

CUPIDO (Culture Power: to inspire development in rural areas) Interreg Project and XpoNorth Heritage Online Digital Heritage Workshop Programme

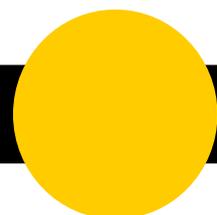
Covid-19 - Bringing Museums to the Home by Creating Virtual Museums

CUPIDO and XpoNorth Heritage will hold a series of online workshops aimed at the Heritage sector and hosted by University of St Andrews. These workshops will aim to help develop skills that help heritage organisations to connect with existing and potential audiences through digital media.

The impact of COVID-19 on the heritage sector has been huge with museums and visitor centres closed and potential visitors confined to their homes. At the same time there has been a flourishing of online heritage interactions, often through social media and accessible via devices available in the home.

This series of workshops aims to facilitate the sharing of skills and resources, whilst helping to equip heritage professional and volunteers in working with heritage online. We envisage the program will address the following issues. It will start in May, will be free to access and available to all.

- 1) **Creating Media:** Developing these skills will build the capacity of museums to develop digital resources in-house. Some activities will be restricted within lockdown but their value will be realised as restrictions are relaxed.
 - a. Digitising collections: how to light and create high quality photographs of collections.
 - b. Learning photogrammetry to digitise artefacts, buildings and landscapes.
 - c. Spherical media, working with phones and commodity cameras to create 360 images and videos.
 - d. Working with drones and aerial photography.
- 2) **Publishing online :** There are many digital resources in museums that are not currently online. Publishing them online will build capacity within the museum and add value to the collections. Support for digital archiving, metadata creation and understanding digital licensing will equip museums to
 - a. Archiving, metadata and intellectual property
 - b. Working with social media, social archiving and mapping sites.
- 3) **Curating Exhibits and Exhibitions :** exhibition building frameworks will support the development of skills I design and creating a museum for the home developed at home!
 - a. Designing digital exhibition panels; which are enhanced with interactive media.
(<https://eu-lac.org/vmcarib/>)
 - b. Interactive mapping: engaging with immersive media organised spatially
(<https://goo.gl/maps/GnApx9xrF8wz5o7t6>)
 - c. Augmented reality exhibits: bring ancient artefacts into the home with the augmented reality framework
 - d. Transforming space with 360 media in the home



4) **Live Engagement:** enabling visitors to book tours over the internet, present workshops and facilitate discussions over the Internet whilst never leaving the home. The combination of infrastructure, live seminars and tutorials and asynchronous communication will enable the creation of learning experiences

which build the capacity of heritage professionals and volunteers to connect with audiences in the home.

Background

Both natural and cultural heritage hold invaluable roles within our society. Museum visits promote tourism, understanding of cultures whether our own or of others, and is a resource for secondary education, social interactions enrich our education, social life and economies. COVID-19 threatens the traditional ways that audiences have previously interacted with heritage and museums. (<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/blogs/how-coronavirus-covid-19-affecting-heritage-sector>) Today, museums, heritage sites, schools and universities are closed. People are confined to their homes except for essential activities. At the time of writing, it is not clear how long this situation will last, but it is likely that even when restrictions are lifted, the normality we return too will be fundamentally different to the normality we were previously used to.

