

## **Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities: Exploring new digital destinations for heritage and academia**

**When:** Monday 12<sup>th</sup> - Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**Call for papers deadline:** 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015

**Where:** The Lowry, Pier 8, Salford Quays, Manchester, M50 3AZ

### **Conference brief:**

This year's conference will look at the varied and innovative ways in which archives, museums, libraries and academia can engage with audiences in the digital age.

The last two decades have witnessed a flourishing of digital content across the heritage and academic sectors. Whether through the creation of digital discovery tools, mass digitisation and online delivery of content, or the creation of new virtual user interfaces; digital technology has come to complement traditional analogue formats to create an altogether richer user experience. The creation, delivery and curation of digital content provides great opportunities for audiences more actively to engage in, and enrich, both collections and the research based on them.

In doing so, our audiences have gone from being consumers of heritage content to active creators and curators, helping us to contextualise and interpret our rich and diverse collections. Crowd-sourced content has revealed the many hidden secrets behind heritage collections, giving them greater contemporary relevance and adding an increased complexity and diversity to established narratives. Digital platforms have democratised the experience and interpretation of heritage collections, not replacing the richness and importance of a physical encounter, but complementing these and widening their appeal. Finally, galleries and search rooms have been pebble-dashed with touch screens, hashtags, and barcodes. Our visitors are now as likely to leave with a mobile-phone app as they are with an exhibition poster. In doing so, the development of digital technologies have presented new opportunities for collaboration not only between our institutions, academics and sectors, but also new ways of collaborating with our users, whatever their purposes.

Digital platforms have provided many new and exciting opportunities, yet they have also presented new challenges for heritage and academic organisations. In what ways can we ensure that digital engagement is truly 'engaging'? What is the relationship between online 'hits' and actual footfall? How can we better capture the meaningful 'impact' of engagement via digital means? And during a time of austerity, how can all sectors make the case for innovative digital engagement, not as an indulgent luxury, but as a necessity to preserve the broader relevance and wider-

recognition of collections? This conference aims to explore the possibilities and also the pitfalls of digital engagement.

## **CALL FOR PAPERS AND WORKSHOPS**

Papers: The conference organisers invite 300 word abstracts to be submitted by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 for the delivery of 20 minute presentations. 10 minutes will be allowed for questions after every presentation.

Workshops: The conference organisers also invite the submission of 300 word abstracts for more focused 1.5 hour workshops. These will be designed and delivered by those submitting a proposal. Where possible, workshops should focus on the exchange of concepts, ideas or practical solutions, in order to identify or overcome common challenges.

Abstracts should be sent to both [melanie.cheung@rluk.ac.uk](mailto:melanie.cheung@rluk.ac.uk) and [matt.greenhall@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:matt.greenhall@nationalarchives.gov.uk), by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015.

Abstracts should include a title and also an indication of preferred delivery method (for both papers and workshops):

- Oral presentation with visual aids (e.g. powerpoint)
- Oral presentation with interactive element (e.g. audience participation)
- Oral presentation followed by open discussion
- Interactive workshop

The main conference themes will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The ways and means of digitally engaging with audiences
- Funding for digital collaboration
- The interrelation of the virtual and physical visitor
- The creation of digital spaces for discourse, dissemination and delivery
- Gameification and edutainment: how can we use video games and interactive learning to engage younger audiences?
- Digital analytics and impact: measuring digital audiences to better understand their needs and behaviour, and to persuade decision-makers to commit resource.
- Online fundraising: the potential of crowdfunding to support campaigns and individual appeals.
- Supporting the Digital Humanities
- Creating Citizen Humanists: the role of the amateur-virtual researcher in better understanding collections

- Digital without borders: international research and outreach through the digital

**Conference fee:** Registration for DCDC15 will open soon. There is no fee to attend the conference, however, a modest fee applies for the networking drinks reception on Monday 12 October and the conference evening reception on Tuesday 13 October.

**Further Information:** is available from [www.rluk.ac.uk/dcdc15](http://www.rluk.ac.uk/dcdc15), and from [melanie.cheung@rluk.ac.uk](mailto:melanie.cheung@rluk.ac.uk) and [matt.greenhall@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:matt.greenhall@nationalarchives.gov.uk).