trusted brand
- Content partnerships
- Resources for research

2.8 In future, we will:

- Develop smarter, more targeted approaches to content production
- Generate market-ready, high-quality content
- Explore blended business models for cultural content

CASE STUDY: MYLEARNING

Developed by a consortium of museums in Yorkshire, *MyLearning* is an innovative online platform which lets teachers and culture-sector professionals build interactive learning resources and share them with others.



www.mylearning.org

CASE STUDY: TATE KIDS

Tate Kids is a new online service from Tate which provides a range of fun resources, interactive and audiovisual content aimed at kids (with things to do for teachers and parents too!)



www.kids.tate.org.uk

CASE STUDY: BECTA STRATEGY

BECTA has commissioned sector agency Lexara to work on a strategy for connecting the Digital output of the Culture sector to the needs of teachers and learners across the UK.



3. Digital Participation

- 3.1 Museums, libraries and archives cater to millions of consumers, online and offline, domestic and international every year.
- 3.2 Collectively, our brand is trusted as a provider of authoritative, politically neutral information and ‘safe’ spaces in which to explore issues of cultural and personal identity.
- 3.3 We welcome the Digital Britain report’s focus on Digital Life Skills, Digital Work Skills and Digital Economy Skills. We also endorse the view that failing to provide these skills for the whole of society risks leading to a Digital apartheid in this new economy.
- 3.4 Museums, libraries and archives – perhaps uniquely among the public services – have at their core the principle of universal participation. The right to culture is one of the first democratic liberties for UK citizens – their library card the first passport to the world’s knowledge.
- 3.5 We believe that there is a profoundly important opportunity for the UK Culture sector to engage proactively with the Participation agenda by providing neutral places for negotiating cultural values and building Digital skills and confidence.
- 3.6 Cultural organisations throughout the UK are already making unprecedented use of social media and Web 2.0 tools and functionality to reach out and engage with communities in ways which would have been impossible with last-generation technology.
- 3.7 Our key contributions in this area are:
 - Reach across hard-to-reach communities
 - Resources for personal history & self-directed learning
 - Skilled staff trained in building Digital skills
 - Content which promotes engagement & participation
- 3.8 In future, we will:
 - Use Web 2.0 tools to engage more people
 - Connect to the Government communities agenda
 - Promote Digital participation

CASE STUDY: FLICKR COMMONS

The National Media Museum was the first UK museum to upload its content to Flickr Commons, where it can be tagged, shared, curated and repurposed by any Flickr user.



www.flickr.com

CASE STUDY: KEW SHOWCASE

Again using Flickr as a platform, Kew Gardens ran a successful competition to showcase user photographs.



www.kew.org

CASE STUDY: LIVEHERE

A website which combines images, media content and Web 2.0 tools to create a sense of what it feels like to live and work in Birmingham.



www.livehere.bmagonline.org

4. Digital Access

- 4.1 For many UK citizens, one of their first experiences of using the web will be in a Public Library through the Peoples Network.
- 4.2 The PN is recognised worldwide as a ground-breaking achievement in providing ubiquitous Internet access which enables people to communicate, play, interact and make use of public services.
- 4.3 Through funding provided by the New Opportunities Fund, a generation of librarians were trained to develop their skills in helping people get to grips with technology.
- 4.4 Fast forward 7 years, and Cultural organisations across the UK are enabling access to the Web in a huge variety of ways.
- 4.5 Whether it is through the use of the JANET internet backbone, through in-gallery kiosk computers, as part of outreach and classroom-based activity or through mobile platforms, we are making a real and lasting contribution to the ability of people to get online, get connected and get contributing.
- 4.6 Our key contributions in this area are:
 - Free, open access to the Web (Public Libraries)
 - Value-added services which drive demand
 - Use of UK infrastructure for Web access
- 4.7 In future we will:
 - Connect to and promote next-generation networks
 - Develop wireless infrastructure for public access
 - Promote Digital access more widely in the sector

CASE STUDY: FORD MADOX BROWN

This learning resource developed by Manchester City Galleries for Key Stage 2 learners was shortlisted for a BAFTA award in 2008.



www.manchestergalleries.org

CASE STUDY: ISLAMIC & EASTERN ART

The Yousef Jameel Online Centre for the Study of Islamic and Eastern Art is an innovative online space enabling the public, students and researchers to interact with the Ashmolean Museum's collections of Islamic and Eastern Art.



www.jameelcentre.ashmolean.org

CASE STUDY: GPS & MOBILE

Many libraries, archives and museums are making use of GPS technology to provide location-based services to mobile content platforms.



