International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies

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# ISSUES RELATING TO HERITAGE SITES AND ICT PROJECTS: MOTIVATIONS AND STRATEGIES

Mr Ben A C Smith

027072482

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I would also like to thank the case study representatives for their participation in the research and the time that they took out of their hectic working lives to make this dissertation possible.

I would also like to thank the staff at Carnoustie Library for their help in tracking down the one public copy of UNESCO's World Culture Report 2000 in the UK.

# List of Illustrations

The researcher of this dissertation has three years professional experience working within the commercial Internet industry and is currently self-employed working as a digital strategy consultant and web-designer for the cultural sector. He has completed one voluntary project for a well-known gallery in Newcastle that was positively received both by gallery management and audience. On the basis of this he has been invited back to work on a high profile temporary exhibition at the same gallery, for an established contemporary artist who amongst other places has exhibited in the Tate Modern. The researcher has also delivered a strategy for and project managed the phase one development of Tyne and Wear's Heritage Open Days website, that serves both as means of information retrieval for the public about the event and as an event management system for the regional organisers.

The subject of the dissertation therefore represents two professional interests of the researcher, the converging of the researchers knowledgebase in both areas and as a tool for the researcher's continual professional development.

## 1: Introduction

Museums, galleries and heritage sites are potent vehicles and facilitators of cultural exchanges of all kinds as well as advocates for setting standards for lifelong learning, accessibility, social inclusion and promotion of culture to 'others' at all its levels. The advent of computer technologies and specifically the Internet (invented by Tim Berneer's Lee as a secret military information sharing application) has compressed the time-space continuum of information communication. It has allowed global, multi-dimensional, multi-sensory, multi-location, interactive networking and therefore represents a diverse opportunity for museums, galleries and heritage sites to deliver their strategic aims and objectives as well as issues highlighted in national agendas such as accessibility, social inclusion, regeneration and lifelong learning.

Most have heard about the dotcom 'boom' and the successive crash or dotcom 'gloom' as those in the cultural industries have been aware of successive funding projects intended to research, experiment with and set guidance standards for digital cultural projects.

Currently there are many success stories, take the Museum of Antiquities (Newcastle upon Tyne) website for example, the first museum to curate an online exhibition in the UK (Allason-Jones, L. 21 August 2003, *pers. comm.*) or, Canadian Heritage Information Network's website or simply the extent to which IT (Information Technology) kiosks or installations have been utilised in museums. There is no doubt that ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) have become a substantial part of most peoples lives, the list incorporating media such as, books, magazines, radio, television, internet, computer programmes and applications.

As with any other business, museums, galleries and heritage sites must evaluate the past and plan the future to ensure success. With national agenda issues coming forward, the majority of cultural institutions have responded by reorganising their

strategies to address these issues. The results of such reorganisation are often policies and strategies, written or at least in the minds of the management, that guide the processes of tackling such issues, for example, education policies, access policies, equal opportunities policies.

However, the Internet and ICTs still represent a very new form of communication and method of delivering strategies and although they constitute a completely new exhibition environment with different but complementary capabilities and boundaries than the 'physical', the question must be how do they actually fit within the grand scale of strategic planning. Evidently cultural organisations have seen the value in employing ICTs to engage, promote and deliver, especially in hindsight of the first 'pilot projects', but what were the real motivations for implementing ICT-based projects? And how do these motivations relate to the delivery of strategic aims and objectives? These are questions that could conceivably give a general overview of how cultural organisations should realign their delivery of ICT projects and the priorities within these projects to enhance the delivery of strategic agendas.

What this dissertation does not do is look at the content and technical delivery of the projects and the new problems induced by accessibility, inclusion, education and marketing and promotion concerns. Though probably a fascinating area for research the remit of the dissertation is to establish the relationships between forces and priorities motivating the initiation of projects and the delivery of organisation's strategic agendas. What will come from this on a similar slant is theoretical suggestions on the same issues that should be taken into account by these organisations in relating their strategies to future projects and in evaluating past projects.

## 2: Aims

Therefore the aim of this study is to examine the motivations of heritage sites to implement ICT projects, examine the relationship of these motivations to the delivery of heritage sites' strategic aims and objectives and to recommend a way of developing a digital strategy.

## 3: Objectives

The study aims to:

- Appraise current thought about ICT based projects through the relevant literature.

- Identify the heritage sites' underlying motivation(s) and delivery style(s) for the ICT based projects identified for case study by using the researcher's personal interpretation of the projects and;

- Examine the heritage sites' underlying motivations for employing these ICT based projects using primary evidence from the relevant, chosen case studies.

- Examine the relationship(s) between heritage sites' motivations for implementing ICT projects and the delivery of heritage sites' strategic aims and objectives using primary and secondary evidence.

- Identify future potential and possibilities for ICT projects in helping to deliver strategic agendas and generate a 'digital strategy toolkit' to assist heritage sites in evaluating the relationships between motivations for implementing ICT projects and with devising a digital strategy to maximise the overall strategic efficiency.

## 4: Literature Review

The following literature review has been composed to give a broad introduction to the topic area, identifying by reference, where possible, key experts within the area. The review will demonstrate an understanding of the topic area identifying key references and parallel literature that sets the topic in context.

