

10 WAYS THAT DIGITAL ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS BENEFITS MILLIONS OF AUSTRALIANS

1. PROVIDING VALUABLE RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHERS

Stonnington History Centre

"Digitising the collection for adding to the catalogue means our collection can be accessed online out of hours and viewed by the local community, as well as by people interstate or overseas. Our collection is well used. We have dozens if not hundreds of requests for copies of our photos for personal use or for publication each year. Most researchers now begin by searching online. As a researcher myself, I would only access a collection that is not online as a later/last resort. I would be reluctant to travel interstate to view a collection without knowing if it was worth my while beforehand."

Malvern Historical Society (www.vicnet.net.au/~malvern)

The Malvern Historical Society email is a vital link for researchers. An almost immediate response is received and the email can be forwarded straight through to the Stonnington History Centre for attention. Enquiries often result in the donation of material. People appreciate seeing that their donation will be catalogued and added to the 65,000 key word search entries on the Stonnington History Collection. Image and record donations can be scanned and then sent as an attachment so that the original remains in the possession of the donor. Donors really appreciate that their donation is being valued and visually shared with the wider community, rather than just stored in an archive.

Australian Academy of the Humanities

Humanities research examples having benefits to the innovation, research, education system and beyond include:

- [Founders and Survivors](#): A project that digitises and analyses the 19th Century corpus of the convict records of Tasmania
- [20th Century in Paint](#): A project that examines the introduction of new media, pigments, dyes and additives through revolutionary art practices in the 20th century
- [PARADESIC](#), The Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Culture: a facility for digital conservation and access to endangered materials from all over the world
- Professor Mark Finnane FAHA FASSA ARC Laureate-funded [The Prosecution Project](#) which is digitising historical prosecution records – akin to the [Old Bailey online](#)
- The [ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language](#) which is developing new methods for obtaining and managing big data from a wide range of little-studied languages

Examples of Australia Research Council projects involving cultural data projects with GLAM sector partners follow. Each of these points to the fact that digitised cultural material, other electronic cultural resources and infrastructure needed to connect and access these records are fundamental to collaboration, increased exploitation of opportunities specific to cultural disciplines, and the transformation of cultural research practices and outcomes.

Australian Research Council funded projects

Project ID: LE100100201

Lead Investigator: Vivien Johnson

Year: 2010

Administering Organisation: The University of New South Wales

Participating Organisations: The University of Sydney; La Trobe University; University of South Australia; The University of Adelaide; The Flinders University of South Australia; RMIT University; The University of Western Australia; University of Tasmania; Queensland University of Technology; National Library of Australia; National Portrait Gallery; State Library of New South Wales

Project Summary

The Design & Art of Australia Online (DAAO) archive provides global exposure for Australian scholarship on art and design, along with tangible economic, social and cultural benefits toward the sustainability of cultural industries. The next generation of the DAAO will enable cultural policy to be informed by an expanded and growing collection of scholarly research. It contributes to national digital humanities infrastructure by collaboratively working toward efficient discovery of data and interoperative infrastructure. Moreover the DAAO has potential as an enabling technology for Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector in meeting the challenges of unethical conduct, sustainability and further developing international markets.

Project ID: FT150100168

Lead Investigator Name: Alistair Paterson

Years: 2015-2019

Administering Organisation: The University of Western Australia

Participating Organisations: Harvard University, USA; British Museum; WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM; State Library of Western Australia

Project Summary

This project plans to use archaeology to write the first modern synthesis of Australia's north-west: a region hosting significant cultural, natural and heritage values including two National Heritage List estates. The project plans to conduct work at significant sites and collections which will build on recent exciting archaeological and rock art discoveries and theoretical innovations to analyse the cross-cultural encounters between Aboriginal people, Europeans and Asians in frontier colonial society. The project aims to provide data and tools for understanding and managing nationally-significant threatened archaeological resources valuable for future tourist industries.

