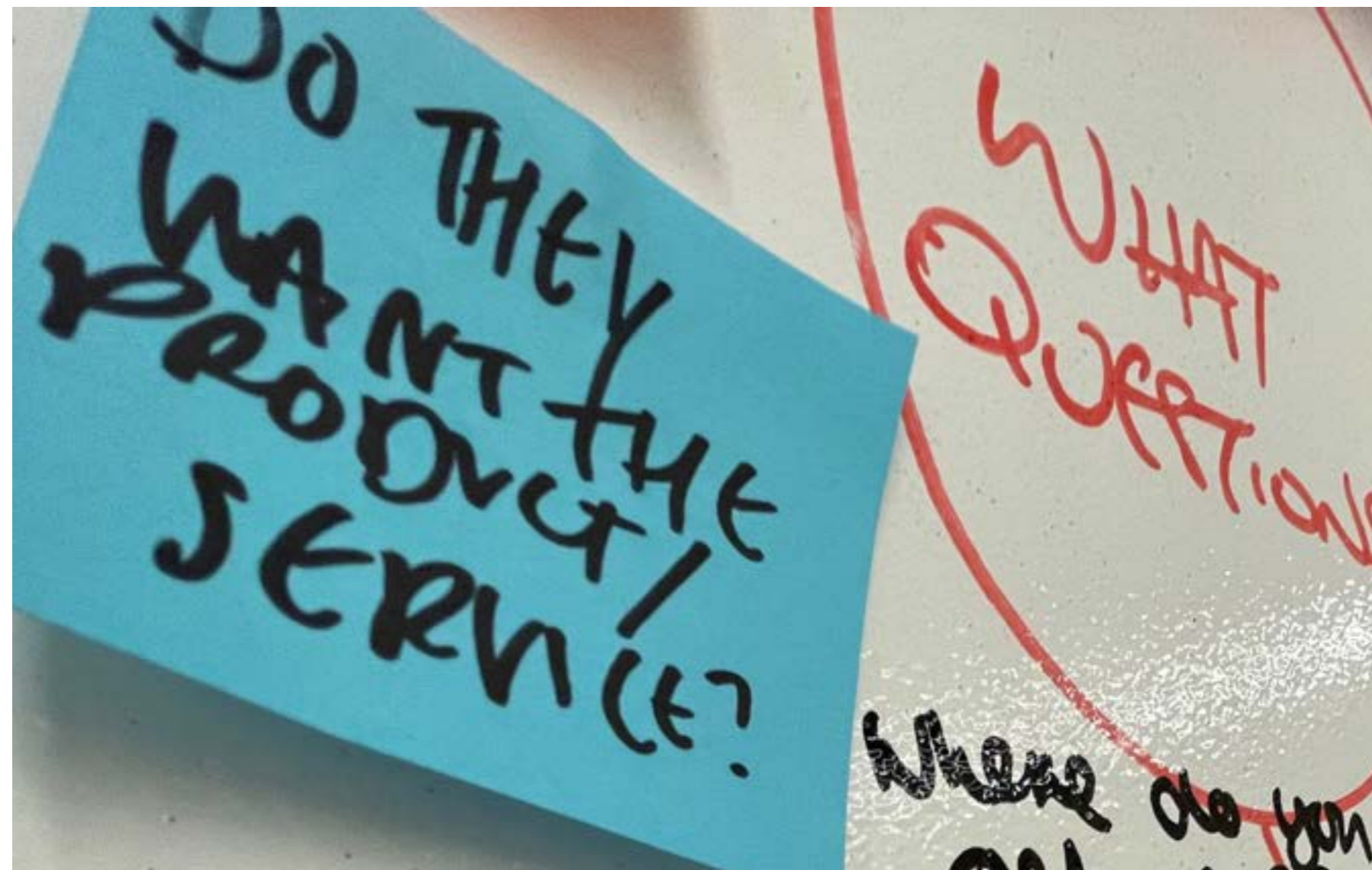


The Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector and the Creative Industries:

Towards a Shared Practice

A PDR Expertise Report
2021 - 2022

Sally Cloke, Jo Ward and Andy Walters



Contents

Page 4	Introduction
Page 5	Sources and methods
Page 7	Museums and Covid-19: Resilience and resistance
Page 11	Case study 1: PDR and Amgueddfa Cymru / Museum Wales
Page 16	Analysis: Skillsets and mindsets
Page 20	Shaping the future: Three key mindsets
Page 23	Case study 2: Clwstwr and Hissing Currents
Page 28	Case study 3: Clwstwr's Amgueddfa Cymru Challenge and Sugar Creative
Page 30	Toward a shared practice: A framework for collaboration
Page 38	Conclusion and recommendations

Introduction

This report draws on the experience PDR gained working with Clwstwr and other partner organisations in the arts, culture and heritage sector.

This report has two main aims. Firstly, to analyse the challenges and opportunities facing the arts, culture and heritage (AC&H) sector as it emerges from the debilitating disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic and reorients itself towards the future.

Secondly, as the sector continues to re-establish itself, many institutions are exploring partnerships with the creative industries. This report seeks to conceptualise a framework for creative industries organisations and AC&H institutions to collaborate effectively in producing innovative services, experiences and products that will help shape the future of the sector.

After a discussion of sources and methods, the report introduces Clwstwr Creadigol and provides an overview of Clwstwr-supported AC&H projects. The next section offers an analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on museums, as the experience of this sub-sector largely mirrors trends within AC&H as a whole.¹

The report then features an illustrative case study of how major UK cultural institution Amgueddfa Cymru / Museum Wales pivoted to digital during the Covid-19 pandemic and have continued to negotiate the divide between physical and digital while working with creative industry partners including PDR.

This section is followed by a discussion of what PDR has identified as some key skillsets and mindsets essential for the future flourishing of the AC&H sector. As with the opening section of this report, this part focuses on museums as an exemplar of the

wider sector. It includes case studies of two Clwstwr projects – Hissing Currents and the Amgueddfa Cymru Challenge with Sugar Creative – to illustrate what some of these mindsets and skillsets may look like in practice.

This leads into the presentation of PDR’s futuring and innovation framework, a tool PDR has developed to evaluate and compare how organisations understand innovation and the degrees of risk they are prepared to take. We encourage creative industries organisation to customise this framework and use it when partnering with AC&H organisations to optimise the collaboration process.

To conclude, the report presents a set of recommendations for the future-readiness of the AC&H sector.

Sources and methods

This report incorporates data from the following sources:

- A desk review of recent reports and academic articles on the current state of the AC&H sector as well as relevant Clwstwr and PDR-generated documents.
- Expertise gained from PDR’s experience running workshops and providing one-on-one support for ten Clwstwr AC&H projects and with Amgueddfa Cymru / Museum Wales (AC-MW).
- Insights gathered through a co-creation workshop run by PDR in September 2021 with a cross-section of AC-MW’s community partners. This was held as part of the exploratory research for the Clwstwr / Amgueddfa Cymru Challenge – an opportunity for creative enterprises to apply for funding to develop ways to rethink the museum experience. The workshop was attended by

people who represented or were supported by cultural and community organisations the museum regularly works with: Race Council Cymru, Disability Arts Wales, Draig Enfys (Rainbow Dragon), Mentrau Iaith Cymru (MIC) and PLANED (Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development).

- A series of open-ended interviews commissioned specifically for this report which PDR ran during May and June 2022 with:

*Gavin Johnson, Clwstwr Producer.
Richard King, author and Clwstwr project participant.*

Ashley McAvoy, Exhibitions Manager, AC-MW.

Will Humphrey, Creative Director, Sugar Creative.

A process of thematic analysis was applied to the interview material. Thematic analysis involves identifying and making sense of patterns or themes within qualitative data. It is a widely used method for gaining insights into human behaviour, perceptions and experiences.²

In addition, some of the contents of this report, including the futuring and innovation framework, were user-tested in a workshop run by PDR in June 2022 with a representative of the museum sector and members of PDR’s user-centred design team.

¹ The terms “museum”, “art gallery” and “exhibition” are used interchangeably throughout this report.

² Kiger, M.E., & Varpio, L. (2020): Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131, Medical Teacher, DOI: 10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030.

PDR worked with the following AC&H Clwstwr projects to provide research and development training and support:

Aomame – an interactive 3D art space where visitors can experience exhibitions, live performances and virtual happenings.

Arall – digital agency Sugar Creative was awarded the Amgueddfa Cymru Challenge for their proposal to use technology to enable AC-MW visitors to see museum artefacts from other people's perspectives. **See case study p. 26.**

Brittle With Relics – a network of location-specific interactive audio installations that connect Welsh oral histories gathered by author Richard King to local geography and history. **See comments from Richard p. 10.**

Fieldwork/From Here – an online environment that aims to capture the best aspects of a physical gallery such as the opportunity to engage with artists.

Heritage Walkers – an interactive augmented treasure hunt that combines digital characters with Welsh history and landscape.

Hissing Currents – an experimental live music performance and immersive visual installation created by musician Gruff Rhys that enables audiences to become co-creators. **See case study p. 23.**

National Eisteddfod of Wales – using augmented reality to encourage new audiences to experience the Eisteddfod.

Taking Flight – live theatre showcasing performers with disabilities that uses a combination of virtual and physical delivery to overcome accessibility barriers.

Tiny City – using online delivery to communicate visual aspects of live performance to blind and visually impaired audiences.

Yello Brick – an interactive narrative game that unfolds through a range of digital and physical media linked to real-world locations.

Museums and Covid-19

Resilience and resistance

Along with the wider AC&H sector, the world's museums were hit hard by Covid-19. In the opening months of 2020, industry bodies and cultural organisations produced numerous reports detailing the impact of lockdowns on income, jobs and confidence for the future. Such resources have been invaluable in compiling this analysis.³

Follow-up reports and academic articles documented the steps museums were taking to stay afloat: staff redundancies, furloughs or reassignments; remote working; increased digitisation of collections; greater social media use; and more virtual exhibitions, tours and other resources to meet a massive surge in online visitors.⁴

The situation faced by freelance professionals was particularly precarious,

with 20% losing their employment due to covid restrictions in early 2020.⁵

Some museum directors were concerned that patrons would never return in their pre-lock-down numbers; others wondered how they would cope if they did, considering the demands of social distancing and other health measures.⁶

Globally, almost 95% of museums were shut to the public, some for weeks, others for months,⁷ while the closure of international borders and disruptions to the school year continued to reduce visitor numbers long after stay-home orders were lifted.⁸ But while the pandemic had a similar impact on museums the world over, it had far from the same effect: there were substantial differences in how successfully organisations coped.