Museums, galleries and heritage sites are experts at framing cultural objects and sites within new environments (Muller 2002: 28), outside of their original contexts and often in purpose built environments. The Internet is probably the main, new virtual environment to have come to the forefront of most people's lives within the UK. This virtual environment can be thought of essentially as a new exhibition space that poses new opportunities for the delivery of a museum, gallery or heritage site's internal strategic agenda. If harnessed properly the internet poses new opportunities for engaging audiences, expanding audiences, creating innovative inclusion work and creating interaction between the public, the museum, the objects, academia and commerce.

Some have envisaged almost a global museum, distributing culture to the far corners of the globe, presumably using pre-defined content management systems, content strategies, labelling, design standards for maximum effective usability and so on (Bowen 2002: Special Report: *Collections databases*). The imminent introduction of the URL extension *.museum* (Karp 2002) is proof enough that governments and cultural organisations are sitting up and taking notice of the potential of the *digital museum* as part of global and trans-national eBusiness strategies.

Clearly there are a number of experts out there with a vast knowledgebase and practical experience about the use of ICTs and their applications within the cultural sector. Authors and practitioners such as Jonathan Bowen, Professor of Computing

at Southbank University, London and creator of the ICOM adopted Virtual Library Museum Pages (see Appendix 2), David Dawson, ICT Advisor for the *People's Network Development Team*, Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, Jim Devine, Head of Education and Digital Media Resources at The Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow, and Suzanne Keene, amongst other things editor of the sectorally infamous report *A Netful of Jewels: New Museums in the Learning Age* (Keene 1999) are only a handful of the most significant figures within this field.

The literature review has highlighted that what is widely available are either independent professional appraisals and 'reverse engineering' articles about projects that are already established, take for example the articles by, Abid and Radoykov (2002) who write about accessibility and preservation of digital resources, Abungu (2002) who talks about Africans access to their heritage projects, Atagok and Ozcan (2001) who summarise the position of digital cultural projects in Turkey, Avenier (1999) who describes the French experience in setting up Museofile, a database that covers all the state-run museums and brings together all sorts of information for the public, Boylan (2002) who describes the World Bank's attempt at setting up a multi-lingual portal to provide space and information for countries and communities to share experience and resources, Cetin *et al* (2000) who review the Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, website project, Diaz and Egido (1999) who review the problematic of sifting for information on the abundance of science museum websites, Karp (1998) who reviews a virtual exhibition, Hsin Hsin (2000) who talks about her experience in setting up a virtual art gallery and the list goes on. Others are research papers that present the technical findings of innovative projects or propose innovative ideas such as *Portable Computers and Interactive Multimedia* (Evans & Sterry 1999) or Evett and Tan's *Talk your way around* (2002). Though fascinating and providing food for thought for other cultural organisations that are on the verge of starting something digital, the articles merely serve to highlight what the

more key documents such as UNESCO's *World Culture Report 2000* (2000), *A Netful of Jewels* (Keene 1999) and *Building the Digital Museum* (Smith 2000) discuss in theoretical terms.

UNESCO's *World Culture Report 2000* in its contribution to the topic of culture, the cultural sector and ICTs, as you expect from such a global organisation, focuses deeply on the instantaneous and global nature of ICT, and how it has helped to create "unheard-of spaces for experimenting with and inventing new ways of living together." (UNESCO 2000: 14) It addresses how people's identification and perception of cultural diversity is affected through processes such as globalisation and through telecommunications and informatics. It talks about how we must regard culture as a process rather than a complete product, as has been the case in the past (UNESCO 2000: 15).

In short, it discusses the role of ICT in globalisation and the articles within its fourth chapter are incisive, to the point, but in content rather lacking in direction for this dissertation. Of course, the report highlights through theory and by example, how ICT can be used to tackle issues such as social exclusion, as does Dawson's (2002) article *Inclusion and ICT: the Challenge*, cultural diversity and by the very subtitle of the report, pluralism. These issues are taken up tangentially in some of the professional appraisals such as *The Revitalisation of the Abomey History Museum and the Web* (Avaro & Gogonou 2001) where the Abomey website's visitor board had clocked about 45 percent of visitors as Beninise people living abroad and obviously trying to keep in touch with their culture (*ibid*: 56-57).

Likewise, *A Netful of Jewels* (Keene 1999), a report by the National Museum Directors' Conference talks fancifully and in an almost visionary way about issues pertaining to museums in the information age such as public access and participation (Keene 1999: 11), global access to culture and cultural networks as a

means of expressing and preserving cultural identites (*ibid*), and education. Of course, somebody needs to see the vision and certainly they have tried to tackle the most prominent national agenda issues such as access, inclusion and lifelong learning within their report. Furthermore, key government led or commissioned reports such as *A Common Wealth* (Anderson *n.d.*) and *The Learning Power of Museums* (DCMS 2000) address the issue of ICT and its inherent value in enabling not just lifelong learning and education, but also in facilitating social inclusion (Dawson 2002) and accessibility to the nations culture (Trant 1997: 74). *The Learning Power of Museums* (DCMS 2000) for example noted the commissioning of a further report to address the issues raised within *A Netful of Jewels* (Keene 1999).