Project ID: LE140100024

Lead Investigator: Julian Meyrick

Year: 2014

Administering Organisation: The Flinders University of South Australia

Participating Organisations: The University of Queensland; Monash University; Edith Cowan University; The University of Melbourne; Deakin University; Murdoch University; The University of Newcastle; Queensland University of Technology; University of Wollongong; The University of New South Wales; La Trobe University; Australian Catholic University; Australia Council ; University of Oslo, Norway; Performing Arts Heritage Network of Museums Australia; State Theatre Company of South Australia

Project Summary

AusStage Phase 5: Australian live performance and the world – global networks, national culture and aesthetic transmission: AusStage stimulates new approaches to collaborative research and pioneers innovative methodologies for researching live performance in Australia. However, the creativity of Australian artists extends beyond national borders. This

project will internationalise AusStage by: developing new methodologies for analysing aesthetic transmission between Australian and international artists; collaborating with international partners to share data and enable research across national borders; and extending the data set to support research on global markets, international distribution and cultural diplomacy. New developments will support innovative research on live performance of international significance and collaborations with international partners.

2. FUELLING INNOVATION

National Library of Australia, Trove (http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-17/world-first-3d-printed-hand-prosthesis-inspired-by-1845-design/7032736?WT.ac=statenews_act)

Trove has an average of 55,000 unique users per day and more than 20 million unique users per annum. There many stories about the positive impact digital access has had on the lives of individuals and there are a number of examples of how digital access has led to important scientific and policy outcomes. An excellent example of this is the development of a prosthetic hand, based on an 1845 design. This breakthrough would not have happened without the digital access provided by the Trove portal.

3. KEEPING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND CUSTOMS ALIVE

Ara Irititja (<http://www.irititja.com/>) and National Film and Sound Archive

The Ara Irititja Project is a model for Indigenous archives in Australia and internationally. It shows how to deal respectfully with cultural heritage and it supports the maintenance of first languages.

The National Film and Sound Archive identifies and digitises relevant holdings in consultation with the Indigenous communities and provides copies to those communities. The community is involved in both the provision of access to this material by third parties and the identification of highly sensitive cultural recordings which require specific community control. In some instances repatriated material provides the only known record of customs since lost to those communities. Copies of films made in the 1930s and '40s by mission staff on Mornington Island were returned to the community and found to contain records of lost customs including canoe making techniques, now reintroduced for younger generations to master.

4. RETELLING THE ANZAC STORIES

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS: National Archives of Australia (www.naa.gov.au)

For the National Archives' *Discovering Anzacs* website, members of the public are encouraged to add their own family photographs and stories to the site and to transcribe the original, digitised service records. More than 100,000 contributions have been made since the site's launch in October 2014 and there have been nearly 7.5 million page views.

The *Learn* section on the site supported by the Department of Veteran Affairs, is for use in the school classroom and by the general community featuring video tutorials to support the interpretation of the digitised service records, an interactive timeline, a school and community toolkit with lesson plans and worksheets, and tips and tools for creating an exhibition for Anzac Day in school or the community.

HELPING PEOPLE UNCOVER THEIR FAMILY HISTORIES: State Library of Queensland

The State Library of Queensland's *ANZAC 100: Memories for a New Generation* features 27,000 soldier portraits, originally published in *The Queenslander* newspaper. Through this project, family members were able to see the first high quality picture of an indigenous serviceman from their family – Soldier Valentine Hare. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-23/wwi-aboriginal-soldiers-service-records-return-before-anzac-day/6416726>

REPATRIATING PERSONAL EFFECTS: State Library of South Australia

The South Australian Red Cross Information Bureau website allows institutions, researchers and family historians worldwide to search, contribute to and harvest the database of records donated to the State Library of South Australia by the Red Cross in 1919. Each soldier is linked to their service records at the National Archives of Australia, Australian War Memorial and, where available, a link to a personal notice from the *Chronicle* newspaper in Trove.

State Library staff digitised 8024 packets of information, creating a total of 76,718 pages which were indexed by volunteers. This resulted in more than 19,000 names being indexed and turned into individual records in the website.

The website has been well received and has resulted in engagement with the interested community and in some instances, the repatriation of personal effects of a soldier to the family.

5. SUPPORTING OUR ASIA-PACIFIC NEIGHBOURS

University of Wollongong

<http://encore.library.uow.edu.au/iii/cpro/CollectionViewPage.external;jsessionid=A11D171E97E310262D7467C87E0A0178?lang=eng&sp=1000012&suite=def>

The Cochrane collection is the most highly used UOW Library archival digital collection. It was created in 2013 and features 1105 digitised photographs and audio files made available online, as well as some radio broadcasts from the period in which Percy and Susan Cochrane were located in Papua New Guinea in the 1960s.