Existing divides were sharpened: larger institutions fared better than smaller ones, urban than rural, public than privately funded, Global North than South.⁹ While the most decisive

³ For examples see: Covid-19 impact: museum sector research findings, Art Fund (UK), May 2020; CultureHive. (n.d.). Covid-19 Impact: Museum sector research findings. [online] Available at: <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/resources/covid-19-impact-museum-sector-research-findings/>. Survey on the impact of the COVID-19 situation on museums in Europe Final Report. (n.d.). [online] Available at: https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMO_documents/NEMO_COVID19_Report_12.05.2020.pdf. ICOM. (n.d.). Survey: Museums, museum professionals and COVID-19. [online] Available at: <https://icom.museum/en/covid-19/surveys-and-data/survey-museums-and-museum-professionals/>. UNESCO (2020). Museums around the world in the face of COVID-19. [online] Unesco.org. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530>.

⁴ Follow-up survey on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on museums in Europe Final Report Follow-up Survey on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on museums in Europe - Final Report. (2021). [online] Available at: https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMO_documents/NEMO_COVID19_FollowUpReport_11.1.2021.pdf

⁵ ICOM (2021).

⁶ Art Fund (2020).

⁷ ICOM (2021).

⁸ UNESCO (2021).

⁹ ICOM (2021).

factor in a museum's pandemic resilience was whether it had already begun digitising its collections and developing an online presence,¹⁰ this tended to follow the same fault lines: for example, only 5% of museums in Africa were able to produce online content during Covid.¹¹

As well as a world-wide health crisis, 2020 brought other challenges. Western museums found themselves enmeshed in heated debates about decolonisation, representation and racism spotlighted by the global Black Lives Matter campaign.¹² Extreme weather events and record global temperatures¹³ intensified the pressure to make museums' premises and practices environmentally sustainable.¹⁴

The fact that the sector survived the past few years with an estimated global closure rate of just over 4% (far better than initially predicted)¹⁵ demonstrates that organisations self-described as "staid"¹⁶ and "slow and

sluggish"¹⁷ can, with sufficient impetus and resources, embrace risk and innovation.

But short-term surviving does not guarantee long-term thriving. To retain skilled staff, conserve and develop their collections, facilitate research, serve their communities and take advantage of the ever-growing importance of the digital realm museums cannot return to a pre-pandemic mindset.

If Covid had a silver lining, it was the way it "acted as magnifying glass on the role, structure and functioning of museums",¹⁸ pushing the sector, as one museum director put it, "to really rethink everything".¹⁹ Many institutions took this opportunity to reflect on their relevance in the 21st century.

Some concern was expressed that a widespread culture of risk aversion would lead to museums slipping back into former patterns once the crisis of lock-down was over.²⁰ Encouragingly,

10 Noehrer, L., Gilmore, A., Jay, C. & Yehudi, Y. (2021). "The impact of COVID-19 on digital data practices in museums and art galleries in the UK and the US", *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, vol 8, no 236.

11 UNESCO (2020).

12 Sterling, C. & Harrison, R. (n.d.). Climate crisis: how museums could inspire radical action. [online] *The Conversation*. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/climate-crisis-how-museums-could-inspire-radical-action-142531>.

13 Bates, S. (2021). The Climate Events of 2020 Show How Excess Heat is Expressed on Earth. [online] NASA. Available at: <https://www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2021/the-climate-events-of-2020-show-how-excess-heat-is-expressed-on-earth>.

14 cimam.org. (n.d.). Toolkit on Environmental Sustainability in the Museum Practice - CIMAM. [online] Available at: <https://cimam.org/news-archive/toolkit-on-environmental-sustainability-in-the-museum-practice/>

15 ICOM (2021).

16 Sterling & Harrison (n.d.).

17 The Art Newspaper - International art news and events. (2021). Seven ways museums are responding to the climate crisis. [online] Available at: <https://www.theartnewspape.com/2021/11/04/changing-climate-changing-museums>.

18 NEMO (2021), p. 2.

19 Noehrer, L. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on digital data practices in museums and art galleries in the UK and the US. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*. [online] Available at: https://www.academia.edu/90392830/The_impact_of_COVID_19_on_digital_data_practices_in_museums_and_art_galleries_in_the_UK_and_the_US?f_ri=4986

20 Noehrer et al (2021), p. 8.

as of mid-2021, 80% of museums said they wanted to make an increased digital presence part of their ongoing offering. As one analysis noted, Covid prompted "a rapid re-assessment of the rationale for and purpose of digital engagement, placing it not as an enhancement to usual delivery or form of entertainment, but at the core of museum delivery".²¹ But there is less evidence of deeper structural change: at the same point, almost 60% of museums had not explored new sources of future revenue.²²

Well before Covid, many museums had sought to make themselves more agile, technologically-savvy and future-fit through collaborations with the creative industries. Bodies such as NEMO (Network of European Museums Organisations) were awake to the potential benefits of working with designers, musicians, digital artists and others: reaching new audiences, contributing to growth and jobs,

creating and sharing knowledge and developing innovative products, services and experiences.²³

While some in the sector would like to position museums as "creative industries in their own right", there are significant differences between the two cultures.²⁴ This can make collaborations between AC&H and the creative industries challenging and even frustrating.

A 2018 NEMO report presented several case studies of innovative creative industry and museum partnerships, while documenting some of the hurdles and barriers.

Divergent understandings of the focus of the creative collaboration formed a common sticking point: was it about communicating facts or offering experiences, education or entertainment, public service or profitability? Balancing the protection and security of their collections with public accessibility

and interactivity was another frequent point of conflict. Different measures of success, working practices, decision-making timelines and comfort zones brought other complications.²⁵

21 Noehrer et al (2021), p. 8.

22 ICOM (2021).

23 NEMO (2018).

24 NEMO (2018), p. 3.

25 NEMO (2018).

Richard King, a author and Clwstwr project participant with extensive experience working with museums and archives, has this to say about the sector:

There is a sort of bias towards small-c conservatism and being very risk averse. I think people outside of those institutions [such as in the creative industries] are naive to think they can come along and say, 'Look, you need to do it like this!', and bang the desk and something will happen. That's not how the world works.

In the two decades-plus I've been living and working back in Wales I've seen huge improvements, and I don't

want to do institutions down because they have a responsibility to the collections they oversee. The problem is, how do you get vital pieces of work out of conservation boxes and in front of people's eyeballs where they can enrich their lives and help them think?

This is where people outside of the system can collaborate with institutions in trying to come up with a third way, a shared practice of working together.²⁶

²⁶ King, R. (2022). Interview by Sally Cloke [Zoom], 13 May.

Case study 1

PDR and Amgueddfa Cymru / Museum Wales

Collaboration during Covid

How can creative enterprises and AC&H institutions develop a mutually beneficial "shared practice of working together"?

The following case study explores a successful partnership between PDR and Amgueddfa Cymru / Museum Wales (AC-MW). The two have worked together on a range of projects, including a touring exhibition kit designed to get museum artefacts into less-served communities, and the Amgueddfa Cymru Challenge. This was a funding opportunity delivered through Clwstwr to support creative industries in exploring ways to make the museum's collections more digitally and physically accessible.

This case study focuses on two major exhibitions the organisations worked on during Covid lock-down, each straddling the physical-digital divide in different ways. Insight and learnings gained from this partnership were instrumental in PDR's development of the futuring and innovation framework.

PDR asked AC-MW's exhibitions manager Ashley McAvoy for his perspective on working with the creative industries, adapting to lock-down and pivoting from physical to digital and back again.²⁷ Ashley's reflections reinforce at many points PDR's desk-research findings on the impact of Covid on museums.

Some background: AC-MW had been given access to previously unseen diaries, papers and personal objects from the Richard Burton Archives at Swansea University. Burton, who remains one of Wales's best known cultural exports, was born Richard Jenkins in 1925 in the village of

Pontrhydyfen, West Glamorgan. Today he is as famous for his turbulent relationship with fellow actor Elizabeth Taylor as for his interpretations of Shakespeare or his distinctive baritone. In 2017, planning began for "Becoming Richard Burton" to be staged at Cardiff National Museum with PDR brought in as a design lead in 2019.

The opening was set for 4 April 2020, but with just three weeks to go the UK went into Covid lock-down.

²⁷ McAvoy, A. (2022). Interview by Sally Cloke [Zoom], 06 May.

PDR:

What happened when lock-down hit?

Ashley McAvoy:

Initially we thought it was going to be a short-term thing. But after a couple of weeks, it was apparent things were much more serious. At that time, I got a message from our senior executive team asking, “Could we do anything digital with Burton?” We hadn’t planned any online components. To be honest, the museum was a bit behind the curve on digital exhibitions. So not only was this an opportunity to maintain public access to our work it was a chance to do some rapid catching up.

I had been working on ideas in the background, not only about digital exhibitions that users could access remotely, but physical exhibitions that were essentially digital content in a physical format. I’d also been having

conversations with PDR in relation to Clwstwr about what we could do with the museum as a content producer.

Ashley had wanted the museum to work with PDR since he took part in a Clwstwr workshop it had led on user-centred design. For the physical Richard Burton exhibition, PDR took the material the museum had curated and mapped it out from a user-centred perspective.

They created digital models of the exhibition gallery and conducted “walk throughs”, experimenting with the placement and prominence of artefacts, with how people would physically interact with the space and with what sort of narrative would be told. The online exhibition needed different expertise, so Ashley so partnered with digital creative agency Focus Group.

Ashley McAvoy:

Focus Group had been keen to work with us and had been pitching ideas for digital exhibitions. I wrote a brief that said that the digital platform would be a stand-alone experience that wouldn’t replicate or provide an analogue to the physical environment. Many of our peers were simply taking 360 degree captures of exhibitions, where you look around and point and click. I don’t think that’s particularly worthwhile: it’s like watching a movie on your phone that was made for a cinema screen.

Focus Group put together a pitch which captured a lot of the ideas we’d been discussing which I presented to senior management. They liked what they saw and had the budget available.

Our in-house digital team had to pivot to become the main point of contact for users. Their workload increased

significantly, and they were under an incredible amount of pressure. So using an external agency to build the digital platform for Burton and managing it as a parallel stream worked well.

