Collections access and the use of technology in museums

A report by Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

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Executive summary

In 2011 Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service entered into a joint initiative, called *Collections Care East*, with the Collections Trust through its Renaissance funded Museum Development Programme.

The aim of *Collections Care East* was to:

- Deliver tangible benefits for museums in the East of England
- Reinforce the strategic aims for museum development in the region
- Reinforce the strategic aims of the Collections Trust

One strand of the project focused on a short piece of research. The research sought to answer four questions:

- How are museum practitioners using digital technologies for access to collections?
- What are the perceived benefits of using digital technologies for access?
- What are the perceived barriers to using digital technologies for access?
- What are the solutions to those barriers?

The main findings of the research were that:

- There is a wide ranging use and knowledge of different digital technologies by museum practitioners both in their personal lives and at work. However, less use of social media in either context.
- There is a strong belief amongst practitioners that technology, efficiently used, will help them to use and manage their collections and engage audiences.
- Barriers exist which prevent or hinder the use of technology for access. These are:

  Organisational barriers:

  - Organisational strategic planning often does not support the implementation of technology at a practitioner level
  - There are issues surrounding barriers to engagement with audiences due to local authority firewalls

  Skills and knowledge and mindsets:

  - There is a need for up-skilling of museum practitioners in the skills surrounding the application of technology, rather than in the technology itself. These skills include IPR management and evaluation
  - There is a need for support to practitioners to enable them to develop mindsets and attitudes which encourage risk taking in digital projects, and build confidence

This report makes the following recommendations, which are being carried forward in the East of England Museum Development Programme 2012/15:

Recommendation 1: To provide relevant and accessible information and case studies which will increase sector knowledge

Recommendation 2: To work with East of England museums to develop digital strategy templates

Recommendation 3: To work with funding organisations to embed sustainable digital strategies into project funding

Recommendation 4: To work with East of England museums to encourage and generate partnerships and collaborative working to enhance skill and expertise sharing

Introduction

In 2011 Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service entered into a joint initiative with Collections Trust through its Renaissance funded Museum Development Programme. The aim of the *Collections Care East* initiative was to deliver tangible benefits for museums in the East of England, to reinforce the strategic aims of museum development in the region, and to reinforce the strategic aims of the Collections Trust.

A number of resources have been developed as a result of the *Collections Care East* project, including a Collections Care Syllabus, a series of collections care 'How To Guides' and a 'search' link between the SHARE Museums East and Collections Link websites. The partnership also had ambitions to develop a series of resources aimed at supporting museums in taking forward their engagement with digital technologies, particularly around collections access. When looking to develop such resources, it became clear that there was no real understanding of where museums are in terms of digital technologies, and what the potential barriers may be in terms of using new technologies. Such a lack of knowledge made developing targeted resources a difficult task. To overcome this problem, this report and an accompanying consultation were commissioned. The aim of the consultation, which has drawn on information gathered from museums in the East of England, has been to gain a more thorough understanding of how museums are using digital technologies for developing access to collections.

This piece of research is one of the first pieces of work that has focused on understanding the issues that museums face, or perceive they face, when considering the use of digital technologies. As such, this piece of work is a pilot study; it is drawing on a relatively small pool of participants and has used two different approaches to gathering information. It is considered that one of the potential outcomes of this pilot is to inform a larger, more comprehensive study.

Methodology

What is meant by 'digital technology'?

One of the initial problems when discussing digital technologies in museums is one of definition – what do museums mean when they use the term 'digital technology'? This research did not start from the position of discussing a particular form of digital application, such as websites, online collections management databases, social media, or apps, rather the focus was on the use of digital technologies in relation to access to collections.

This approach facilitated participants discussing their concerns and perceptions regarding digital technologies in the broadest sense, allowing for specific themes or

categories of technology to arise from the conversation. As outlined in the introduction, the approach adopted in this pilot may now be well placed to inform other pieces of research on museums and the use of digital technologies: perhaps research that focuses more on specific areas of digital technologies within the museum sphere.

The aims of the research

The research undertaken focused on four key questions, these were:

- How are museum practitioners using digital technologies for access to collections?
- What are the perceived benefits to using digital technologies for access?
- What are the perceived barriers to using digital technologies for access?
- What are the solutions to those barriers?

