

Museums Matter

Innovation

Innovation is the foundation of business success and takes many forms – ground-breaking research, scientific developments, creative design or artistic output. Innovation may be the adoption of new forms of technology or finding an alternative way of using something more traditional. Government, business and universities all wish to encourage and sustain innovation and place greater emphasis on knowledge. As knowledge-based institutions with collections, museums provide a valuable asset to innovation. They support academic research, technological development, the creative industries and the development of new digital products.

RESEARCH

Museum collections provide unique source materials for research. Museums of all sizes work in partnership with higher education and research institutions and technology developers, and museum-led research is funded by a variety of organisations. More than 350 scientists work at the Natural History Museum and in partnership with international collaborators they publish over 700 scientific papers each year using the collection of over 80 million specimens spanning 4.5 billion years. This research tackles pressing global issues such as improving crop yield for a growing global population or tackling the spread of malaria through the study of mosquitoes.

A number of UK museums are formally recognised research institutes with Independent Research Organisation status, conducting research that makes a significant contribution to the sum of human knowledge. Museum research is led by museum curators, who are highly regarded in their academic fields, and they support numerous museum-based collaborative doctoral awards. The subjects explored by museum-led research are numerous and diverse: recent examples include the study of prisoner of war diaries; turtle diversity; food distribution networks; digital preservation; osteology; fashion and African cities; faith, slavery and identity; and children's play in the new media age.



Museum collections are a **rich source of inspiration** for the UK's **creative industries**.



INSPIRING BUSINESS AND DESIGN

Museum collections are a rich source of inspiration for the UK's creative industries. Museums are also able to showcase new or local design through events, exhibitions and retail. The V&A, as the world's leading museum of art and design, is an invaluable source of inspiration to the UK's creative sector. It, like Leeds Museums, Manchester City Galleries and many more, works with an array of creative businesses from architects to fashion houses to games designers. Museums work with students, SMEs and internationally-recognised firms as co-creators, inspiration or to provide a showcase. The Museum of London Tweed, based on fabric in the collection, was created by British fashion labels Liberty and Christy's Hats. It was then turned into a suit by London tailors Norton & Sons and modelled for a global audience by musician Tinie Tempah for London Collections Men, a showcase of British menswear.

DIGITAL

Museums have become leaders in digital innovation. They are respected publishers of trusted content, serving the audience which visits the museum as well as another which may not. Museums have embraced opportunities for major partnerships with both small and multi-national digital technology companies and have transformed museum data into an asset. Increasingly sophisticated virtual tours and games have allowed geographically remote audiences to build relationships with museums. Tate's annual IK Prize celebrates creative talent in the digital industries. The 2014 winner, *Tate After Dark* by London studio The Workers, allowed users of the app to see the Tate Britain galleries over four nights via camera-mounted robots who were guided by "masters": the first master was Colonel Chris Hadfield, retired commander of the International Space Station. The project won Apollo's 2015 Digital Innovation of the Year and was honoured at the 2015 Webby Award.