As the pandemic curve began to flatten, a physical reopening was tentatively planned for November 2020. PDR revised the design of the exhibition to ensure it could operate in a Covid-compliant manner. Literal and digital walk throughs were staged to eliminate bottlenecks and physical touchpoints were removed. Encouragingly, opening up the space and redirecting the flow of visitors didn’t require many changes to the design.

Ashley McAvoy:

The physical exhibition was only open for about eight days before lock-down hit again. This was frustrating and yet something of a relief. We were working hammer and tongs managing two

projects live. That can be quite exciting, but you have that nagging feeling you’re missing something. Closing again meant we were able to give online the attention it deserved.

The physical version of Becoming Richard Burton was finally able to welcome visitors between May and October 2021.

PDR:

How else did the museum increase its digital presence during lock-down?

Ashley McAvoy:

The museum workforce has diverse range of personalities and skills. But we have one thing in common: everyone I work with loves museums; we go to museums in our free time. We all found the fact we weren’t able to provide the public with a museum experience very frustrating.

Our events team took the lead in transitioning to digital. Everything they did in their regular programming they found a way to put online, from panel talks to dinosaur-themed sleepovers – even a food festival. Their children’s activities were recently shortlisted for a national Family Friendly Museum Award.

We asked ourselves, if people could only exercise within five miles of home, what could the museum do to enhance that experience? Our collections team developed archaeology, history and natural science resources to help people explore their own areas, with strapline “Getting out outdoors is good for you”. The On Your Doorstep program became a way for people to work with the museum, discovering things and sharing photos with us. This tied in with the work we do monitoring biodiversity and cataloguing archaeological finds.

We discovered an upcoming programme gap at one of our partner galleries, Oriel y Parc in Pembrokeshire. So we did something we've never done before: took a digital project and pivoted to create the physical On Your Doorstep exhibition. We engaged PDR as our design lead and worked closely with them to develop it.

PDR became involved in the project in November 2021. Members of PDR's product and human centred design teams ran workshops with museum staff focusing on understanding what the museum wanted to achieve. The challenge was how to tell a coherent story with many different objects, such as dinosaur footprints, Civil War coins and replicas of huge Celtic plinths.

Next, PDR developed a complete design concept, from branding to interpretive material and signage, exhibition layout and visitor flow. The exhibition was launched at Oriel y Parc in

April 2022 with the plan to stage local versions of On Your Doorstep at other AC-MW sites.

Ashley McAvoy:

Experiences like this have led the museum to rethink the way it works. Rather than, "We've got an exhibition and we need some events to go with it, or a learning program, or some digital elements", we're starting with a creative idea and asking, "What does the program of activity look like around this? How do we design each element so they can be enjoyed individually or as a suite?"

We're open to more online only-exhibitions, but in some ways the museum is back to where we were pre-Covid: we have a very full program of physical exhibitions for the next couple of years, and our digital team is busy supporting that. We are doing more with social media but mostly as a promotional tool. But while there's no

capacity at present for online-only exhibitions we're working on it.

PDR:

Has Covid lock-down had any other lasting impacts?

Ashley McAvoy:

We discovered we needed to improve our visitor evaluation and analytics, both online and physically. We were great with numbers, but the qualitative data – who our visitors are or what they want – was missing.

When the museum reopened, social distancing requirements meant we had to use a ticketing model, something we hadn't done before. Of course, once you use online ticketing you're collecting data. You're also able to add merchandising. We started with an off-the-shelf ticketing platform, but we're now in conversations about a new fit-for-purpose platform.

Museums are very traditional places. They remain rooted in a very 19th Century imperial British hierarchical authoritarian history. In 24 years, I've seen a significant shift to professionalisation, particularly in terms of administration and management. But there remained a kind of resistance, a sense of "We do things this way because this is the way they've always been done".

The pandemic knocked all of that into a cocked hat. We did not have a "We've always done it that way" in answer to the challenges we were facing. With total respect to the museum's senior management, the shift over the last two years has been very rapid. There's much more focus on outcomes than on process. A younger generation of staff is coming through. Personally, I'm having a mid-to-late career resurgence. We've got huge opportunities in front of us, and there's a lot of great work to be done.

Analysis: Skillsets and mindsets

The preceding case study demonstrates the importance to the AC&H sector of gaining new skillsets that will enable it to flourish post-Covid and beyond. In particular:

Gaining maximum benefit from visitor statistics

This encompasses gathering qualitative and quantitative data, analysing it to generate insights into what visitors – both physical and online – want from the museum experience and how well they are being served, and applying this information in creative ways to generate innovative products and services.

Integrating income streams and developing new ones

These include ticketing and merchandising. As noted above, almost 60% of museums had not explored a new

income stream by mid-2021 despite the income-shrinking effects of Covid.

Becoming digitally savvy

This includes more than the capacity to use online exhibitions and social media: it entails being able to use both the digital and physical realm creatively and appropriately, move fluently between the two and extend and adapt content across a range of channels.

However, in terms of being prepared for the future, new skills are not enough. Mindset changes are also required. While a skillset is a collection of technically oriented, tangible behaviours or competencies²⁸ a mindset is “a predisposition to see the world... [or] to perceive and reason in certain ways... a means of... bringing to each new experience or event a pre-established frame of reference for understanding it”.²⁹

Mindsets underpin many of the beliefs and attitudes that shape a person’s approach to managing and effecting change, including setting goals, taking on challenges, acquiring knowledge and developing new skills.³⁰ While skillsets are tools for “managing change according to a known process”, the right mindset can equip people to become change agents, “actually disrupting existing patterns to enable emergent futures”.³¹

The following diagram (figure 1) helps visualise the relationship between skillsets and mindset in successfully effecting change. It sets out various

28 Kennedy, F., Carroll, B. & Francoeur, J. (2012). Mindset Not Skill Set. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 15(1), pp.10–26. doi:10.1177/1523422312466835.

29 Rhinesmith, S.H. “Global mindset for global managers”, p. 63, *Training & Development*, vol 46, no 10, 1992, pp. 63-68.

30 Dweck, C.S. & Yeager, D.S. (2019). Mindsets: A View From Two Eras. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, [online] 14(3), p.174569161880416. doi:10.1177/1745691618804166.

31 Kennedy et al. (2012).

domains of change – areas where people or organisations seek to make innovations or improvements to the world around them – in order of increasing size, timescale and number of stakeholders involved, with changes to artefacts and objects being the least complex domain and societal transformation the most.³²

As the diagram shows, as one moves from a less to a more complex domain, the relative importance of having the right skillset declines while having an appropriate mindset becomes increasingly significant.

32 The diagram is adapted from ones developed by Uscreates and Jones and van Patters. Jones, P.H. & van Patter, G.K. *Design 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0: The rise of visual sensemaking*. NextDesign Leadership Institute, 2009. Bailey, J. “Tinkering, weaving, stitching: creating change in systems”, Uscreates on Medium (website), 28 September 2018, medium.com/@hello_83733/tinkering-weaving-stitching-creating-change-in-systems-72fd6aa95bae

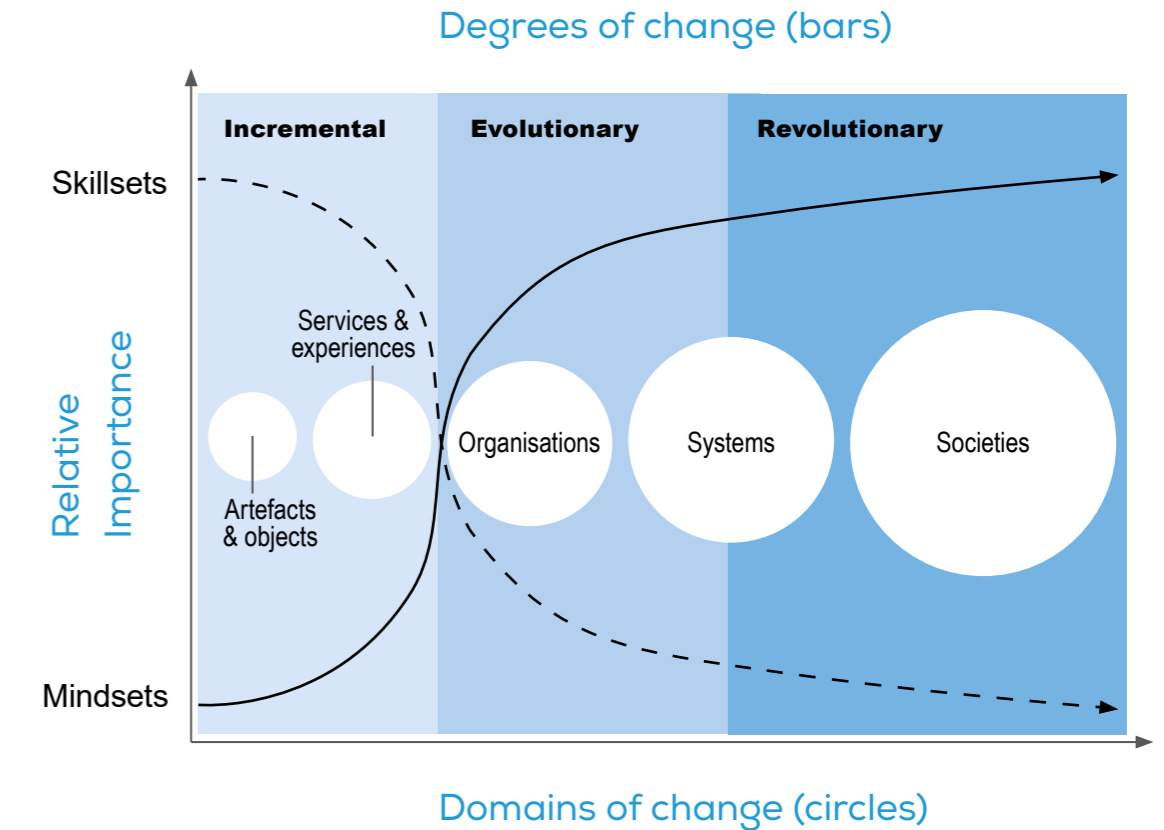


Figure 1: The relationship between skillsets, mindsets and degrees and domains of change.

Achieving change by redesigning artefacts and objects remains a necessary and significant activity in many areas of AC&H. But even the museum sector – arguably the most object-and artefact-focused of all – has gradually undergone a transformation since the early 1990s from being collections-focused to seeing themselves as audience-centred providers of services and experiences.