The research approach

Museum staff and volunteers from across the East of England were invited to participate in the consultation in two ways:

- Through an online questionnaire
- In consultation workshops

The research respondents

In total, 40 people took part in the research representing 21 organisations. Of the 40 that took part, 20 attended the workshop and completed the questionnaire. A range of organisations were represented, although it was weighted to Local Authority museums. This weighting occurred in part through holding one of the workshops with the regional Museums East of England group meeting, which is made of the larger museums and museum services, which are mostly Local Authority organisations. However, the group was to some degree self-selecting as the questionnaire was made available through the SHARE Museums East website and sent out to mailing lists.

The make-up of organisations that were represented is as follows:

Museum Type	Number Participating
Local Authority	12
University	1
Independent	4
Museum Development Officer	2
National / Regional Museum support services	2

The online questionnaire

The online questionnaire (**Appendix 1**) was initially circulated to staff and volunteers from 16 museums who had attended a regional 'Social Media' training event. Following this, the questionnaire was circulated directly to members of the Museums East of England group, which is made up of senior museum professionals across the region and museum development officers. The questionnaire was also made accessible to the sector in the East of England as a whole through the SHARE Museums East website.

Using a series of closed questions the questionnaire aimed to gather feedback on current uses of digital technologies, perceptions of use and the development of future opportunities. It also included questions aimed at gaining an understanding of personal and work-based engagement with technology. In addition, there was an opportunity within the questionnaire for free text comment in response to open questions around opportunities for future and developmental needs in relation to the use of digital technologies and collections.

20 individuals completed the questionnaire; 50% of those completing the questionnaire also attended a workshop.

The consultation workshops

A series of 2.5 hour long facilitated workshops were held to enhance the data gained from the questionnaire and to gain more in depth feedback from the sector in a consultative forum. Workshops were held on:

- 30 January 2012, Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service in Norwich – an open invitation to practitioners in the region

- 31 January 2012 St Albans Museum – an open invitation to practitioners in the region

- 1 February 2012 St Albans Museum – a 1 hour session with museum managers from across the region at the Museums East of England regional meeting.

The first two group sessions comprised relatively few participants, with nine museum staff attending on the 30th January 2012 and six on the 31st January.

The third workshop on February 1st allowed feedback from a range of 17 museum managers and museum development officers from across the region. This workshop lasted one hour and although gathering a wide range of data, there was less available time for discussion.

The workshops sought to explore attitudes and perceptions to the use of digital technologies in relation to accessing collections, and encouraged discussion using a series of open questions and topic areas. Participants were provided with a prompt sheet of social media logos to encourage recognition and discussion (**Appendix 2**).

Participants worked in small groups to discuss a series of questions. Responses were recorded using sticky notes and additional discussion of each topic within the wider group, was recorded.

The questions asked within the three workshops were:

- Which technologies are you currently using in your museum to enable access to collections?

- What works well? What works less well?

- Which technologies should museums be using to access collections?

- What are the barriers to using digital technologies to access collections?

- What are possible solutions to overcome the identified barriers?

- What can museums practically do to increase access to collections using digital technology?

