The impact and legacy of our Digital Skills for Heritage initiative

04/03/2024

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The end of programme evaluation reveals thousands of people and organisations took part in and benefitted from our investment and includes recommendations for the future.

Attachment	Size
PDF View Evaluation of the Digital Skills for Heritage initiative (.pdf) as PDF(1.94 MB)	1.94 MB
PDF View Gwerthusiad o'r fenter Sgiliau Digidol ar gyfer Treftadaeth (.pdf) as PDF(1.93 MB)	1.93 MB

We launched our £4.2million initiative to raise the digital skills and confidence of the heritage sector in February 2020. The ambitious programme responded to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Culture is Digital policy work, which identified significant opportunities for heritage sector development through the use of technologies. DCMS later contributed an additional £1m to expand our successful work.

Four years on, we've funded 55 projects that have supported over 53,000 individuals working and volunteering in over 6,400 organisations.

Our aim was to build digital confidence among small and volunteer-led organisations; to provide digital training and learning opportunities to increase the reach and impact of small and medium-sized organisations; and support digital leadership across the sector.

> The impact and legacy of our Digital Skills for Heritage initiative has been impressive and thousands of individuals and organisations have improved their skills and confidence to use digital to make heritage more discoverable, accessible and open.
>
> *Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund*

What our investment has made possible

The projects we've supported delivered at least 242,000 hours of training and development and created over 880 openly licenced learning resources. This has led to:

- 85% of projects increasing their digital skills and confidence
- 100% of Leading the Sector participants increasing their digital confidence
- the development of a UK ecosystem of 64 digital support organisations and experts
- an increase in access to heritage and an increase in reach to new heritage audiences

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: “The impact and legacy of our Digital Skills for Heritage initiative has been impressive. We were able expand the initiative in response to sector demand with support from DCMS and thousands of individuals and organisations have improved their skills and confidence to use digital to make heritage more discoverable, accessible and open. There is now a wealth of openly licenced learning resources in English and Welsh to help the sector get the most from digital.

“By reaching and engaging more people with heritage we can ensure it is valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.”

Our commitment to digital transformation

The evaluators, InFocus, identified a clear demand and need for digital skills and training. Organisations said they still struggled with time, capacity, resources and access to expertise.

Supporting the confidence of leaders and boards to prioritise digital transformation, and more knowledge sharing about low-cost uses of technology, will be crucial to achieving digital maturity in the heritage sector.

Digital remains a key priority under our 10-year Heritage 2033 strategy and runs through the investment principles that will guide our grant decision making over the next decade.

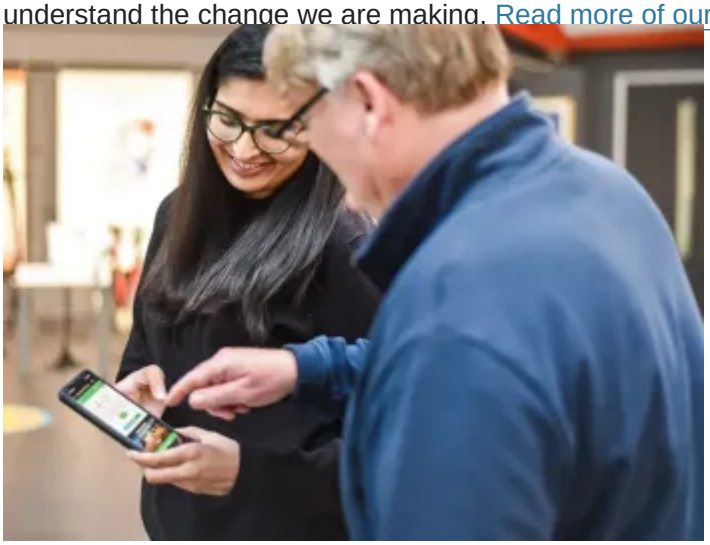
We will continue to invest in digital for heritage through our National Lottery Heritage Grants. If increased digital skills can improve the sustainability of your organisation, or the creative use of digital can make heritage more accessible and inspire more people to protect heritage, we want to hear from you.

Explore more

Read the full Digital Skills for Heritage evaluation in the PDF attached to this page to find out more about the difference our funding has made.

Our research and evaluation

We regularly conduct research to discover what is happening in the heritage sector, and we evaluate our work to better understand the change we are making. Read more of our insight.



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





New online resource to answer the sector's digital questions