Many are even rethinking what it means to be a museum – which takes them into the domain of organisational change.³³ In this process, they have moved from addressing discreet and manageable challenges to a realm of interconnected, “wicked” problems in which merely having the right skillset is unlikely to be sufficient for success.

The recent phenomenon of the “immersive Van Gogh” exhibition provides a good example of the interplay between skillset and mindset. The first such exhibition – in which visitors

walked through a darkened space lit by wall-sized projections of the artist’s works – opened in France in 2008.³⁴ But as of June 2021, there were almost 50 such Van Gogh experiences on show across the United States, put on by five competing companies. All used a similar format, but added tweaks such as music, animation, audio guides or augmented reality.³⁵ Other artists such as Kahlo, Klimt, Picasso and Monet have also been given the immersive treatment.³⁶

While the pioneering Van Gogh exhibition was an example of a mindset change, the subsequent attempts at competitive advantage are the result of bringing in new skillsets.

The AC-MW case study demonstrated evidence of some significant mindset changes which enabled the museum to successfully adapt to the challenges of Covid. The following table sets out a summary of the changes.

³³ impact.ref.ac.uk. (n.d.). REF Case study search. [online] Available at: <https://impact.ref.ac.uk/cases-studies/CaseStudy.aspx?Id=17136>

³⁴ www.wbur.org. (n.d.). The original immersive Van Gogh exhibit opens in Boston. [online] Available at: <https://www.wbur.org/news/2021/12/21/imagine-van-gogh-original-immersive-exhibition>.

³⁵ Artnet News. (2021). Here’s Our Guide to Every One of the Nearly 50 Immersive Van Gogh Experiences Blanketing the U.S., and What Makes Each Unique. [online] Available at: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/immersive-van-gogh-guide-1974038>.

³⁶ Nast, C. (2022). The Rise of ‘Immersive’ Art. [online] The New Yorker. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-silicon-valley/the-rise-and-rise-of-immersive-art>.

From:

“We’ve got an exhibition and we need some events to go with it, or a learning program, or some digital elements.”

“We do things this way because this is the way they’ve always been done.”

Focusing on process.

Seeing digital as a supplement to physical exhibitions.

Traditions rooted in the 19th century.

To:

“What does the program of activity look like around this? How do we design each element so they can be enjoyed individually or as a suite?”

We did not have a “We’ve always done it that way” in answer to the challenges we were facing.

Focusing on outcomes.

Recognising the strengths and weaknesses of both.

A significant shift to professionalisation, particularly in administration and management.

Shaping the future

Three key mindsets

What mindsets will help AC&H organisations shape the future, not just adapt to it? This section presents our recommendations for three distinct but related “brave new mindsets”. While they are primarily intended for organisations in the AC&H sector, they have implications for creative industries organisations who want to collaborate with them. These mindsets concern:

- How the AC&H sector sees the public;
- How the sector sees itself; and
- What the public wants (or needs) from the sector.

As figure 2 shows, the first two mindsets are particularly interdependent, with the third flowing from both. As previously, the focus in the following discussion is primarily on museums, but the recommendations apply across the entire sector.

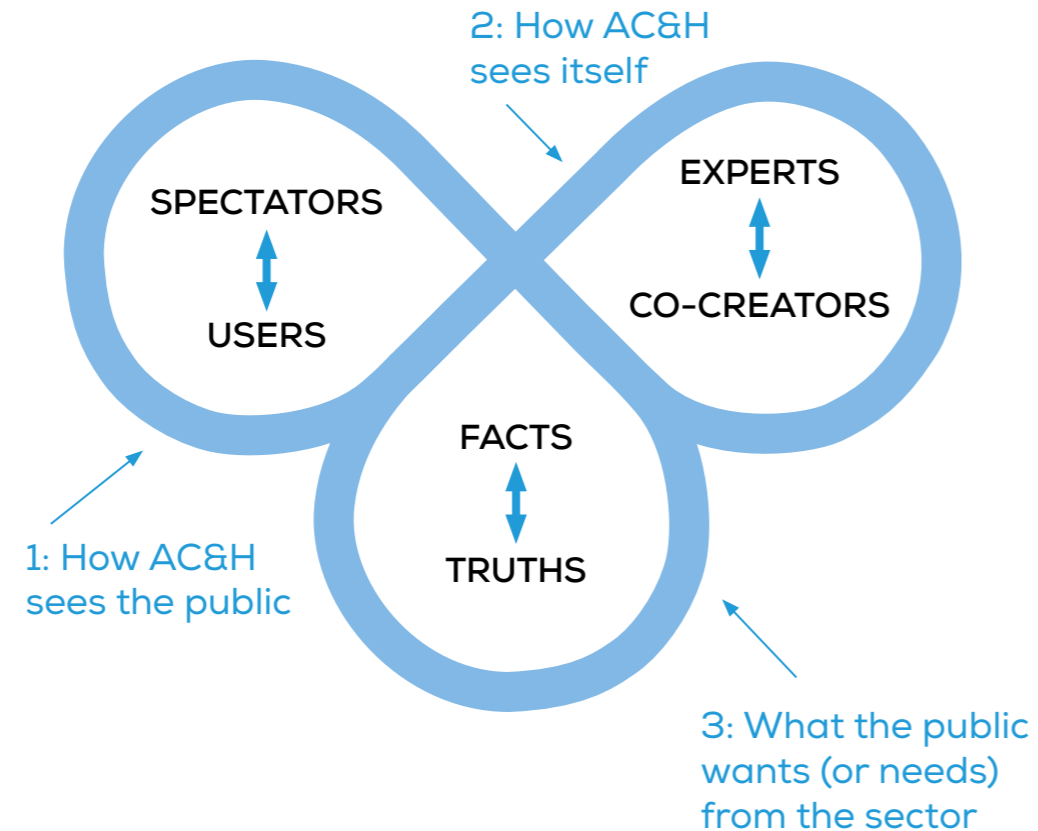


Figure 2: Three key mindsets for the AC&H sector.

Mindset 1

How the sector sees the public: spectators versus users

“Museums are very traditional places. They remain rooted in a very 19th century imperial British hierarchical authoritarian history.”³⁷

As well as being founded in tradition and “hierarchical authoritarian” self-understandings, museums are steeped in what curator and critic Stephen Wright calls “modernity’s expert culture”.³⁸ According to this mindset, the institution’s role is to educate, inform and guide a receptive public who accedes to the fact that the “museum knows best.” It is important to note that expert culture is not the same as having legitimate professional expertise: it arises when this expertise is used to exclude and reinforce hierarchies rather than include and empower.

Expert culture not only reduces audiences to passive spectators, it

marginalises the artworks and artefacts on display.³⁹ As objects of spectatorship, they become divorced from the rest of life and devalued in meaning or power. Quoting philosopher Giorgio Agamben, Wright describes the museum artefact as trapped in a “separated dimension where... [it] is no longer perceived as true and decisive...’ It’s art, but, well, it’s just art”.⁴⁰ What it gains in curiosity value or disinterested admiration, it loses in relevance and in its capacity to inspire or effect change.

Wright calls the museum sector to allow visitors the freedom to become genuine “users”. In other areas of AC&H, he argues, “users have come to play a key role as producers of information, meaning and value, breaking down the long-standing opposition between consumption and production”.⁴¹ This is especially true online, where audiences are co-creators of content, music remixers, fan fiction writers, citizen journalists and more.

But museums “have so far proved reluctant to make way for usership, both because their physical architecture is geared toward display (not use), but because above all their conceptual architecture would have to be thoroughly revamped”.⁴² In other words, a mindset change is required.

³⁷ McAvoy, A. (2022).

³⁸ Aitkens, N. & Wright, S. (2014). *Toward a lexicon of usership*. Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum.

³⁹ Wright (2013), p. 61.

⁴⁰ Wright (2013), p. 50.

⁴¹ Wright (2013), p. 1.

⁴² Wright (2013), p. 39.

Mindset 2

How the sector sees itself: experts versus co-creators

The Mona Lisa is one of the world's best protected artworks, and one of the most frequently targeted for attempted vandalism. In May 2022, a protester smeared cake over the painting's protective glass, shouting: "All artists, think about the Earth. That's why I did this".⁴³ It is not too much to imagine that Leonardo's artwork was chosen because of its status as the pinnacle of spectatorship and inaccessibility – and perceived irrelevance to the world's problems.

The Mona Lisa is case in point of an artwork trapped in that "separated dimension" where it has become "just art". The challenge to the sector is how to make a culture's treasures useful and usable, so they can become powerful, relevant and purposeful way-markers in users' stories

To successfully reframe audiences from spectators to users, the museum sector will need to change how it sees itself. Institutions will need to wear their expertise more lightly and step down from the vantage point from which "users are invariably misusers".⁴⁴ They will also need to become much less risk averse and more trusting of their audiences.

Precious objects may need to be removed from glass cases – literally and metaphorically. This is an inherently hazardous process and a serious challenge to the sector's conservation mandate. However, the status quo has its own drawbacks, as the Mona Lisa example illustrates.

The traditional museum-visitor relationship resembles what radical educator Paolo Freire called the "banking model of education", in which the learner/visitor is seen as an empty vessel ready to be filled with knowledge by the teacher/institution. Freire argues that only when learners and teachers

work together as equals, solving problems, sharing ideas and acting as co-creators of new knowledge will the relationship become truly liberating for both parties.⁴⁵

From the museum's point of view, the new knowledge created in such partnerships may not have much in common with the "official" narratives associated with objects and artefacts. But what it may lack in orthodoxy it makes up for in fertility, vitality and the power to inspire. Wright uses the metaphor of (cross) pollination to describe role of users in the AC&H sphere. "Users are like bees", he argues. Bees are mostly kept for honey, but that

*"accounts only for a modest contribution to the general economy. A spillover effect... of their activity is the pollination of surrounding crops... which generates a non-monetised value incommensurably greater than the value of the harvested honey. The implications for usership are tremendous."*⁴⁶

Case study 2

Clwstwr and Hissing Currents

Harnessing the audience's creativity

The following case-study offers an example of what can happen when the previous two mindset changes occur so that audiences are enabled to become users and experts re-imagine themselves as co-creators. Although it focuses on a combination of musical performance and visual installation, this example is highly relevant to the wider AC&H sector.