In total 33 people attended the workshops. In some cases individuals attended both the workshop and completed the questionnaire.
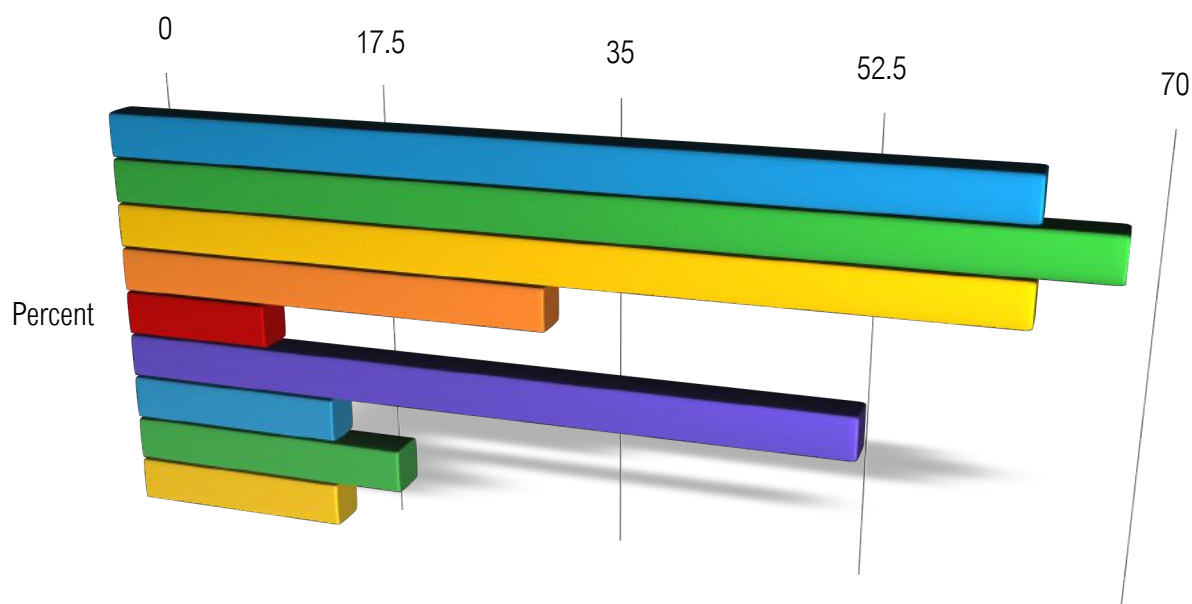
Data gathered from the workshop sessions and the questionnaire was amalgamated and is incorporated in the *Findings and Analysis* section of this report.
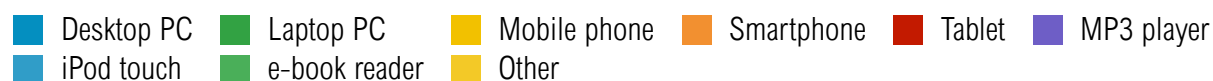
Findings and analysis

How are museum practitioners using digital technologies for access to collections?

Under this line of questioning, mainly highlighted in the questionnaire, the research aimed to find out if there was a substantial difference between the use of technology by museum practitioners at home and at work. The rationale behind this aim was that if there was a difference, and we found that home use far exceeded work use, the barriers to use at work might be found in organisational structure, and process, rather than personal skills and knowledge.

We found that respondents indicated a good use of and access to digital technology in both their personal and work lives: the vast majority of respondents use computers (laptop and desktop) and mobile phones, and have broadband in their homes.
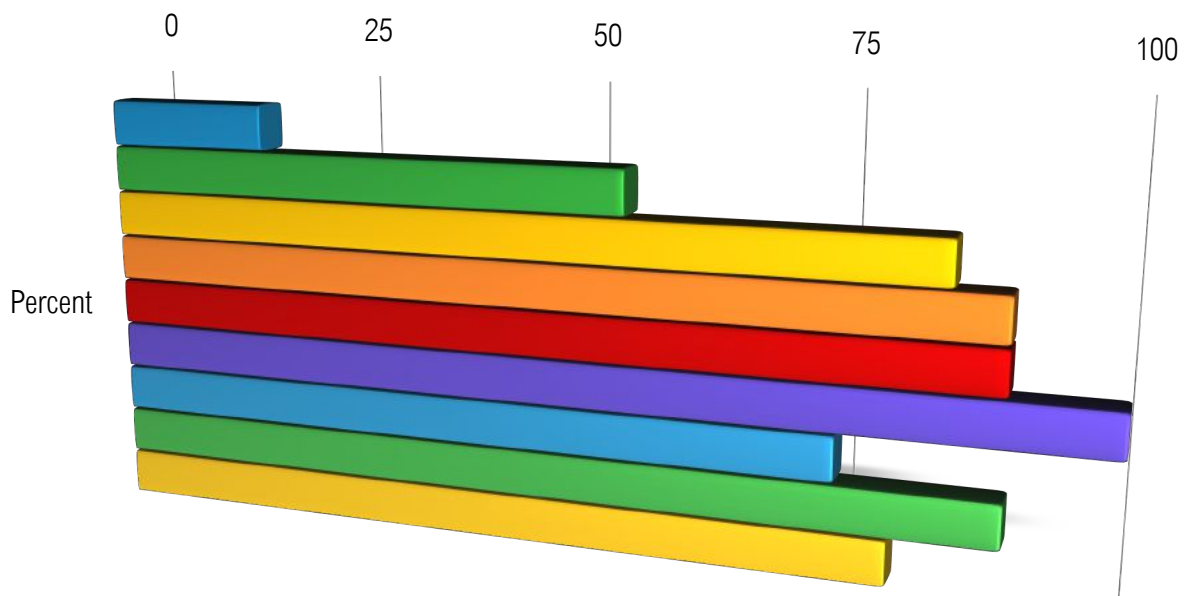

'Do you have personal access to....?'