This report was published as *Building the Digital Museum* (Smith 2000) and of course it is pertinent to note that projects and funding initiatives such as NOF, the ICT Challenge Fund and the NGfL were already well underway, underpinning the fact that the government saw digital resources as key in tackling national agenda issues (DCMS 2000: 22 - 23).

*A Netful of Jewels* (Keene 1999) makes fairly unsubstantiated statements about broadening access, suggesting that there is evidence that *virtual museums* can help to increase actual visits (Keene 1999: 7), a view that Bowen would personally endorse (Bowen 2002 *Special* Report: 5) and that, for example, disabled people will be able to benefit from museums' networked services (Keene 1999: 7). Of course this is probably true but the report doesn't acknowledge as clearly as other author's such as Muller (2002: 29) that the virtual museum can be seen as a different space than the real and as such has its own boundaries and sets of rules. The virtual environment doesn't always abide by the same set of rules as the real and in solving one problem associated with the real, through the use of ICTs, we are at risk of creating new or perpetuating existing problems (Dawson 2002: 60) that are just as pertinent to address. Nevertheless as Trant (1997) argues it, the virtual environment

gives ample opportunity to, "mend logical rifts inherent in physical collections" (Trant 1997: 74) though she also noted that most museum websites still mirror the physical space rather than creating a new space (*ibid*) (This article was written in 1997 and may therefore not be representative of the situation now.). Dawson (2002: 61) would insist that such an environment cannot provide the same sense of place or experience as visiting the *real* thing, but acknowledges that ICT can help to open up access.

Clearly *A Netful of Jewels* (Keene 1999) sets out a theoretical and optimal framework or strategy for working digitally within and underneath the physical habitat of museums' usual business strategies but it fails to address, as previously suggested, issues that Muller (2002: 29) clearly argues, that for some, an ICT project will become an integrated part of the whole, whilst, "for others their offsite and onsite locations may become distinctly different" (*ibid*). Therefore there is no single way forward. What the mixture of these articles would suggest is that any organisation going digital must address the issue from a purely organisational perspective, understanding how this part will affect the whole and how the whole will in turn affect the part. Only then can cultural organisations start to lay down strategies that guide the *real* and the *virtual*. (Muller 2002)

'Bridging the digital divide' (Abungu 2002) is another common issue debated within the literature directly (UNESCO 2000), but mostly indirectly (Avaro & Godonou 2001). This issue relates not only to the human-technology interaction knowledge deficit, i.e. how to work computers, software and internet programs but also to the marginalisation of peoples unable to access the hardware resources required to acquire digital content, whether for geographical, economic or social reasons (Boylan 2002; DCMS 2000: 22). What is clear is that this debate goes some way to addressing the new issues that the virtual environment creates concerning accessibility, a topic that Bowen (1999; 2000; 2002; 2002) is fully conversant with.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) calls museums, galleries and heritage sites to action on this issue just as it does in the *real*, *physical* environment. Their digital projects may lack the foresight that new accessibility problems will be created in the *virtual environment* with new, flashy technologies often being employed over and above practicalities of delivering the content to the end user (Bowen 2002: *Museums + Internet*). Jonathan Bowen (2002: *Museums + Internet*), alludes to the idea that they may be excluding more people than they are including. Currently little attention is paid to the overarching problems that can be created in programming content for the digital environment and the possibilities of alienating certain sections of the population, perhaps even discriminating against them (*ibid*). The NOF technical standards, mentioned within *Building the Digital Museum* (Smith 2002: 5) seem to go some way towards countering such problems as well as Bowen's (2002: *Museums + Internet: a question of* access) direction for museums towards operating within W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) accessibility standards (See Appendix 2).

The follow up report to *A Netful of Jewels*, commissioned by the DCMS, is aptly named *Building the Digital Museum* (Smith 2000). Rather than tackling issues theoretically this report has addressed how the cultural sector can take the virtual environment forward as a sustainable business model. The report in itself is extremely useful however what neither it, nor its predecessor does is to put the business models proposed into context with existing business models that were created around the physical boundaries and rules laid down by the *real* museum environment. The report, in its seven-point recommendation (Smith 2000: 2) draws at least four important conclusions for concern here. It states that contents should take full account of user needs and should be accessible to as wide an audience as possible, that content should be developed through a national strategy to ensure efficiency, coherency and to aid future merging of information within a sectoral framework and that training should be provided to the museum workforce. The point

about training the workforce would seem an imperative when considered with Muller's (2002) article goading the museum to look out of the box and into the future. This is simply because, to accomplish successful harnessing of digital technologies requires expertise and knowledge about the area, it's own boundaries and sets of rules and how they can be exploited within the context of delivering strategic agendas.

It is clear that there are deficits. Much of the literature addresses the pertinent issues within the national agenda, about how to bring about sustainable business models for digital museums and ICT projects, as well as debating the theoretical and physical implications of the creation of a new type of interactive space for museum audiences. Nevertheless it by no means directly addresses how museums, galleries or heritage sites should align themselves strategically to deliver useful, engaging, inclusive, accessible, educational projects whilst supporting and enhancing their offline activities within the *real* space. Here lies the crux of the dissertation research topic, to try to unravel where organisations are in their strategic thinking and how they may progress to even greater success.

