

Press release: Culture is Digital report will unleash the creative potential of technology for cultural organisations

DCMS Secretary of State Matt Hancock announced the move as part of the [Culture is Digital report](#), which sets out an ambitious framework for how culture and technology can work together to increase participation and boost the capability of cultural organisations.

It is the first time that the Government has looked at how the two sectors can work together to unleash the creative potential of technology and help bring every cultural organisation – both big and small – into the digital age.

The report makes a number of commitments, including:

- Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund will invest more than £2 million to build the digital capacity of their sectors
- The National Gallery will create an Innovation Lab to examine how museums and cultural organisations can use immersive media, such as virtual and augmented reality, to enhance visitors' experiences
- The Royal Opera House will create an Audience Lab, which will work with diverse talent to create content using emerging technologies and develop cross-sector collaborations

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Our cultural output has always been our unique calling card to the rest of the world and when combined with the latest digital developments there is no limit to our creativity.

We want the UK to be the best place in the world to trial pioneering technology, while also maintaining our world leading status as a centre of artistic and cultural excellence.

Our Culture Is Digital report sets out how culture and technology can collaborate, learn from one another and keep innovating. By embracing new technologies and attracting more diverse audiences, we will continue to cement our status as a creative powerhouse in the digital age.

The [Culture is Digital report](#) showcases innovative projects in the creative sector, highlighting the extraordinary collaborations between our world-leading cultural and digital pioneers.

It was launched at the National Gallery showcasing some of the finest recent examples of digital culture, including cutting-edge immersive installations using the latest technology.

The #CultureisDigital project was informed by an [online open conversation](#) last year and was borne out of the Government's [Culture White Paper](#) commitment to review the digitisation of our public collections and enhance the online cultural experience.

It also builds upon the Government's [UK Digital Strategy](#) commitment to increase digital skills, digital participation and unlock the power of data.

Dr Gabriele Finaldi, National Gallery Director, said:

The National Gallery is committed to an ambitious five-year programme of digital change. This goes from evolving our approach to ticketing through the use of big data, to launching new mobile services, to embedding innovation in immersive media in the Gallery through our forthcoming Lab. We are excited by today's launch of the Culture is Digital report. The commitment it marks from DCMS, the Arts Council and cultural organisations across the country to digital transformation heralds an exciting new period for us all.

Royal Opera House Chief Executive Alex Beard said:

When culture and technology come together, great things can happen. The Royal Opera House is exploring immersive technology to open up a suite of new experiences, sharing the extraordinary qualities of ballet and opera with audiences old and new in our digital age. This report acts as a useful framework for all in our sectors to explore this territory.

Arts Council England will also create and pilot the use of a Digital Maturity Index for the cultural sector, to help organisations improve their digital capability.

ACE will also work with the Heritage Lottery Fund to form a Digital Culture Code – a set of guidelines and principles which cultural organisations will be encouraged to sign up to help increase their digital skills.

Arts Council England Chief Executive Darren Henley said:

Every day across England, artists, performers, museums, libraries and arts organisations create brilliant new content. We want to make sure they have the skills to use the best technology to enable more people in more places to connect directly to this deep well of creativity.

Heritage Lottery Fund Chief Executive Ros Kerslake said:

We welcome this timely report from DCMS. As we have set out in our current consultation on future funding, HLF is committed to supporting digital capacity in the heritage sector, building on the considerable progress that has already been made. We look forward to working with Arts Council England and other partners in making our collective aspirations for digital culture a reality.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Showcases at the event included:

- Factory 42 – Hold the World with David Attenborough: In Hold the World, Sir David and the Natural History Museum are brought together using a combination of interactive video game technology and TV documentary. Sir David will be transformed into a hologram and will guide participants to virtually handle fossils, using his passion for the natural world to bring objects to life.
- Science Museum/Alchemy VR: Space Descent VR, a unique and immersive virtual reality experience commissioned by Alchemy VR for the Science Museum Group in which astronaut Tim Peake guides you through a thrilling, high-speed journey to Earth in the Soyuz TMA-19M.
- BBC/Civilisations: As part of the Culture UK initiative, BBC R&D has collaborated with BBC Arts to offer the museum sector, galleries and libraries a number of exciting opportunities to be involved in the news series 'Civilisations' on BBC 2.
- The Welsh National Opera/REWIND: Magic Butterfly – the combined experience of The Magic Flute and Madam Butterfly in VR – was a collaboration between the WNO and immersive content studio REWIND. The interactive immersive virtual reality experience combines motion capture, animation, music and technology.
- Smartify: A virtual art guide enabling audiences to scan and identify artwork in museums and receive rich information via text, audio and video using augmented reality.
- You can follow #CultureIsDigital on social media and explore our [interactive 360 degree presentation](#) that allows users to learn about case studies and other key aspects of the report.