5. Digital Rights

- 5.1 A balanced approach to Copyright holds the key to unlocking the potential of the Digital Economy across all industries and platforms.
- 5.2 We welcome the recognition in the Digital Britain report of the critical importance of Copyright and the need to foster a strong and confident economic environment which also takes into account current and future user behaviours.
- 5.3 Managing Copyright material is, at heart, what Cultural organisations do every day of the week. Our sector exists in a Copyright ecosystem in which we work very hard both to respect the needs of rightsholders and satisfy the demands of users.
- 5.4 There is a strong distinction in the report between ‘rightsholders’ and ‘users’ – we believe that in an open environment which promotes content distribution, the modern prosumer can be both at the same time.
- 5.5 The tone of the Digital Britain proposals is emphatically pro rights-holders and we would hope that the final report would adopt a more balanced view which also recognises the right of taxpayers to access content for the public interest (such as education, culture, health and society).
- 5.6 We also feel strongly that there is a need to bring an end to consultation in this area and move towards concerted action. We would hope that there is sufficient information within the *Gowers Review of IP* and the recent *Copyright: The Future* consultation to move towards workable solutions.
- 5.7 Our key contributions in this area are:

- Considerable experience in managing IP for public access
- A responsible, proportionate approach to licensing
- Bridging communities of creators and users
- Providing a fund of IP to drive future creativity

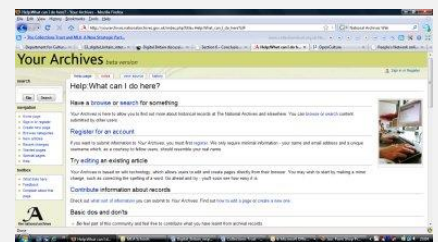
5.8 In future, we will:

- Ensure that museums, archives and libraries manage IP responsibly
- Improve our skills and expertise in licensing and negotiation
- Contribute to the future development of legislation

CASE STUDY: YOUR ARCHIVES

The National Archives have led the way in exploring the potential of social media to develop more meaningful engagement with communities and individual users.

Your Archives is an innovative Wikipedia-style interface which allows users to generate their own content and upload it to the National Archives website.



www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

CASE STUDY: CULTURE24

Culture24 is the interface between museums, libraries, archives and the general public.

Combining first-class journalism and innovative technologies, Culture24 is a one-stop-shop for news, information, listings and other information about this thriving sector.



www.culture24.org.uk

6. Digital Britain and the UK Culture Sector

6.1 We hope that this document has set out clearly what the UK Culture sector can do for Digital Britain. In return, we would ask the following:

- Recognise the strength and commitment of the UK Culture sector to building a stable and confident Digital Britain.
- Support the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in their work to connect communities to next-generation networks through Public Libraries and the Peoples Network.
- Support exceptions under Copyright law which permit museums, libraries and archives to fulfil their public service remit in a Digital Age.
- Continue to support Cultural institutions in contributing to a thriving Digital economy based on public service broadcast and publishing.

6.2 The best way of ensuring that UK Culture can make this contribution is by ensuring that the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is invited to represent the sector on key working groups in the production of the final report.

7. About the Collections Trust

7.1 The Collections Trust is an independent UK social enterprise which exists to promote the accessibility and sustainability of UK Culture by raising standards and promoting best practice.

7.2 The Collections Trust's work spans the common ground between cultural collections, technology, consumers, commerce and copyright.

7.3 The Collections Trust is funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), Museums Galleries Scotland, CyMAL (through the Federation of Museums & Art Galleries of Wales) and the European Commission.

7.4 For more information, go to www.collectionstrust.org.uk

CASE STUDY: OPENCULTURE

OpenCulture is a partnership initiative between the Collections Trust, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and Culture24.

The OpenCulture network brings together key players from across the Creative & Cultural Industries to discuss issues of common interest in the Digital Agenda.

The network includes the Arts Council, Channel 4, the BBC, British Library, National Museums, National Archives, LOCOG and a wide variety of other organisations.



www.collectionstrust.org.uk