## 1: Methodology

The following section provides a breakdown of the methodology employed to carry out this dissertation. As far as is possible this methodology attempts to be comprehensive however, in some chapters extra notes regarding methodologies are made as they are more relevant sitting in the context of the chapter. Criticisms of the methodology are made in the concluding chapter (chapter 7).

## 2: Parameters

Certain words or phrases have been defined below as working definitions for the sole purpose of this dissertation.

**ICT projects; ICT based projects; and variants** – Information and Communications Technology: any project within a museum that is delivered in the most part using media and hardware such as, computers, Internet and electronic installations though the author acknowledges that there are many other media that constitute ICTs.

**Heritage sites** – For the purposes of this research 'heritage sites' is used as an all-encompassing term that includes in its meaning museums, galleries and heritage sites or attractions.

It is important to note that the researcher has focused on understanding the processes and relationships between processes in museums, from purely the museum managerial aspect. This was a necessary constraint to allow the research to be completed in the allotted time, however, the researcher acknowledges that further useful information would come from research that approached the same subject from a user or audience perspective. The researcher believes the two research topics would complement each other in the analysis of the data and bear even more fruitful results, however it would be advisable that a project of such scale be carried out as PhD research.

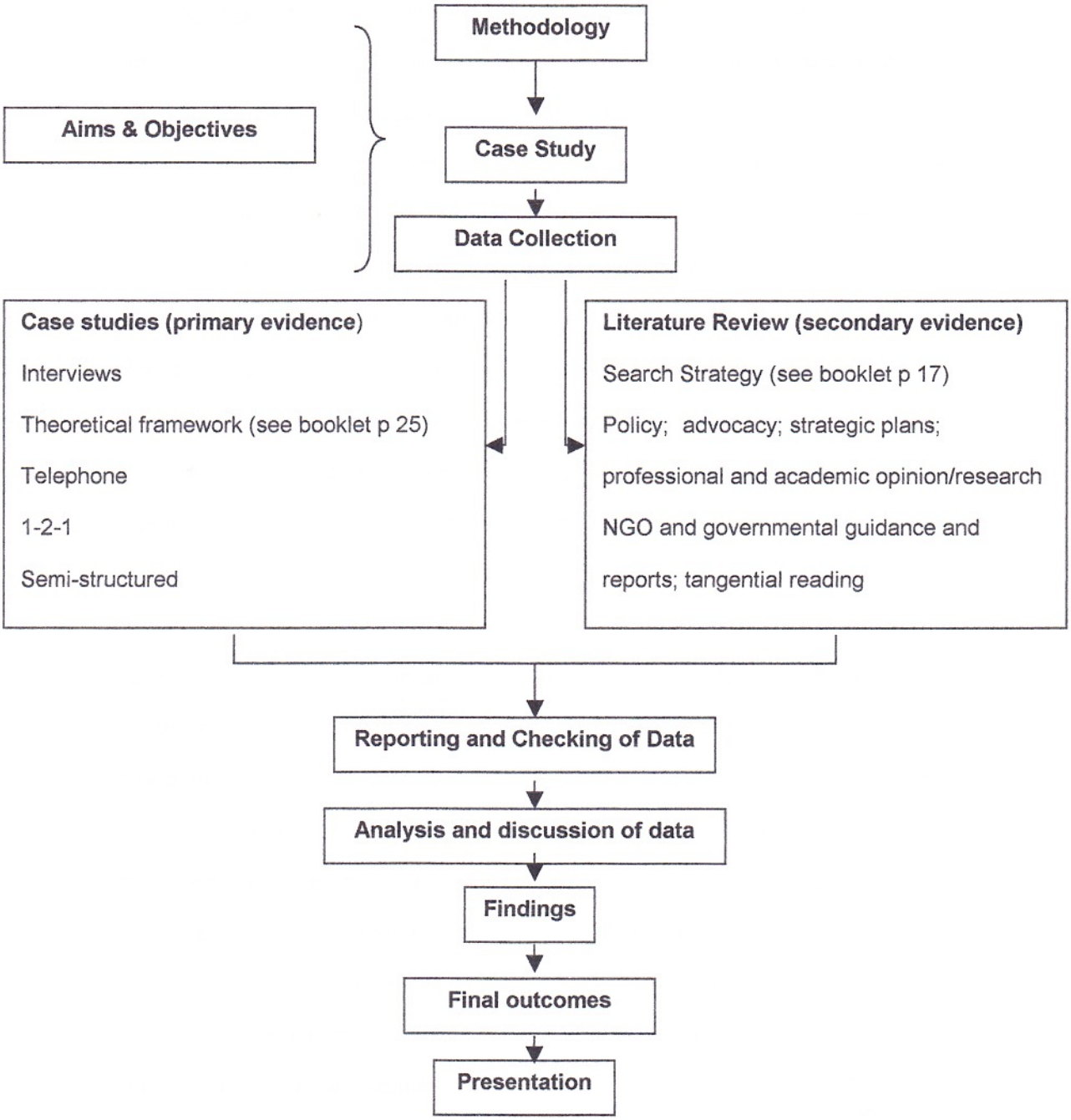
### 3: In General

In order to carry out the dissertation successfully it was necessary to devise a methodology that laid down strict research parameters. Although the research aims and objectives were devised so that they were theoretically achievable, manageable and deliverable within the set timescale the researcher identified three key needs in order to construct a suitable methodology. Addressing these three needs would help to efficiently control and constrain the research so that it was manageable. Suggested by Yin (1994: 2) these three needs were:

1. To define the case being studied;
2. To determine the relevant data to be collected and;
3. To determine what should be done with the data.