To date there have been over 142,000 instances of online access to the collection. It has been used to celebrate the 40th anniversary of PNG independence, and images have been used to produce a calendar for distribution through PNG primary schools. Images have also been reproduced by the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

6. MAKING COMMUNITY HISTORIES EASILY ACCESSIBLE

University of Wollongong Library (<http://ro.uow.edu.au/ihspubs/>, <http://ro.uow.edu.au/ihsbulletin/>)

In 2014-15 UOW Library collaborated with the Illawarra Historical Society (IHS) and Museum and the Wollongong City Library to digitise a range of IHS publications. The result of this effort was free online access to 21 IHS publications dating from 1964, and 1325 articles relating to the Illawarra extracted from the *IHS Bulletin*, commencing in 1945. In-document full-text searching was made available via Google and between December 2014 and 2015 there have been over 16,700 full-text downloads of *Bulletin* articles and 2325 of the booklet series.

Port Melbourne Historical Society

The website is used to report local events of historical interest since these are not covered by local papers anymore. It is hoped these will one day become part of the record:

Ted Baillieu's speech at the ANZAC Centenary

commemoration <http://www.pmhps.org.au/2014/10/this-is-the-place/>

Frank Vincent's speech at the Whittaker

commemoration <http://www.pmhps.org.au/2013/11/port-in-the-twenties-a-difficult-suffering-place/>.

7. PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

State Library of South Australia

The State Library has 23 data sets available through data.sa.gov.au. These data sets have been made available for GovHack, the SA nodes of GovHack – Unleashed Open Data competition and N3xGen Unleashed; as well as the national WW1 Hack. The exposure and use of these data sets, particularly in the youth competition have contributed to the development of young entrepreneurs, building a cohort of skills, partnership opportunities as well as furthering the Library's presence in this demographic and the open data agenda.

8. FEEDING MAINSTREAM MEDIA

State Library of South Australia

The State Library of South Australia's continued Flickr presence has resulted in nearly 2 million views of the Library's collections to date, averaging 5000 views per day. Exposure on the Flickr site has resulted in photographs being used by journalists around the world for online articles.

National Film and Sound Archive (<http://anzacsightsound.org>)

The National Film and Sound Archive has produced a series of digital centenary "newsreels" which have reached more than one million viewers on national TV and have screened before top rating movies at over 100 cinemas across all States reaching both metropolitan and regional audiences. There were 9000 online sessions the first month the website launched and since then, usage has continued to grow.

9. RESTORING HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Lilydale & District Historical Society (www.lilydalehistorical.com.au)

Lilydale & District Historical society has more than 4000 images in its collection. They have sold licensed copies to media companies in Australia and overseas, and "locally, our images and research have helped secure the future of two of Lilydale's oldest homes, both now being lovingly restored by their owners who also proudly hang our images of their homes in pride of place. Both the owners and our community benefit from the retention of the homes and their place in our local history."

Digitisation of the image collection has created an important revenue stream to cover the society's property rent; displays; additional equipment such as scanners, printers, computers and the internet.

10. CONNECTING FRIENDS AND FAMILIES

Mortlake and District Historical Society

The Mortlake and District Historical Society Inc created its Facebook page in 2011. “Among the most popular and discussion-inducing images are football and other sporting photos, Deb Ball photos – especially from the 1970s and 1980s – and school photos. School photos from the 1960s through to the 1990s resonate with many of our followers aged in their 30s to 60s. Without doubt MDHS's increased membership is due largely to our Facebook profile. A significant number of new members are in their 40s which, for an Historical Society, is unusual.”

Port Melbourne Historical Society

The Society reaches out to people with a connection to Port Melbourne who no longer live here through our blog and facebook page. Facebook is often the first port of call for people looking to connect with their family history. The Society's blog posts have prompted beautiful moments of recall from people hitherto not known to the Society <http://www.pmhps.org.au/2014/07/lost-shops-of-graham-street/>.