

Speech: Jeremy Wright speech to Edinburgh International Culture Summit

Good afternoon everybody. It's great to be able to join in the welcome to you all here to this fourth Edinburgh International Culture Summit.

And there is of course no better backdrop for this event than this wonderful city during the height of the festival season.

As you will already appreciate and come to appreciate, these iconic festivals are a living, breathing example of the incredible power of culture in transforming our lives and our cities.

Visitors from across the world have been flocking to see some of our biggest names, side-by-side with smaller productions. And of course giving our economy a boost as they do so.

The Edinburgh International Festival and the Fringe encapsulates the creativity and ingenuity that can be found all across the United Kingdom.

As we leave the EU, we will use that creativity to show the world that we remain an open, welcoming and outward looking nation.

This summit provides a unique platform for ministers and cultural leaders from across the globe to discuss the big issues that impact us all.

One of the themes of this Summit particularly struck a chord with me, and that was culture in a networked world.

As our Culture is Digital report identified, technology offers unprecedented opportunities for culture in the UK and beyond.

Every day we see the seismic power of technology and its ability to engage new audiences, drive new business models, and increase access to world-class archives and collections.

Some of our oldest and most prestigious sites are using technology to meet demand for new digital experiences and to reach those less engaged with culture.

Cultural organisations also have a powerful role to play in how we interpret information in the digital age.

In a world of social media echo chambers, cultural organisations are vital in challenging our views and introducing us to new perspectives.

I know that many of you are working on your own programmes to combine your great cultural institutions with the most cutting edge, impressive technology.

This will be the new cultural frontier over the coming years.

And we can only really make the most of it if we are open minded about and we work together, regardless of boundaries.

That's why events like today are so important.

Thank you to Sir Jonathan Mills and your team for your continued passion and dedication, and your hard work in organising this event.

Thank you to all the partners involved in making it happen, including the Scottish Government, the British Council, Edinburgh International Festival and the Scottish Parliament.

And speaking of the Scottish Parliament, thank you to the Presiding Officer for allowing us to host the Summit in this spectacular Chamber.

Let us all make the most of this opportunity. Because culture shows humanity at our best.

It is my privilege to open this important Summit.

The ideas and conversations that we will share over the coming days will show the world how the enduring power of culture can strengthen the bonds between our nations.

Thank you very much.