- Desktop PC
- Laptop PC
- Mobile phone
- Smartphone
- Tablet
- MP3 player
- iPod touch
- e-book reader
- Other

The importance of technology in contributing to job responsibilities was also widely recognised. In the work place; questionnaire respondents have good access to a basic range of digital hardware and software. This includes dedicated use of PCs, access to the internet, email accounts and printers. The vast majority of respondents also have access to a computerised collections management system.

It was notable however, that at home respondents were less likely to engage fully in a wide range of social media: only approximately one third actively contribute or participate in social media. This is reflected in a reticence to implement or engage with social media in the workplace.

'When at work, do you have access to....?'

- ■ Own PC
- ■ Scanner/Photocopier
- ■ Local network
- ■ Printer
- ■ Own email account
- ■ Intranet
- ■ Own telephone
- ■ Internet
- ■ Computerised Collections Management System

What are the perceived benefits to using new technologies for access?

This line of questioning was explored in both the questionnaire and the workshops. In the workshops, a range of benefits to using digital technologies to provide access to collections were agreed by participants. In particular, using digital technology was highlighted as being beneficial in the following areas:

- Encouraging new ways of thinking and generating new knowledge
- Efficiency
- Promoting new ways to access collections by staff and public
- Generating and sharing information

These benefits were echoed in the responses to the questionnaire. For example, 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

'Technology can help me do my job more efficiently'

'Technology can help my museum reach new audiences'

In addition, 90% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:

'Technology can help me manage my collection'

Overall, the perception of the participants was that using digital technology was beneficial in terms of enhancing access to collections. This was also echoed in the response to the statement:

'If we put our collections online, nobody will visit the museum'

to which 90% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Participants of the questionnaire were also asked about social media and using technology to have a conversation with their museum audiences. 95% of respondents agreed with the statement that,

'Technology enables me to have a conversation with my museum's audiences',

and 90% disagreed with the statement

'Social media is just vanity publishing'.

Interestingly, although participants were positive about the value of social media and the benefits that digital technology could have in facilitating conversations with audiences, only a third are actively participating in social media either at home or at work. This suggests that in this area, the benefits maybe recognised, but not then followed through and put into practice in the workplace.

Generally, all participants in this pilot project felt that using digital technologies to enhance access to collections was beneficial to museums.

What are the perceived barriers to using digital technologies for access?

The consultation workshops explored the barriers experienced by respondents in developing digital access to collections. The identified barriers were wide ranging and are grouped under the headings below.

Organisational strategies

Respondents identified a range of organisational barriers, some of which were viewed as potentially harmful to museums' progress in providing access to collections for visitors and users. Several respondents identified that wider organisational digital policies and strategies, particularly within local authorities, impacted heavily on the ability of the museum to engage with audiences: centralised and inflexible IT services were identified as particular barriers. The lack of specific digital strategies within organisations was also highlighted as a barrier, along with issues such as responsibility to use appropriate digital technologies not being regularly written into job descriptions. The following comments encapsulated many of the perceived barriers:

> *'The digital agenda and its link to access for collections is not being incorporated into organisation-wide strategies, or through the development of individual digital strategies.'*

> *'Engagement with digital media is not written into job descriptions or project development and it should be.'*

> *'Local authority IT systems present a major barrier to digital involvement and ability to provide good access to collections, social media and interaction with audiences. IT departments will often not support the software museums need to use, whilst system 'security' blocks staff from using social media and particular types of software.'*

> *'Broadband access is an issue in areas of the region, which has a major impact on the opportunities which can be effectively developed.'*

<u>Lack of skills, knowledge and expertise</u>

Feedback from the workshops identified that there is a perceived lack of skills, knowledge and expertise in using digital technologies, despite the fact that responses from the questionnaire indicate that the vast majority of respondents had access to and were successfully using a range of different media both at work and in their personal lives. This suggests that the basic skill level is actually greater than perceived. It may be that this potential gap between perception and reality reflects a lack of confidence within the sector when considering using digital technologies. It may be that an apparent lack of confidence, and fear of risk taking, is holding back individuals and organisations from engaging more effectively with digital technologies: participants felt they should be using digital media, but a perceived lack of expertise was resulting in some people not engaging at all, or conversely feeling that they should attempt to deliver on all aspects of digital media engagement.