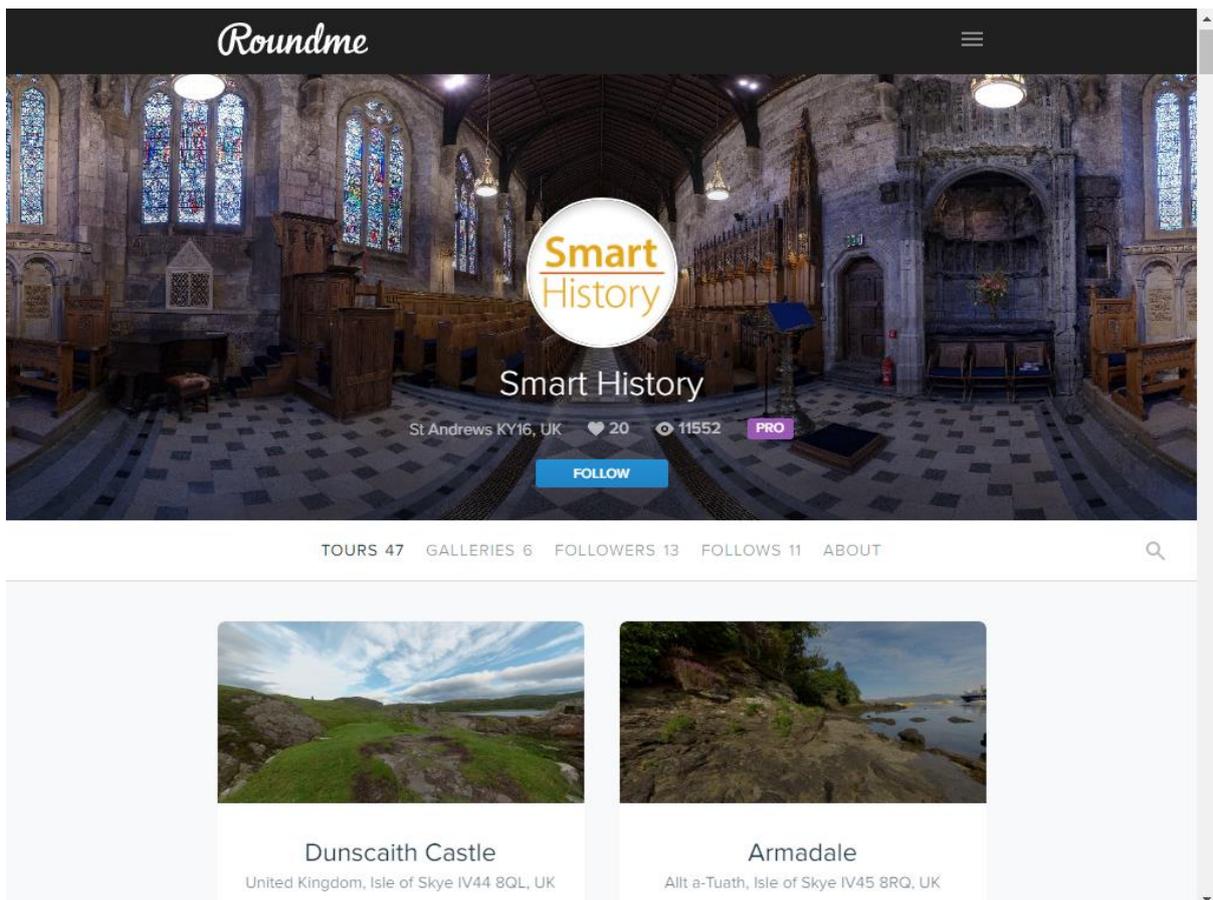


Figure 1 Spherical media can bring the museum experiences into the home.

The possibility of direct physical interaction with heritage is greatly restricted and likely to remain so. However, rigid isolation came at a time when digital advances were transforming the way people engage with heritage. Virtual Reality (VR) headsets offer the possibility of immersion to historical times



and places inaccessible due to barriers of space and time. Digitisation through photogrammetry and scanning enable the creation of virtual galleries of 3D digital artefacts (<https://sketchfab.com/eu-lac-3D/collections>). Spherical media supports the creation of engaging scenes that captivate the visitor in natural and cultural heritage (<https://roundme.com/@smarthistory/tours>). Widespread digital literacies had enabled the development of straightforward VR exhibits in museums and galleries prior to their closure (<https://vimeo.com/208677167>).

The capabilities of commodity computers, cameras, mobile phones and drones make it possible for digital media, interactive exhibits as well as digital or mixed media exhibitions to become a normalised part of the workflows of heritage professionals and volunteers (<https://www.cpubenchmark.net/>). VR was progressively changing from a method of engagement only produced for high-end exhibitions created by specialist companies, to integrating within the processes of exhibition development and produced by project partner, students or adept museum staff.

COVID-19 has placed digital representations of heritage at the forefront of heritage engagement, and are not the primary method of interaction with at-home audiences. Rather than travelling from the home to the museum, it is now necessary for the museum to be brought into the home.

There is widespread access to the internet through smart phones and through broadband connections in the home. Similarly, there is widespread availability of computers, tablets and mobiles which will enable access to virtual museum content. (<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>)

The Virtual Museum Infrastructure (VMI), which supports learning to work with immersive and mobile technologies and provides a framework for connecting audiences with digital exhibitions. The VMI developed at the University of St Andrews as part of the Horizon 2020 EU-LAC Museums project (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1111/muse.12198>) and the Northern Peripheries and Arctic Program CINE project (<https://cineg.org/>) will be the template used in supporting this endeavour.

The infrastructure simplifies the process for museums and other heritage organisations to create their own virtual museums, by providing services, digital toolkits, exhibition building resources and delivery frameworks (<https://eu-lac.org/virtual-museums/>).

CUPIDO

CUPIDO Interreg North Sea Region culture project is about developing new business opportunities in the cultural and cultural heritage sector. This is to reinforce the economic position, competitiveness and social inclusion of local rural communities. CUPIDO is cultural activities such as art, dance, music and cultural heritage. The project has 16 partners from 7 countries and runs from 2019 to 2021.

HIE and St Andrews are working with communities and social enterprises across the region on a programme of transnational digital activities designed to help commercialise the culture sector.

<https://northsearegion.eu/cupido/about/>