Clearly, from the above three requirements other essential decisions followed such as how the data would be collected and analysed and in reference or in context with what, and also how the findings would be presented.

A brief summary of the levels of methodology that will be discussed in this section follows below:




**4: A Case Study Strategy?**

The areas of examination laid out within the aims of the dissertation could essentially be categorised as what, how and why questions. Yin (1994: 6) provides a table of information that lays out different research strategies and the relevant situations in which they should be used, though he also acknowledges that

combined approaches are often most relevant and that most research situations are not clear cut (1994: 8). Through logical deduction and by use of Yin's table (1994: 6) the information required, to achieve the aims and objectives, appeared most suited to a case study approach that by its very nature focuses in on specific instances of the topic being covered, rather than approach a broad spectrum of individual instances (Denscombe, 1998). Certainly the topics of the research required in-depth information about relationships and processes to be discovered and therefore it probably could not be acquired by means of a postal questionnaire survey (Denscombe, 1998). Postal surveys (which tend to use closed questions) for example as other 'closed-question' ways of obtaining data tend to be more suited to research that requires a standardised and broad response from a representative group.

As Yin (1994) and Denscombe (1998) believe, the case study approach is all encompassing as a strategy allowing for the use of numerous different data collection methods and although relying on the same techniques as an historical approach it can benefit from the use of two other sources of evidence, that of direct observation and systematic interviewing. The case study approach as Yin (1994) proposes it is the preferred method to examine contemporary events, when behaviours need not be manipulated. It deals best and most frequently with operational, managerial and theoretical research issues (Yin 1994: 6). Denscombe (1998) insists that case studies, unlike surveys, go into sufficient detail to allow complex situations and phenomenon to be unravelled by understanding how the many parts affect one another. Considering the research topic of this dissertation and the phenomenological and qualitative approach required to achieve the aims and objectives the case study strategy allowed for the collection of empirical evidence based on context, experience, observation and direct observation. The data necessary to achieve the aims and objectives tends to be holistic and does not

deal with completely isolated factors. It focuses on relationships and processes rather than the outcomes of the processes and relationships (Denscombe 1998: 31).

Clearly this approach formed the overarching framework for the methodology and the researcher noted during the processes of devising the methodology that some criticisms and concerns of the method exist. These largely regard the lack of ability to control the integrity of primary evidence, that they can be time consuming and if presented in traditional format, with full transcripts of interviews they quickly push the word limits of dissertations to the boundary whilst also making them difficult to read (Yin 1994: 10). Case studies are also often criticised according to Yin (1994) and Denscombe (1998: 40) because, "they provide little basis for scientific generalization" (Yin 1994: 10) and thus the credibility of them is questionable at least. Furthermore the researcher was also aware that the preconception of a case study strategy is that it will produce 'soft data' and thus the research could seem to lack rigour and solidity (Densombe 1998: 40). However, the research objectives did not require specific questions to be answered but rather a contextual analysis of certain real-life situations and it proposed to expand and generalise situations and theories rather than make statistical generalizations. In this context Yin (1994: 10) has argued that generalizations can be made.

In deciding to employ a case study, qualitative research strategy as the main foundation of the methodology the researcher was also aware that human fallibilities could be more problematic in this 'holistic' approach rather than a more positivistic, quantitative, scientific-style approach because control agents are more difficult to put in place and in many cases could hinder the research. It was also acknowledged that the results of the research would be the researcher's personal interpretation of the evidence and therefore just one opinion of the situation.

The researcher acknowledges that some may question whether or not the case study is representative. Furthermore they may argue that the findings are unique to particular circumstances and thus how can you generalize on such basis (Denscombe 1998: 36)? The best possible answer to this is that the case study, though unique in some respects, is also a, "single example of a broader class of things" (Denscombe 1998: 36). Most importantly though, the intention of the dissertation was never to generalise about all ICT projects in heritage sites but simply to look at how to generalise and rationalise the managerial and strategic processes and their relationships with motivating forces for implementing the projects. Arguably this does not require a representative sample, as the outcome of the dissertation is purely to look at how they align in the cases being studied, to make suggestions for the future and to suggest a toolkit that should aid the generalization and rationalisation of motivations and strategies.

Other alternatives were considered, such as a more quantitative, generalised approach, canvassing a representative selection of museums, galleries and heritage sites within the UK or a defined region of the UK. The information necessary to complete the research aims was deemed by the researcher to be more specialised and in-depth than could be collected in a short, controlled, non-contextual survey that would have been dictated by this other method. (Denscombe 1998).