Additionally, it became clear from the workshops that some specific issues were causing concern and creating a barrier to using digital technology. In particular a lack of knowledge or experience with copyright issues, and evaluating the impact of digital strategies, were identified as problematic and hindering effective use of collections for access or commercial purposes.

These issues were brought to the fore in the following comments:

> *'There is fear of digital media and a lack of confidence within the workforce.'*

> *'There is a lack of knowledge and understanding of effective use of digital media within organisations.'*

> *'The lack of expertise, skills and knowledge within the workforce means that developments in this area are often left to one or two key people who have a personal interest.'*

> *'There is a lack of knowledge of how to measure or evaluate impact of some aspects of digital media, for example, not knowing how to use simple tools of evaluation i.e. Google analytics.'*

> *'Issues relating to copyright are a barrier to developing use with collections; a lack of knowledge and understanding paralyses staff from developing solutions.'*

> *'There is a real lack of knowledge about technology - and even basic computer skills in museums. This leads to poor choices when it comes to technological solutions. A professional person would usually be expected to have a thorough understanding of their commonly used tools.............. I think staff training in basic IT skills is essential, otherwise we'll just muddle on in the same cack-handed way and not take full advantage of the technologies which are available.'*

<u>Lack of resources</u>

Although 75% of respondents to the questionnaire disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement...

'technology is too expensive and there are other priorities in my museum',

resource issues were still identified as impacting heavily on the ability of organisations to engage effectively with digital opportunities. These centred on staff and volunteer time, particularly in uploading information to websites, the time required to digitise collections and the need to ensure social media, such as facebook and twitter, are regularly used. Some of these concerns relate to those raised around organisational barriers, for example dedicated staff and volunteer time to manage digital developments and projects was raised as a major barrier: staff lack time to develop initiatives because this area of work is not prioritised or identified within their organisations. Again, relating to organisational barriers, respondents raised concerns that digital media tasks were not adequately reflected in job descriptions or volunteer agreements, leaving engagement with digital media as an 'add-on' to roles rather than an integrated part of a job.

Funding was also viewed as a major barrier: many respondents considered the museums they worked for to have outdated hardware and software and no finance to maintain or purchase up to date digital technology. Many respondents felt that the costs of developing digital initiatives are difficult to justify, particularly as they are unclear about how to effectively measure impact from digital initiatives.

Respondents commented:

> *'It does absorb time and staff resources to devote to this, both to digitise collections and keep facebook/twitter up to date and interesting. It relies on someone on the staff being savvy with social networking and interested.'*

> *'It doesn't replace the older forms of collections management and access so it adds to the costs of running a museum.'*

> *'The cost of ongoing support, upgrading and maintenance of digital hardware and software is a barrier to organisations.'*

> *'Organisations are wary of investing in systems and software which will not have longevity.'*

Using technology when simpler solutions are available

There were recurring concerns that museums were using technology for technologies sake, when a less technical solution could be used. Respondents were particularly concerned about this in relation to the use of interactives in galleries. The ongoing maintenance costs of interactives and a continued need for museums to feel they must constantly 'keep up' with a rapidly changing digital environment were viewed as barriers to using digital technologies effectively to support access to collections.

Respondents commented:

> *'Not enough thought or expertise is brought to bear on why something should be used - we are quite knowledgeable about using a layer approach to written information in displays, and we need to be similarly thoughtful about what technology is best for what purpose.'*

> *'We need to ensure technology is not used for technologies sake. Sometimes simple interactives are preferable.'*

> *'Often presentation technology is used for its own sake, not to enhance the visitor interpretation of the collection.'*

> *'The problems are often not with the technology itself but the way it is used. Careful thought needs to be given before implementing a high-tech option. If it is used intelligently it can enhance a museum and the services it provides. However, using new technology for the sake of it, or because it's trendy, is asking for trouble. People need to recognise that the best solution isn't always the high-tech one. Part of the problem is lack of knowledge by staff, which means high tech firms can persuade them that almost anything is great (including badly written software). Another problem is maintenance. If*

you go to a museum where half the interactives have broken down, it doesn't give a good impression. Consideration needs to be given to ongoing care and maintenance and having backup equipment ready to replace things which break down. All too often this is ignored until something does go wrong and then there is a delay while someone is found who can fix the problem.'