Gavin Johnson is a producer with Clwstwr. One of his projects is Hissing Currents, a performance and visual installation by musician Gruff Rhys, best known for his work with the Super Furry Animals. While technology plays a key role in Hissing Currents, the project is as much about mindset change as it is skillset.

As Gavin Johnson told PDR:⁴⁷

Gruff is interested in changing the conventions of live performance and engaging the audience in different ways to offer something unique. He's interested in harnessing people's creativity to influence him. So we've started talking about a more immersive experience and using technology to enable the crowd to participate live somehow.

He was working on an album called Seeking New Gods that was inspired by a volcano located between North and South Korea. For Hissing Currents we took that idea and changed it to a mythical volcano and structured the music around a narrative journey to test our thinking.

Clwstwr offered an ideal opportunity for Gruff to receive R&D support and funding. We connected with BBC Maker Box whose app Audio Orchestrator allows people to create a DIY surround sound system using mobile

phones and laptops. We gave people advanced access to Seeking New Gods plus Audio Orchestrator so they could make their own mix and give us feedback via Twitter.

We have a live user testing experiment of Hissing Currents coming up soon (July 2022). We want to further test the Audio Orchestrator tool and try to understand how people use their mobile devices, how groups of phones handle sounds and if a performer can play with Audio Orchestrator in a real time. By doing that we can think about the next steps or plan for other eventualities.

43 Greenberger, G. "Mona Lisa smeared with cake by climate change protester: 'think of the planet'", Art News, 30 May 2022, [artnews.com/art-news/news/mona-lisa-smeared-cake-vandalism-1234630315](https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/mona-lisa-smeared-cake-vandalism-1234630315)

44 Wright (2013), p. 1.

45 Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

46 Wright (2013), p. 28.

47 Johnson, G. (2022). Interview by Sally Cloke [Zoom], 09 May.

Mindset 3

What the public wants (or needs) from the sector: facts versus truths

In 2021, Jane Austen's House in Hampshire attempted to contextualise the writer's domestic practices against their historical background. When the museum proposed displaying material discussing the relationship between Austen's tea drinking and the trans-Atlantic slave trade,⁴⁸ a tabloid-fuelled controversy exploded, with outraged fans claiming “woke madness” and “re-visionism”.⁴⁹ The museum stood firm.

Commentators suggested that the pushback from Austen's admirers was motivated by a desire to “isolate her from the sort of messy hubbub of history”.⁵⁰ Like the Mona Lisa, the author has been consigned to being an object of spectatorship through a process of sentimental veneration. On her pedestal, she is safe from being caught up in the complexities of her era. The spectator is likewise insulated

from making any connection between Austen's novels and the complexities of our era. Her books are reduced to “an expression of something delightful, comforting, beautiful, clever”.⁵¹ Their potential to challenge, confront and provoke have been effectively neutralised.

In September 2021, PDR ran a workshop with a cross-section of AC-MW's community partner organisations to gather information about what people wanted from a museum. A common theme was that they wanted a museum to be a sanctuary and safe place – but at the same time they also desired for it to be a place of honesty, one that supported open conversations about collective histories, cultures and futures.⁵²

This aligns with a recent US research study which found that people view museums as one of the few trustworthy institutions remaining – islands of truth in a post-truth world.⁵³ But behind

this response lay some potentially conflicting opinions on the topic of “neutrality”, with respondents divided over whether museums should always be “nonpartisan/neutral” or whether they can legitimately take a position or recommend particular courses of action. As the report noted, there is a

“growing awareness... that museums are not neutral but rather inherently present a specific point of view... museums need to cultivate a deeper understanding of the values and attitudes audiences express towards museums and the idea of neutrality. That understanding will enable them to pace their work to the ‘speed of trust’ in order to be effective forums for civil discourse.”⁵⁴

The question of how museums could be “effective forums for civil discourse” came to the fore during the Covid pandemic as a result of the global Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign. Recognition was already growing

that museums were not just born from “19th Century imperial British hierarchical authoritarian history”:⁵⁶ the sector remained coloured by a Euro-centric, positivist and instrumental understanding of knowledge that perpetuated colonialism, racism and other forms of domination.⁵⁷ BLM put Western museums under a spotlight, leading many to make public gestures towards decolonisation and representation, such as taking statues of discredited figures off display or offering more inclusive and culturally sensitive retellings of history – with varying success, as the Jane Austen example shows. The speed of trust is not universally constant.

At the same time as museums were seeking to respond to BLM, the global threat of climate change was putting them under increasing pressure to make their premises and practices environmentally sustainable, and to help promote sustainability through the

narratives they told.⁵⁸ As Colin Sterling and Rodney Harrison of University College London noted, museums have been as historically implicit in the world's climate crisis as they have in the perpetuation of racism – and the two are interrelated. The sector's founding “vision of European exceptionalism” had not only fostered an attitude of entitlement and contempt toward non-White cultures, it had helped justify

“a harmful relationship with the natural world, encouraging ideals of progress and exploitative understandings of nature as a resource... While many museums are increasingly willing to acknowledge the many ways in which their own histories are bound up with ongoing debates around race and inequality, drawing threads between these injustices and the problem of climate change has yet to become common.”⁵⁹

48 janeaustens.house. (n.d.). A statement from Jane Austen's House | Jane Austen's House. [online] Available at: <https://janeaustens.house/a-statement-from-jane-austens-house>

49 Gross, J. (2021). A Jane Austen Museum Wants to Discuss Slavery. Will Her Fans Listen? The New York Times. [online] 27 Apr. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/27/world/europe/jane-austen-slavery-museum.html>

50 Gross (2021).

51 Gross (2021).

52 PDR/AC-MW Communities Workshop, 14 September 2021.

53 Museums and trust, American Alliance of Museums/ Wilkening Consulting, Spring 2021.

54 American Alliance of Museums (2021). Museums and Trust 2021. [online] American Alliance of Museums. Available at: <https://www.aam-us.org/2021/09/30/museums-and-trust-2021>

55 Sterling & Harrison (2020).

56 McAvoy, A. (2022).

57 Sterling & Harrison (2020).

58 CIMAM (2021).

59 Sterling & Harrison (2020).

Coming to terms with its own complicity in global injustices – and finding ways to honestly address this – is a complex and painful reckoning for the AC&H sector. The fact that public opinion is helping drive this change provides a powerful counterargument to those critics who suggest that seeing visitors as users and working with them as co-creators will turn museums into “pleasurable, nonconfrontational” places that never challenge people or encourage them to move outside their comfort zones.⁶⁰ Far from it.

Much has been written about storytelling being “the real work of museums”.⁶¹ But stories and narratives are forms and containers – they say nothing about the intention or value of what is being communicated. People may not necessarily want to hear hard truths when they visit museums, but – if they can be empowered to be users and co-creators in the (re)imagining

of meanings and the (re)framing of artefacts – then museums may be uniquely placed to facilitate something the world urgently needs: “cultural frameworks to identify and challenge the myths and misperceptions that threaten all of us”.⁶²

⁶⁰ Wiener (2022).

⁶¹ Bedford, L. (2001). Storytelling: The Real Work of Museums. *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 44(1), pp.27–34. doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2001.tb00027..

⁶² Unfccc.int. (2022). [online] Available at: <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Talanoa%20submission>



Case study 3

Clwstwr's Amgueddfa Cymru Challenge and Sugar Creative

Empowering necessary conversations

This final case-study explores a collaboration between a creative agency and a museum that takes up the challenge of decolonisation through the sensitive use of technology to empower necessary conversations.

What seems like the most innocuous museum object to you may be loaded with a different meaning for someone else, perhaps of violence or oppression. What if you could literally see it the way they did?

Clwstwr joined forces with three Welsh cultural organisations to offer some

specific R&D-focused opportunities and provided funding for a creative organisation to develop ways to “rethink the museum experience”. It was awarded to digital agency Sugar Creative. This began a ground-breaking project exploring decolonisation, meaning, and truth-telling within museum collections.

As Sugar's creative director Will Humphrey told PDR:⁶³

We didn't set out to focus on decolonising. We were interested in exploring subjective interpretations of content and ways to give space to non-traditional voices. Those echoes, those personal elements, are things museum collections don't always convey. So we came up with the concept of an “empathy engine” that lets people step into the shoes of others and experience museum content from their viewpoint.

After we were awarded the Amgueddfa Cymru Challenge, we sat down with some of the museum's experts who had been exploring similar issues as part of their commitment to addressing racism and colonialism. Arall – Welsh for “other” – became a way to build on their work.

Arall will run on a mobile device such as a tablet or a phone – visitors can bring their own or the museum will have some ready to use. Visitors will use the camera on their device to look at a particular object and choose to understand it from the perspectives of several different people. As well as using spoken words and auditory effects to tell the story, Arall will physically transform the object to simulate seeing it through another's eyes.

Arall is innovative both in concept and execution. The ways it combines machine learning, object identification and augmented reality make it a genuine first of kind, something that

has never been used in any museum before. As an exercise in R&D, we're starting with one artefact as proof of concept, but we hope it will be able to be expanded across the museum's collections.

The collaborative relationship with the museum and Clwstwr has been exactly that – collaborative. We're indebted to Amgueddfa Cymru for their commitment to decolonisation and to pursuing innovative and non-traditional ways of story-telling around museum objects and displays. The R&D framework that Clwstwr provided was incredibly valuable in formulating and evolving our concept. It gave us the space to question our assumptions at all stages. What Sugar contributed to the mix was our open curiosity combined with an awareness of what opportunities could come through harnessing the latest in creative technology.

Throughout the development process, we're worked closely with members of the museum's decolonising committee, which includes representatives of communities with lived experience of racism, disability groups and individual artists and creators. We've hosted numerous workshops, roundtables and discussions and consulted with them at every stage, seeking their input on the core concept, the technical components, the voices and the stories being told. We are trying to be as sensitive and inclusive as well can, but almost inevitably we're not going to get it 100%. However, we will own our mistakes and we will be better next time.

Arall engages with some complex and potentially controversial concepts, such as the acknowledgement that what society perceives as right and just can change over time, or that facts are only one element of a wider truth. We hope we can use new

technologies to help provide opportunities for discourse, encourage empathy and empower necessary conversations. Raising difficult issues can create tension and friction, but it's also the only way we can have meaningful progress.

⁶³ Humphrey, W. (2022). Interview by Sally Cloke [Zoom], 22 June.

Towards a shared practice

A framework for collaboration

The final section of this report presents PDR's futuring and innovation framework, a practical resource designed to support effective partnerships between AC&H institutions and the creative industries. It aims to assist collaborating organisations to articulate their approach to innovation and risk-taking and reach a shared vision for their project.