In this case depth was seen to be more suitable than breadth (Denscombe 1998: 111).

**5: Data Collection**

Following from the overarching research strategy, it was necessary to decide what the best ways were of collecting relevant data.

It is evident from the arguments and information in the previous section (4) that a case study approach lent itself to many different data collection methods. It was therefore necessary to understand which methods were geared best towards gathering complex, in-depth information.

***a: Literature Review: Secondary Evidence***

In order to place primary research findings into context a literature review was carried out. The literature review aimed to introduce the topic whilst identifying key experts and references within the topic area. The aim of the literature review was to understand recent issues surrounding the dissertation topic and also parallel and tangential issues. It was to lay the theoretical and professional foundations for the primary research to be placed in context and to ensure that relevant or under-investigated issues in the area were at least identified and if possible within the remit of the research topic addressed and expanded.

As a relatively new topic area, with Information and Communication Technologies only coming to the forefront of how we work in the last decade, the literature search was concentrated on the period 1993 to 2003. It was necessary to identify key topic areas for literature research, in order to constrain the depth and breadth of the dissertation and to ensure clarity of thinking and theorising within the analysis and conclusion of research results. It was also necessary to define the type of sources relevant to the research topic and these were found to be:

- policy;
- advocacy;
- professional and academic opinion/research;
- non-governmental organisation (NGO) and governmental guidance and reports;
- parallel and tangential reading.

Clearly a search methodology was required for obtaining key references. This followed extracting key words and phrases that described the dissertation topic, such as 'museums + internet' and 'heritage and new media'. Searches were carried out through BIDS, library catalogues and online catalogues. The websites of key organisations within the cultural sector were also searched for relevant information, for example, the DCMS, Resource, UNESCO, NEMLAC (North East Libraries and Archives Council) and so on.

The researcher was also fully aware that the literature review would always be an interpretation of the relevant literature and therefore subjective.

***b: Case Studies: Primary Evidence***

The research methodology was based on using a case study strategy. The researcher decided to limit the research to three case studies, firstly to allow the research to go into sufficient depth and secondly to limit the time required to complete the research. This strategy was to be complemented by devising an overt set of criteria against which the case studies could be individually measured. The actual case studies themselves were chosen for the following reasons:

1. Ease of access to the key players and knowledge base, for each project identified. Some projects that were initially highlighted presented greater difficulty in regards to access than others where contact with key personnel in the organisations had already been established.
2. It follows from point 1. that this was in part also due to time constraints: that it was quicker to make contact and arrange interviews with people already familiar with the researcher or the postgraduate course that he was undertaking.
3. Familiarity with the projects that were to be the focus of the case studies so as to reduce time needed to familiarise the researcher with the ICT project. Though the researcher acknowledged that it could present some problems

of bias, due to prior knowledge, the researcher felt that within the timescale allowed for the dissertation it was justifiable to select case studies in this way.

4. That they represented a good range of project objectives and motivations and excellent examples of ICT projects. The thought being that they could bear more fruitful information than by choosing supposed bad examples of ICT projects. Clearly the researcher was aware that this point weighed heavily on his own interpretation of ICT projects and thus could introduce biases.
5. In the processes of defining aims and objectives of the dissertation the researcher had identified certain criteria that he felt would classify the motivations behind implementing ICT projects. These were: marketing and promotion; education; inclusion; and access. From a wide range of heritage site based ICT projects that the researcher was aware of, he identified those that appeared on face value to provide a good balance across the four criteria. The assumption being that again, these would be most fruitful in delivering data for analysis.

One-to-one, semi-structured, recorded by permission telephone interviews (A blank copy of the semi-structured interview questions is provided in Appendix 1) were used as the actual method of data collection alongside the collection, where possible, of relevant strategic documents of the three chosen case studies. Other methods of data collection were considered such as questionnaire surveys or in-person interviews, group interviews and focus groups (Denscombe 1998). The main justifications for using interviews over other methods were that interviews allowed for the collection of more detailed information, as the dissertation topic dictated, whilst retaining the possibility to probe further, using open-ended questions on new or interesting topics that the interviewee brought up during interview. Questionnaire

surveys did not allow for this and tend to collect more superficial information because they rely mainly on closed questions (Denscombe 1998).

Using one-to-one interviews meant that they were easier to arrange and administer than group interviews or focus groups as there was only one person to guide through the interview agenda, and only one person's ideas to grasp (Denscombe 1998: 114). Furthermore, because the information for each case study stemmed from one source this ensured that the interviewer was better placed to analyse the resulting information. It was acknowledged that group interviews and focus groups can deliver more of a consensus of opinion. Likewise it was acknowledged that the stronger interviewees of the group may bias the results because the weaker were not so willing to speak or similarly for those who may have felt their ideas did not conform to the social or organisational norm (Denscombe 1998).

It was noted by the researcher that his 'self', personality, conduct, intonation and so on could affect the results of the interview, however, as the topic of the dissertation was not seen to be particularly controversial, if it was at all, this did not seem a strongly biasing point.