What are the solutions to the perceived barriers to using digital technologies?

Respondents identified a range of solutions to the perceived barriers and also provided suggestions on how museums can maximise the opportunities provided by engagement with digital technologies. The following themes were identified:

Changing organisational practice

Many comments reflect the recognition that solutions lie in developing a cultural shift within organisations. This needs to be focused around:

- An integrated approach to the delivery of digital based technologies
- The measuring and evaluation of the impact of digital technologies on public usage
- Linking marketing across an organisation to embed and integrate digital and print medias
- Advocating the use of digital technologies and social media in museums to senior managers, trustees and politicians.

In particular, respondents were keen to see organisations supported to develop digital strategies and to recognise the opportunities available within their museums. Several respondents indicated they would value specialist input to enable them to fully exploit access to collections using digital technologies.

Respondents commented:

> *'Digital technology, like most technologies, is an enabler. Because of the relative youth and rate of progress of digital it often tends to be seen as distinct area for strategy development but it should be embedded within core objectives and activities.'*

> *'It needs to be an interwoven aspect of museum work, not an add-on. I believe technology can help us to repurpose content, so that we might create something once, but use it in lots of different ways.'*

Enabling risk taking

Participants recognised the importance of experimentation with new technologies and for the need for museums to test boundaries. Participants want to feel confident to engage in new projects with the knowledge that success is not the only positive outcome, but that lessons learned would be equally valuable.

Respondents commented:

> *'Museums need to be encouraged to take some risks and experiment with digital media and not be afraid to fail and learn from the lessons.'*

> *'We need support and challenge to 'get our feet wet' in this area without spending huge amounts of time and money - little and often is needed to ensure things are integrated into wider strategies for marketing, collections information and education work.'*

Working in 'bite-sized chunks', and enabling evaluation

There was recognition of the importance of museums engaging with technology in a manageable way, taking 'bite-sized chunks'. Participants acknowledged that in some instances a panic response to engage in all aspects or digital and social media has led to

poor delivery through lack of skills and understanding. Participants wished to see targeted projects, enabling them to develop particular aspects of collections related technology, which could be properly evaluated and the impact measured to enable sustainable future development and continued delivery.

A respondent commented:

> *'Museums should be consulting with the public and audiences and using pilot projects to provide 'little nibbles rather than big bites' which are then evaluated.'*

<u>Working in partnerships and brokering collective solutions</u>

There was wide ranging support for collective solutions to sharing information and engaging with museum users. Participants valued the opportunities provided through SHARE Museums East and SSNs and identified potential in developing these further.

A respondent commented:

> *'Partnerships, joint working and sharing of knowledge and expertise should be enhanced; this could be through the development of an SSN for digital media in the region, or through partnering up with young people.'*

Participants recognised the importance of maintaining and developing wider partnership links for example through links to other websites, such as E2BN, through use of online portals for collections information, such as Culture Grid and the Public Catalogue Foundation and the use of online collections management systems, such as EHive.

<u>Responding to identified training and development needs</u>

Participants and respondents were able to identify a range of training and development needs for staff and volunteers in the region's museums. Some of these covered basic skills needs in, for example, digital photography and social media, whilst others were concerned with up-skilling the profession to developing and embedding digital strategies and enabling full integration of technology within all aspects of the museum's working.

> *'I use technology on a day to day basis, and am currently working on the QR codes .... but ideally I would like to increase the emphasis on collections in our website and social media platforms, which are currently focused more on marketing and events.'*

Conclusions

Although this pilot study drew on information from a small sample, there are a number of themes that can be seen within the responses. There is an overall recognition that digital technology is of benefit to museums and could be developed to provide increased access and use of collections, and there is a desire to take digital technology forward. However, this study has also identified a number of barriers, either perceived or actual, which will need to be addressed if museums are to fully engage with the use of technology. These barriers focus around three main areas:

- A lack of strategy and understanding by institutions and organisations on the benefits of using technologies to meet their wider strategic objectives

  Whilst 'digital' is perceived as 'different', it is disconnected from organisations' strategic goals. As a result it is addressed separately and is not knitted into other activities which promote access to collections.