The framework uses a two-by-two matrix, a tool commonly used in business strategy planning.

In the following diagrams (figures 3 to 8), the vertical axis classifies different modes of innovation. At the developing end, we place innovations that are based on small improvements or variations on current versions of products, services or experiences. At the disrupting end, we place innovations that

represent a major break with existing ways of doing things.

The horizontal axis classifies different modes of futures thinking – or futuring for short. At the probable end, we would place new products, services or experiences that seek to align as closely as possible with emerging trends and expected conditions. They are generally intended to reach a wide market and be commercially successful. At the preferable end, we would position innovations that are experimental, imaginative or risky. They are less concerned with immediate profitability than with influencing the future direction of their field or society as a whole.

To illustrate, take two examples from the field of design (figure 3). The first is the concept car. Often representing a significant break with present trends and current technologies, manufacturers use concept cars:

*“to gauge customer reaction to new and radical designs which may or may not have a chance of being produced... [They] inspire both organisations and their customers to head towards a future that they can influence”.*⁶⁴

Our second example is high street fashion. Here, designers envision the future by looking at the leading edge of the present, keeping abreast of trends on the street or social media. Each collection must be new, but not too new to risk failure.⁶⁵

As figure 3 illustrates, high street fashion is a popular product designed as a probable, or at least plausible, extension of current trends.

⁶⁴ Evans, M. (2018). Researching the future by design. In: J. Yee, ed., The Routledge Companion to Design Research. [online] Routledge, pp.190–202. Available at: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9781315758466/routledge-companion-design-research-paul-roddgers-joyce-yeo?refId=6ae064c5-ae51-415c-88e6-53e70bb-47f1a&context=ubx>.

⁶⁵ Evans (2018), p. 191.

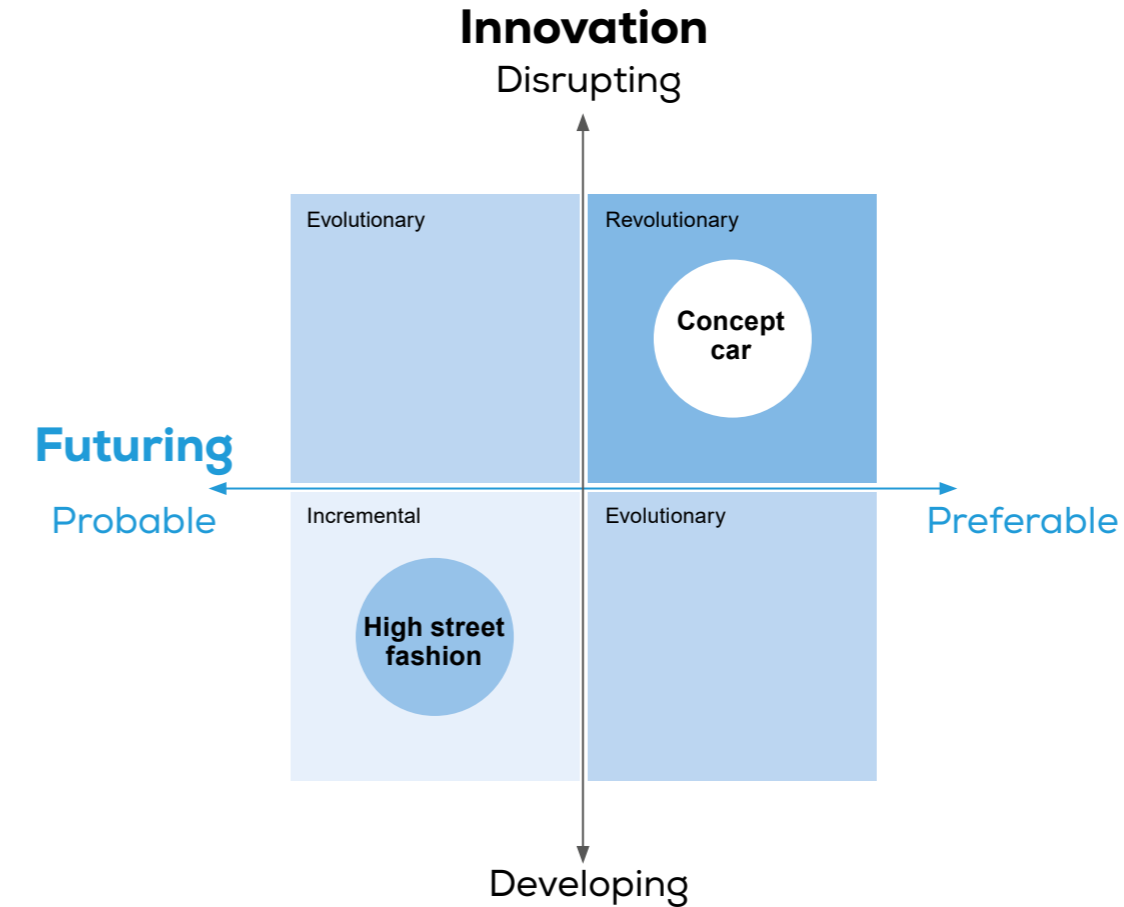


Figure 3: High street fashion and the concept car.

In this and the following matrix diagrams, the vertical axis represents modes of innovation and the horizontal axis represents modes of futuring.

While it is designed for “next season”, it anticipates what people’s tastes and requirements in clothing will be like in this short-term future, rather than seeking to shaping the nature of what humans wear in a particular preferred direction. It displays an incremental level of innovation which poses minimum risk and offers minimum potential for growth.

The concept car demonstrates a disruptive break with the present. It is designed not for short term sales but aspires to shape the future of the automotive industry. It models a revolutionary degree of innovation which offers maximum potential for growth but also maximum risk. The empty quadrants represent evolutionary innovation. This can be achieved through the creation of disruptive but popular new offerings or future-shaping but familiar-seeming developments.⁶⁶

In the context of collaboration between an AC&H organisation and a design

agency, PDR’s futuring and innovation framework can be used to map each party’s approaches to futuring and innovation (see figure 4). It is not uncommon for such different organisations to use similar language, express similar aspirations and goals, yet hold very different visions. For example, one may be imagining an interactive website and better interpretive signage; whilst the other may conceive of a contemporary cultural extravaganza.

Each side of the creative partnership has differing responsibilities. It is often seen as the designers’ role to challenge assumptions and present potentially radical new opportunities. An established cultural organisation needs to balance this against the needs of existing stakeholders and often has a better grasp on the broader impact of change on the organisation beyond the collaborative project.

The first step towards a “shared practice” involves making differences explicit by putting both sides’ pre-conceptions and assumptions on the table: literally, if at all possible, adapting PDR’s futuring and innovation framework. As well as clarifying and acknowledging both parties’ values and non-negotiables, this will help begin the relationship on a foundation of openness and respect. In turn, this will help foster trust, facilitate two-way communication, build common goals, protect boundaries and gain the buy-in of key decision makers and stakeholders – all factors that NEMO found contributed to positive collaborations.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Meldrum, M.J. & McDonald, M.H.B. (1995). *Key marketing concepts*. London: Palgrave.
⁶⁷ NEMO (2018).

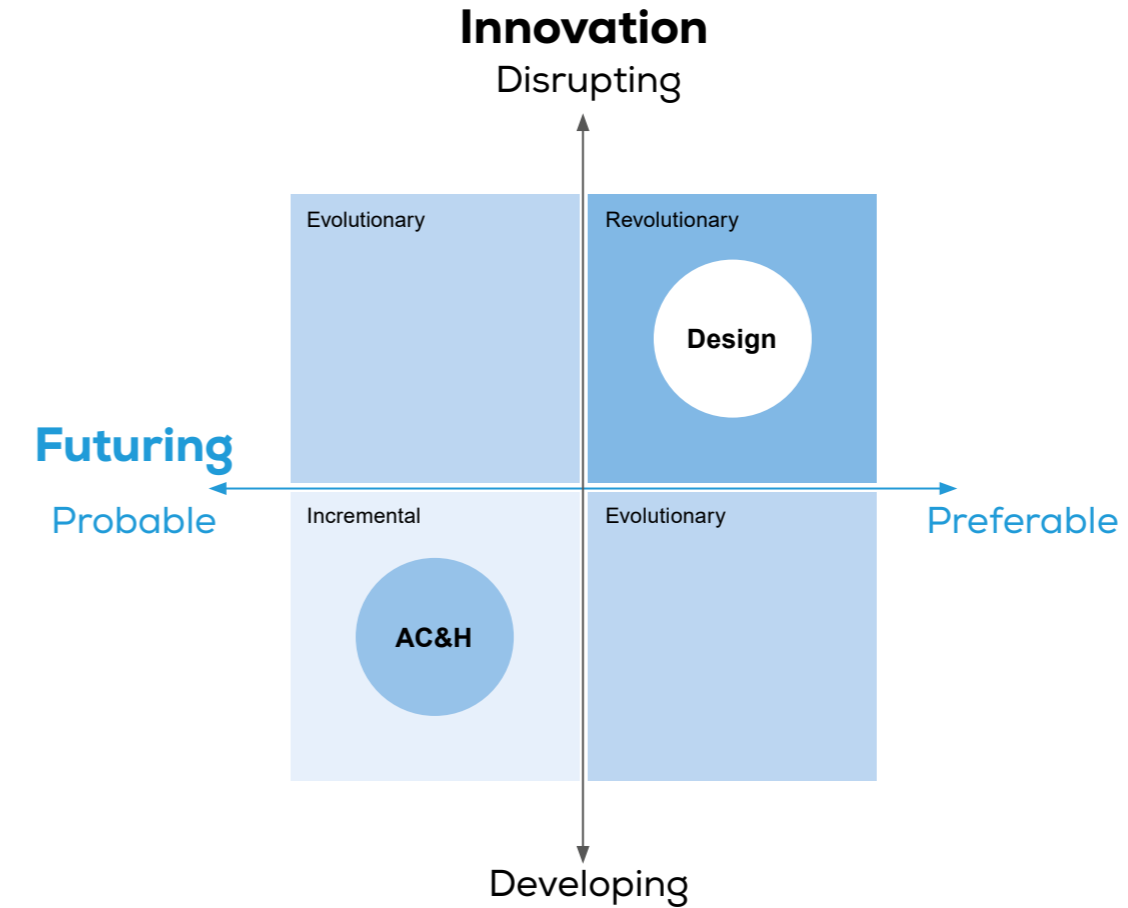


Figure 4: An AC&H organisation and a design agency may have very different ideas regarding innovation.