A one-to-one basis meant that the interviewer could get to the heart of the matter by speaking to the one key person in the relevant organisation, for example the person who managed and spearheaded the project in question. The dissertation specifically calls for management viewpoints on motivations, strategies and visions and hence it was decided that all interviewees must be the key management person involved on the project that was under case study.

The methodology must also address briefly the choice to use semi-structured telephone interviews. Lack of time to arrange in-person interviews combined with lack of time and money to travel to the relevant organisations were all contributing

factors and telephone interviews provided an immediacy and accessibility to the interviewee that cost far little and took less time to arrange. It is also true that the telephone interview has some advantages over the in-person interview. Body language and facial expression are not as influential, though the reverse can also be true, as visual prompts cannot be used to the interviewers advantage (Frey 1983: 44 – 45; 51). Also, unlike an in-person interview the telephone, due to social etiquette, demands complete participation (Frey 1983: 15).

To ensure that interviewees were settled for the main interview, initial contact was to be made with them to arrange a convenient time for the interview and to pass the barrier of initial unease that occurs when talking to someone you do not know very well. A timescale for the interview was to be set at approximately fifteen to thirty minutes so that the interviewee knew how much time they would need to allocate out of their working day. Copies of the dissertation aims and objectives were sent out before interview along with copies of the agenda for the interview, comprising mainly of a list of general 'cue' questions. Primarily, this ensured that each interviewee knew exactly what would be asked of them, so that there were no surprises and that people did not feel put 'on the spot'.

The immediate nature of the telephone and its demands on human interaction over the telephone meant that the researcher expected that some answers would perhaps be superficial (Frey 1983: 53) however on the whole it was felt that it would wield as productive results as an in-person interview and be more productive and in-depth than a long questionnaire survey.

The interviews were semi-structured rather than structured so that interviews and information could be allowed to develop and so that responses could be probed further to ensure that the researcher understood correctly. Relying on open-ended

questions allowed for 'discovery' of information rather than 'checking' of facts (Denscombe 1998).

Interviews were to be recorded using a Dictaphone. The process involved using a speakerphone and recording quality was to be checked by making a test call prior to the first interview. Two Dictaphones were to be used, one as the main recording instrument, the other as a back up in case the first had technical problems. Comment on tape recording and checking of equipment

**6: Reporting and Checking of Data**

Interviews were to be recorded (with interviewee consent), transcribed, and presented, edited to the main points directly or tangentially relevant to the topic. It would have been preferable to have a complete, word-by-word transcription of the interviews however this evidently takes a lot of time and can be extremely difficult when audio recordings are not of excellent quality. Full transcriptions of 15 to 30 minute interviews would have taken up too much of the word limit and left little for the more relevant analysis, discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

Again, the researcher was aware that in making an edited interview transcription, contexts, meanings, stresses, intonations etc could be compromised. To attempt to counteract this an option for the interviewee to receive and sign-off the contents of the transcribed interview was fitted into the later stages of the interview agenda.

**7: Analysis and Discussion of Data**

The findings were to be scrutinised and analysed with reference to the theories, ideas, issues and problematic identified by the literature review. In this section the researcher tried to draw all relevant information together and draw out main points, ideas and issues that relate back to the dissertation aims and objectives.

It is important to note that the reporting and analysis of the data was to take place in harmony devoting a single chapter of the research report to each case study. The general, semi-structured format for each of these sections was:

- What and where is it? An introduction to the case study example: What; Where; When
- Who's doing it? A brief background to the management/institution
- How are they doing it?
- Data result summary.
- Why are they doing it? Motivations
    - Marketing & Promotion
    - Access
    - Inclusion
    - Education
- How, if at all, do these motivations relate to the strategies, aims and objectives of the heritage site?

Discussion of the four case studies findings and the theories, ideas, trends and so on from the literature review were to be brought together in chapter six of the dissertation.

**8: Final outcomes**

Final outcomes of the dissertation were to be conclusions on the main objectives of the dissertation alongside highlighting potential for future research, creating some sort of relational audit toolkit to ensure that motivations can be driven in the right direction to help deliver strategic aims and objectives and finally to scrutinise and comment upon the effectiveness of and the problems occurring through the use of the stipulated methodology.

**9: Presentation**

Presentation was to be formal using 10 point, black, Arial font or larger and double-spaced lines for the main body text. The dissertation was to be split into manageable chapters and sections with graphical content added where appropriate to illustrate points.

**1: What and where is it? An introduction to the case study example: What; Where; When**

Not yet launched publicly but in-situ and working in a trial phase, the Newcastle Castle Keep *Disabled Access Project* is an innovative project funded partly by goodwill and also by money granted from the *Disabled Access Fund* (Blue, P. 11 August 2003, pers. comm.), Newcastle City Council and the Society of Antiquaries. As the researcher observed on site, the project aims to deliver a photographic 'reconstruction' that simulates the Castle Keep and allows people to virtually walk through the building. The project came about as a direct extension of an earlier project that brought a, so far, fragmented history of the development of the Castle and of Newcastle itself into a coherent timeline and as such has been under development for at least two to three years (*ibid*).

