How the heritage sector can make the most of



AI could help us make archives more accessible. Pictured: Kresen Kernow.

Learn how artificial intelligence (AI) is being used to innovate and what you need to know to responsibly use this rapidly developing technology.

We commissioned Dr Mathilde Pavis, an expert on intellectual property, data and ethics, to take a snapshot of the heritage sector's current and potential uses of AI.

The briefing explores practical uses of AI in heritage and collections management, visitor experience and general operations. Organisations are already using it for tasks ranging from creating catalogue metadata to better understanding biodiversity through analysing bug splatter photos.

Pavis also examines international debates about regulating AI, what to consider to manage the risks AI presents, and how to prepare your organisation to effectively use AI.

> This new research supports our commitment to responsible, effective digital innovation and ensures executive leaders and board members are equipped to consider their organisations' strategic response to AI.

Josie Fraser, Head of Digital Policy at the Heritage Fund

Heritage organisations want to understand what's possible with AI

In June UK Heritage Pulse surveyed heritage organisations about their attitude towards and use of AI.

Most respondents had some awareness of AI and AI tools – with ChatGPT cited as the most known and used – but fewer than 1 in 4 respondents have used AI tools within their organisation.

Most respondents have not considered how they might use AI in the future, but half had thought about how AI may change how people interact with their organisation.

69% of Heritage Pulse respondents said they were not confident that they could find information or training on possible uses of AI.

> The inside of a glasshouse at Kew Gardens.
>
> Kew Gardens is working with partners to track the traffic of endangered plants by using AI to identify rare plants from photos.

Equipping heritage leaders with strategic insight on AI

Josie Fraser, Head of Digital Policy at the Heritage Fund, said: "Comments from the sector indicate AI is understood as offering both significant opportunities and potential disruption across heritage organisations.

"The [UK Heritage Pulse] survey respondents recognise that new resources and skills will be required to take advantage of developments and that investment may be most effective at sector-wide rather than organisational level. We are also seeing caution and concern in relation to the adoption of a new, developing set of technologies.

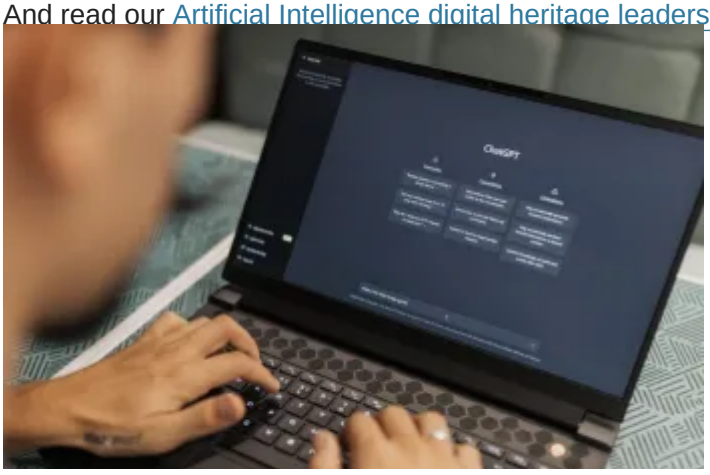
"The briefing, commissioned as part of our Digital Skills for Heritage initiative, provides evidence-based strategic insight to sector leaders, providing examples of current AI use across UK heritage and outlining relevant international debates.

"This new research supports our commitment to responsible, effective digital innovation and ensures executive leaders and board members are equipped to consider their organisations' strategic response to AI."

Explore the heritage sector's approach to AI

Find the data behind the AI survey on the UK Heritage Pulse website.

And read our Artificial Intelligence digital heritage leadership briefing.





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Preventing acts of criminal damage to heritage sites is a critical concern. Photo: Gordon Leggett, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.



sector surveys revealed in 2025

Minder Kaur Athwal, a trustee at the Digital Skills for Heritage-supported Heritage Trust Network. Credit: Sarah Hayes.

Digital Skills for Heritage