  Local authority museums are often hampered by organisational barriers to the development of effective information technology strategies for access. This is particularly reflected in security concerns in the use of social media.

- Enhancing skills and expertise of practitioners, to maximise and evaluate the use of digital technologies.

  Museum staff and volunteers responding to the consultation demonstrated a good general awareness of digital media and an understanding of the access opportunities it can provide for collections. However, detailed organisational knowledge and expertise of the application and evaluation of technology within museums appears to be limited to a few organisations and within these, to some key individuals.

  There are key subject areas which impact on the use of digital technologies, particularly the management of intellectual property, and the evaluation of the use of digital, in which museum practitioners feel they lack the necessary skills and knowledge. This prevents them from embarking on a digital option.

- Changing attitudes towards risk taking in museums and increasing confidence in choosing and implementing appropriate technologies

  There is a culture of low risk taking by museums, which is compounded by a lack of resources; museums do not want to take risks which could fail or be viewed as wasting resources. There is a perception that hardware and software changes quickly and there are anxieties about 'keeping up', and the resulting costs incurred to organisational budgets.

Overall, it seems that to counteract some of these barriers, museums need to grow in confidence in linking with the digital agenda. They need to become more educated about the various categories of digital technology, from developing website, collections catalogues, social media and developing collection or exhibition specific 'apps' and interactives, so they can make informed choices about with what, when and how to engage. To facilitate a greater understanding of what they should or could be doing, museums need to develop organisational strategies for how they engage with digital technologies. This should include recognising that digital technologies are one medium through which collections can be managed and made accessible, facilitating greater interaction with audiences. As part of developing organisational strategies, museums should consider whether 'digital' should be embedded within job descriptions or specific roles within the museum.

Museums should also consider as a matter of course, how digital technologies could be incorporated into project work; for example, it may be strategically sensible to digitise collections when they are used in a new exhibition, or to create online exhibitions that complement 'real-life' exhibitions, or to develop digital resources with every new learning programme that is created. As part of developing digital strategies, museums should feel confident that they cannot keep all specialisms in-house and that part of becoming a 'digital museum' is buy in support and services when required.

Overall, this pilot study is a first step in beginning to unpick some of the issues that museums face when considering engaging with digital technologies, and it seems that many of these issues could be addressed through the development of carefully thought through organisational digital strategies.

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Recommendations

Drawing on the research undertaken through this pilot, this section makes a number of recommendations of work that could be undertaken to support the sector in moving forward in a positive way and taking a more confident and considered approach to using

digital technologies. These recommendations will inform the East of England Museum Development Programme for 2012 – 2015. In addition, it is anticipated that this research will form a basis for taking further research forward through the Collections Trust.

Recommendation 1: Providing information and increasing sector knowledge

Many museums would benefit from information on which categories of digital technology exist and how they might be implemented in a museum setting. To achieve this, the following pieces of work are recommended:

- Development of simple Information Guides on categories of digital technologies, with Case Studies on how they have been used in a museum setting

- Provision in the East of England of a series of half day Information Seminars disseminating the Information Guides and case studies

Recommendation 2: Developing Digital Policies

It is clear that museums need to embrace digital technology at a strategic level and to begin to consider themselves as 'digital organisations'. As a first step towards this, and as a precursor to museums feeling confident to embed 'digital' into their strategic planning, the following pieces of work are recommended:

- Working with a number of museums to develop a template for a digital policy

- Publishing and disseminating digital strategy templates to the East of England region and the wider museums community to support digital strategies being taken forward across the sector

Recommendation 3: Working with funding partners

The funding requirements for any digital project are important in driving forward sustainable strategies for digitisation in museums, and for embedding digitisation projects into the organisational strategies of the host museum. They are a necessary lever to ensuring that digital projects are planned in a sustainable manner.

It is also important that major funding partners understand the needs and practice of museums in relation to digital technologies, from 'basics' through to 'developed' approaches, i.e. from digitising collections and maintaining digital catalogues, through to developing interactive online galleries or apps. Funders also need to understand fully the barriers often faced by museums when they are part of larger organisations, such as local authorities.

- It is recommended that the Collections Trust work with funding partners at a national level to highlight these issues, and SHARE Museums East, as part of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, support understanding at a local level.