The second step involves recognising that innovation is the art of the possible. While the design agency might love their client to immediately join them in revolutionary innovation, initially this may represent too big a leap. Working through this framework may help both parties agree on what role they see for revolutionary innovation, while choosing to put more of their initial focus into evolutionary innovation (see figure 5).

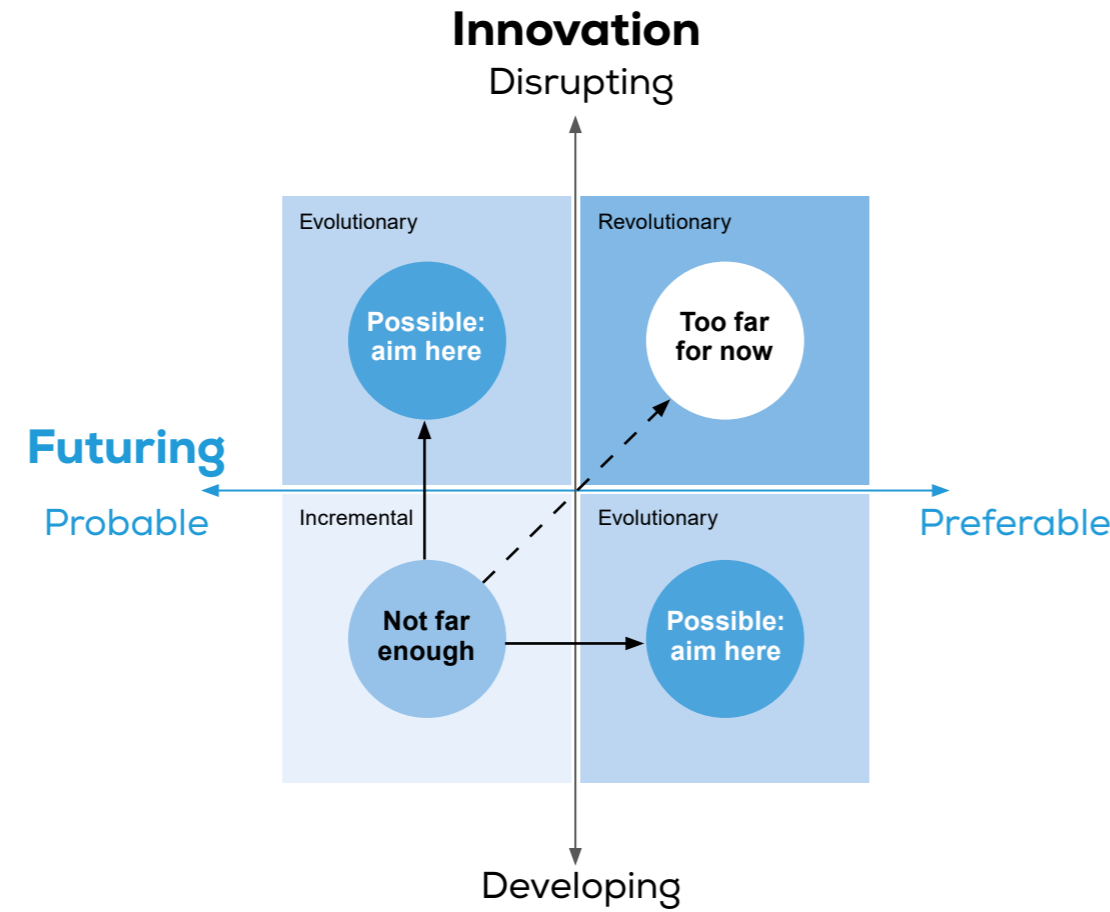


Figure 5: A direct leap from incremental to revolutionary innovation may be too far for many organisations.

Often the pathway from incremental to evolutionary innovation and futuring consists of small steps not giant leaps. As figure 6 shows, once an organisation becomes acclimatised to operating in evolutionary mode, the revolutionary may no longer seem as impossible. Small but significant progress has been made into uncertainty and risk, the genuinely new has been experimented with and at least some of it has paid off.

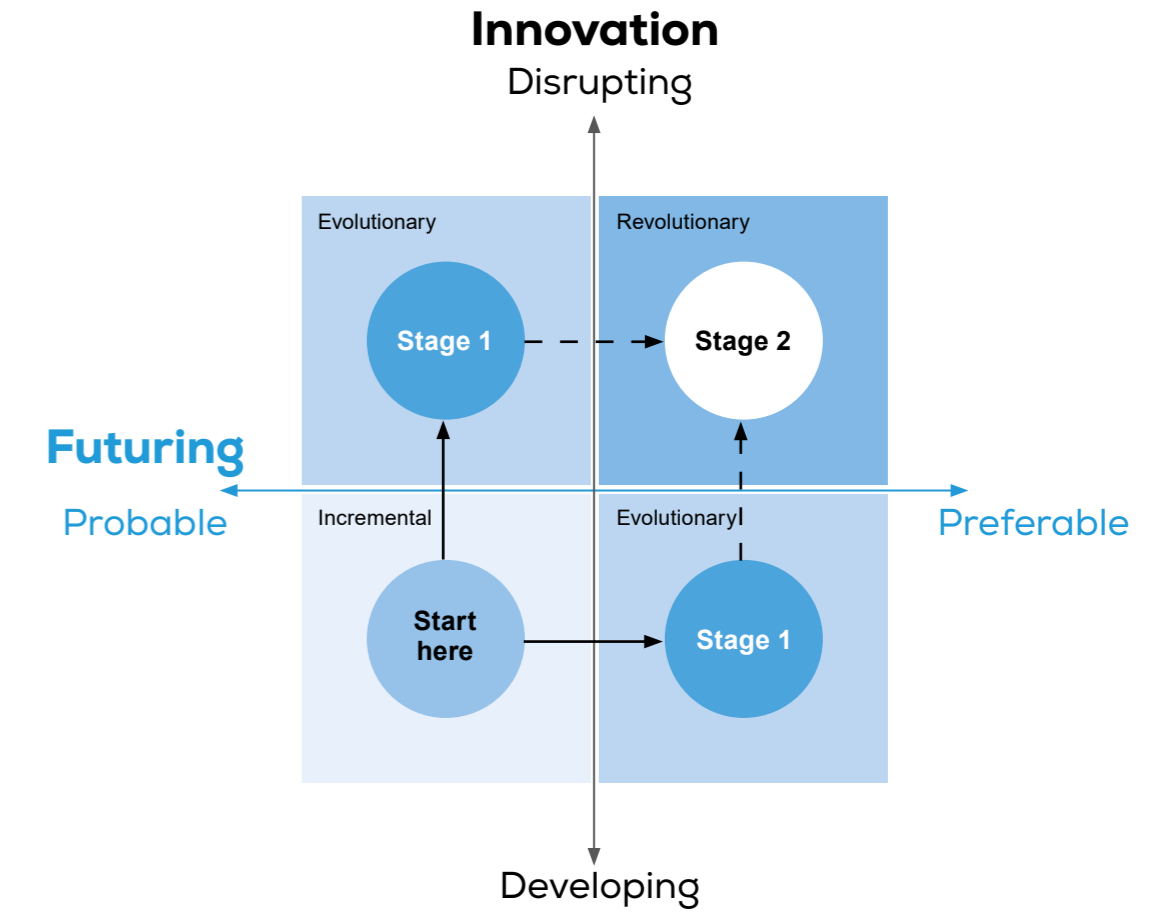


Figure 6: Stage by stage progress from incremental to revolutionary innovation.

Importantly, both the AC&H organisation and the design agency know where they – and each other – stand in relation to futuring and innovation, and where they want to be. In reality, the path from incremental to revolutionary innovation is rarely linear. It is likely to involve circuitous loops, re-iterations and fresh starts as different approaches are explored and insights gained and applied (see figure 7).

Alongside this, most organisations will find it necessary to move between different modes of futuring and innovation – or operate in more than one simultaneously. This will be influenced by factors such as what type of work they are carrying out, where it fits into their organisational strategy and what budget is available.

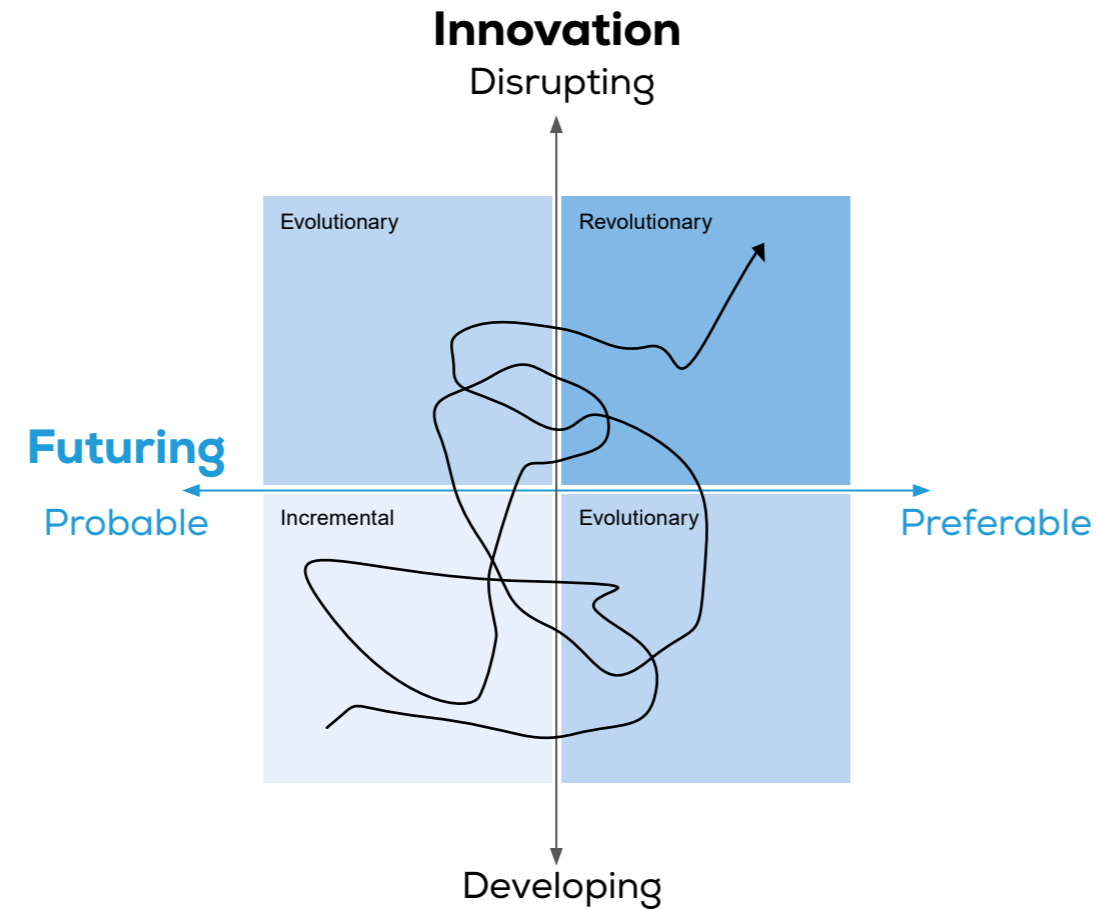


Figure 7: A more realistic representation of the relationship between modes of innovation and futuring.