Recommendation 4: Working with regional and national museum partners

The final recommendation is that museums need to develop and continue a dialogue with one another to share knowledge and skills. In addition, museums across the sector need to consider how they may work in partnership and collaboratively develop their use of digital technologies. Specifically, museums should seek to engage with online solutions to providing digital access and management of collections such as the Culture Grid and Ehive, or more generic offers such as Flickr. They should also explore developing or joining networks focusing on the use of digital in museums, such as the 'museums computer group.'

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

| SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE | SHARE MUSEUMS EAST / COLLECTIONS TRUST |

Perceptions of technology in museums

Thank you for taking part in the Renaissance East of England Collections Care East project.

You are completing this questionnaire because you have volunteered to attend a workshop which explores the use of technology in museums and perceptions about its use.

Your responses in this questionnaire and at the workshop will be anonymised and used to inform a report which will help Renaissance East of England and the Collections Trust to support the use of technology for collections access in the future.

About you

Your name*

Your job title*

Your museum name*

Your age (optional)

Education level (optional)

Technology in your life

The following questions are intended to help us understand how technology plays a role in your personal and professional life.

Do you personally own any of the following products?

☐ Desktop PC
☐ Laptop PC
☐ Mobile phone
☐ Smartphone
☐ Tablet (like an iPad)
☐ MP3 player (like an iPod)
☐ iPod touch
☐ e-book reader (like a Kindle)
☐ Other

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE   **SHARE MUSEUMS EAST / COLLECTIONS TRUST**

Do you text?

○ Yes   ○ No

Do you shop online?

○ Regularly   ○ Occasionally   ○ Never

Do you have Broadband at home?

○ Yes   ○ No

Do you use social/community websites such as facebook and twitter for your own personal use?

○ Yes   ○ No

If you answered yes to the previous question, which of the following 'types' of social media user do you think you are?

○ A 'luker' - you read other peoples posts but dont post much yourself
○ A 'sharer' - you post material and updates of your own
○ A 'geek' - you frequently post material of your own and create your own content (ie in blogs)

Do you have a personal email addresses?

○ Yes   ○ No

If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, how many personal email addresses do you have?

[▲▼]

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SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE   **SHARE MUSEUMS EAST / COLLECTIONS TRUST**

When your computer goes wrong at home, do you try and sort it out yourself?

○ Yes   ○ No

At work, do you have access to:

☐ Your own PC
☐ A printer
☐ Your own telephone
☐ A scanner/photocopier
☐ Your own email account
☐ Internet
☐ A local network
☐ An Intranet
☐ A wholly or partly computerised Collections Management System

Attitudes to technology

The following questions are intended to establish your perceptions about the use of technology in your working life

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Technology can help me do my job more efficiently	○	○	○	○	○
Technology can help my museum reach new audiences	○	○	○	○	○
Technology will open new forms of funding and income for my museum	○	○	○	○	○
Technology can help me manage my collection	○	○	○	○	○
Technology enables me to have a conversation with my museum's audiences	○	○	○	○	○

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Do you have any (further) positive perceptions about the use of technology to enable access to museum collections?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Social media is just vanity publishing	○	○	○	○	○
If we put our collections online, nobody will visit the museum	○	○	○	○	○
Having collections online generates more work for the museum staff because we receive more enquiries and we do not have the capacity to deal with the extra work	○	○	○	○	○
Technology is too expensive and there are other priorities in my museum	○	○	○	○	○
I don't like technology and I don't want to use it	○	○	○	○	○

Do you have any negative perceptions about the use of technology in   museums?

Is there anything else you want to tell us about your perceptions of the role of   technology in museums – positive or negative?

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SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE   SHARE MUSEUMS EAST / COLLECTIONS TRUST

Do you consider yourself tech-savvy?

◯ Yes   ◯ No

Opportunities in the future

Looking ahead, and not thinking about technology or digital for a moment, what do you see as biggest opportunities facing your museum in the next 3 years?

Can you think of ways in which technology could help you make the most of   those opportunities?

Developmental needs

What changes can you personally make to maximise the impact of technology on your work or in your museum?

What changes can your museum make to maximise the impact of technology on your work/your museum?

Thank you very much for your time, and for contributing to this survey.

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Appendix 2 – Social Media logos prompt sheet used in workshops

Social media: what do you use (or recognise?)