Figure 8 attempts to map this plurality using different sized circles to indicate how an organisation's resources might be distributed across each category. Even the most creative and inventive organisation may spend a considerable proportion of its time and effort on incremental innovation and futuring and relatively little on the truly revolutionary.

PDR encourages design agencies and other creative industries organisations to customise this framework and use it when working with the AC&H sector to help build trust and mutual understanding into the collaboration process.

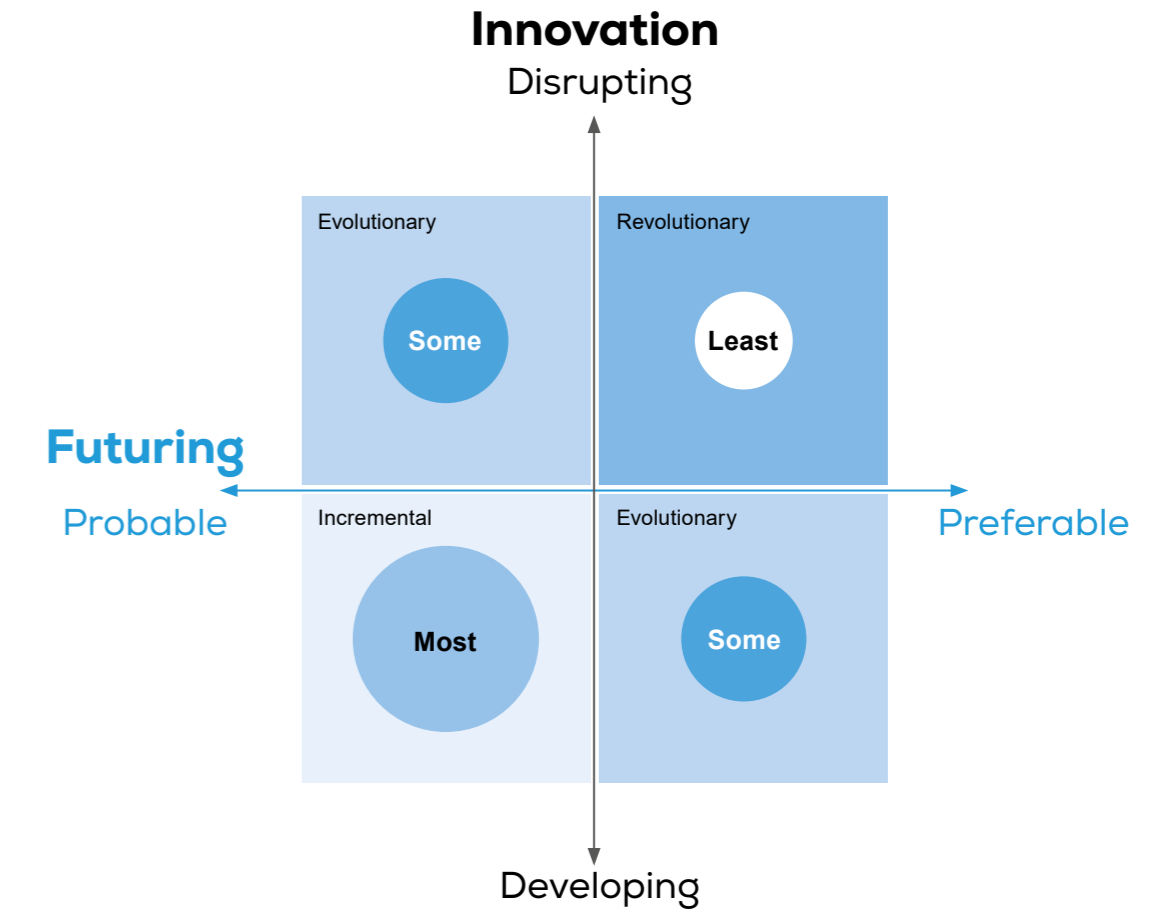


Figure 8: Organisations may operate in multiple modes of futuring and innovation simultaneously.

Conclusion and recommendations

Covid, as one museum director put it, was an opportunity for the AC&H sector “to really rethink everything”.⁶⁸ In mid-2022, organisations across all industries are still negotiating what it means to work – and what work means – in this “post-Covid” world.

PDR believes that the AC&H sector and the creative industries can use this time of regrouping and regeneration to reaffirm their commitment to creative collaboration.

To facilitate this, PDR suggests the recommendations on the following pages, some already flagged in this report, others emerging from it.

⁶⁸ Noehrer et al (2021), p. 8.



Skillsets

Skillset audit

Organisations in both the AC&H sector and the creative industries would benefit from undertaking a post-Covid “skillset audit” to ensure that they are well positioned for both current and emerging challenges. As noted in this report’s discussion of museums and Covid, many institutions found themselves with significant skill gaps when faced with the need to rapidly transition to digital delivery.

It is not possible to be certain about what skills will be needed for what comes next, but the challenges of decolonisation and climate change will undoubtedly remain both complex and pressing. In addition, the rise of the “metaverse” – a network of persistent, online shared spaces that can be accessed by virtual reality and in which an increasing number of “real world” activities, including

entertainment, social interaction, work and financial transactions can be carried out – suggest that the AC&H sector’s demand for sophisticated technical and creative skills will only accelerate.⁶⁹

Workforce composition review

One way the AC&H sector has typically managed changing skillset requirements is through a reliance on freelance and contract staff. As noted above, these workers were particularly affected by the changes to business practices during lock-down, with many losing their income. While a freelance workforce has short-term advantages, the sector would benefit from reviewing the composition of its human resource base, including its dependence on contractors.

Offering more stable employment and clearer career paths to staff who want them would help mitigate any

potentially damaging talent flight. In addition, it would give concrete evidence of a commitment to contemporary issues of social justice in a sector dedicated to righting past wrongs.

Training for creative collaboration

As noted in this report, the museum sector has undergone a significant recent shift to professionalisation, particularly in terms of administration and management. More than 20 universities in the UK currently offer post-graduate qualifications in museum studies, museology and related areas, for example, to equip graduates for relevant careers.⁷⁰ The creative industries have likewise undergone considerable specialisation in terms of education and training, with a range of tertiary options available ranging from generalist BAs to degrees in theatre production, audio engineering, ceramics and more.

To this mix, PDR recommends adding individual courses or subjects introducing students to the benefits of collaboration between the AC&H sector and the creative industries, showcasing some of the most innovative examples and encouraging students to understand the different challenges, concerns and priorities of the two sectors in order to bridge them more effectively.

⁶⁹ Ravenscraft, E. (n.d.). What Is the Metaverse, Exactly? [online] Wired. Available at: <https://wired.com/story/what-is-the-metaverse>

⁷⁰ www.postgraduatesearch.com. (n.d.). 46 Postgraduate Museum Studies and Museology Courses in the UK. [online] Available at: <http://postgraduatesearch.com/pgs/search?course=museum-studies-and-museology>.

Mindsets

Three mindsets for shaping the future

This report has introduced three new mindsets we recommended the AC&H sector adopt to help enhance their capacity to shape the future. To recap:

- For the sector to move from seeing the public as spectators to trusting them to become users of the artefacts and experiences in their care.
- For the sector to leave behind the expert culture of modernity and instead use its expertise to enable users to become co-creators of meaning, knowledge and value as they engage with cultural artefacts and experiences.
- For the sector to be less concerned with “unbiased” facts and instead invite users and the wider society into conversations that challenge

dangerous myths and explore changing truths.

In addition to these mindsets, we suggest the following:

A global mindset for global challenges

One of most regrettable aspects of the effects of Covid on the AC&H sector was the way in which the damage was unequally spread. As noted, institutions in the Global South were hit far harder by the pandemic than those in the North and had only a fraction of the capacity to respond: for example only 5% of museums in Africa were able to produce online content.⁷¹

Decolonisation is an acknowledged priority for Western museums. But this objective cannot be achieved without a concurrent commitment to help resource the cultural institutions of formerly colonised nations so that they can tell their own stories and remain

resilient in the face of future crises, both global and local.

A similar approach must also be taken to the other major issue AC&H institutions face – climate change. The roots of colonisation and climate change both lie in the exploitation of the global South by the North. Historical inequalities continue to play out today, as those countries who have contributed least to CO2 production and global warming are currently bearing far more than their share of the effects – and have fewer resources for mitigation or adaptation.

Our fourth mindset change is for AC&H to become a truly global sector which demonstrates a holistic commitment to justice and equity for people and planet.

⁷¹ UNESCO (2020).

From negotiating change to driving it

The biggest surprise to come out of Covid was that the AC&H sector survived in better shape than initially predicted, adapted to the rapid shifts of the pandemic environment, and in many cases even thrived. Even museums, institutions self-described as staid and sluggish, demonstrated that they could – with the necessary impetus and resources – embrace risk and innovation.

The AC&H sector has proven without a doubt that it can change. This should be an enormous source of encouragement for the sector – but not an end point.

OFFEE +
ONVOS.
A

NGET
SK

OUTLINE
+
T
SCRIPT

DISTRIBUTED
PROCESSED, BUT A BT COPY
C/MON, SEND UP U

YEP, YOU
GUTS ARE GOOD.

S4C
☺

TO THE
DIRECTOR

GLASSY
BLACKHOLE
(REAPER)

Wanted Land