The Castle Keep is one of 6 Grade I listed buildings within the Castle Garth, it is part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument and lies within the Central Conservation Area of Newcastle. Castle Garth consists of a Roman fort, Anglo-Saxon cemetery, motte and bailey castle and later stone castle. The site of the Castle Keep and its' immediate environs have significant heritage importance, reflecting the development of Newcastle from Medieval times.

**2: Who's doing it? A brief background to the management/institution**

Pat Blue, interviewee for this case study, is 'Administrator' of the castle Keep, on behalf of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne. Having taken up post around three years ago his previous experience includes working as a trainer and evaluator for the police service and spearheading a multimedia taskforce for police related evaluations.

The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne is custodian of the Castle Keep under a longstanding agreement with the City Council.

The team running the Castle Keep as a visitor attraction is currently made up of the part-time administrator, Pat Blue and also four full-time and 1 part-time staff. Their responsibilities include implementing the Society of Antiquaries policy in relation to the Castle Keep; promote the interests of the keep to educational bodies and the public whilst also safeguarding the building fabric and its historical integrity (*ibid*).

**3: How are they doing it?**

The project uses panoramic imaging rather than virtual reality to create a reconstructed, user-centred simulation of the Castle Keep. The project is delivered on an in-situ personal computer system and projection equipment but in the future will be distributed as CD-ROM to educational establishments, groups and individuals with disabilities (*ibid*).

**4: Data result summary.**

What follows is an edited summary of the main, most relevant points made by the interviewee during the course of the interview:

The aims and objectives of the Castle Keep, though not formally presented on paper, are to promote the keep, and support heritage in the local community but also throughout the region, and on a national and international basis.

It was obvious that the material for the timeline project that was being developed would be accentuated by a virtual tour. Although the Castle Keep is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 1 listed building, the Administrator felt that under the ideals of the DDA the organisation should still strive to push itself and its services forward to as many people and provide access to the building to as many people as possible, including disabled people and the financially disadvantaged.

In the future, the Virtual Tour, timeline and photos would be put on CD that could be distributed to groups of or individual disabled people unable to come to the Castle Keep, to the disadvantaged, and to schools and libraries.

Local TV personality and historian Jon Grundy created a voice over that may in future be made into an audio paper for the blind, through partnership with a local firm who specialise in this area.

Basically the work was constantly developing from one idea to another yet everything done was done on a shoestring budget and through the good will of many people and companies.

Future aspirations included creating covers for CD-ROMs and to find money for printing.

The virtual tour will be made available in the Garrison Room, the most accessible room for people with physical and mobility impairments, by appointment only, due to low staffing levels at the Castle Keep.

The Castle Keep does not generally have formalised policies specifically including strategic aims and objectives, though the overall vision and way forward is contained in the Administrators head.

The interviewee agreed that it would be necessary to have evaluation methods to ensure that what guides the future development of the project is in keeping with the overall aim of the Castle Keep.

**5: Why are they doing it? Motivations**

**a: Marketing & Promotion**

Clearly, from not only the researcher's personal interpretation of the project but also from the evidence produced through the interview with the administrator, marketing and promotion was not a motivating factor in the conceptualisation and thus development of this project. However, the mere fact that the project is focused

towards involving, including and making the Castle Keep accessible to currently excluded parts of the potential audience means that one of the outcomes of the project is to raise the profile of the Castle Keep within the regional communities and further a field.

**b: Access**

The mere name of the project denotes that its prime 'reason for being' is to increase accessibility to the fabric of the building or more precisely the 'virtual fabric'.

The *Disabled Access Project* was, as the interviewee reported a logical extension of the previous *Timeline* project (*ibid*), which in itself was not specifically motivated by the desire to increase physical access to the building fabric. The *Timeline* project was more a vehicle to serve for greater intellectual access to the building; it's history and the history of the development of Newcastle (*ibid*). By extension the *Disabled Access Project* was clearly motivated by the desire to increase both physical and intellectual access.

Furthermore, the interviewee strongly indicated that the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 (UK Laws 1996) and the issues of access, that it sets out, were significantly important motivators in the implementation of the project. The Castle Keep itself is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Grade 1 Listed Building. To make alterations to the physical fabric of the building, to facilitate access for the physically impaired, would not be deemed reasonable nor would it be easy to obtain Scheduled Ancient Monument consent or Listed Building Consent to make such changes. Under the terms of the DDA 1995 (*ibid*) it is likely that the Castle Keep could have continued to operate as it does at present, however, the Administrator obviously felt passionately enough about providing greater access and has provided probably the best alternative service. Indeed, it could not be seen to be an inferior

service because should the project not exist then access to the Castle Keep, per se, would have been difficult if not impossible for anybody with physical impairments.

**c: Inclusion**

Obviously inclusion has an inextricable link with accessibility and thus the project, perhaps only by extension, has been motivated by the need to include more sectors of the population. The interviewee has indicated that on top of this and core to all the activities of the Castle Keep is to promote the Castle Keep and local heritage within communities at local, regional, national and international level. Central to this objective is the inclusion of people and aiding them to make connections with their heritage, be it a local heritage or international heritage.

**d: Education**

Evidently the project has educational merit, as it is the vehicle for transmitting information to previously excluded audiences. Though the interviewee does not cite education as a motivating factor there is clearly an argument that opening access to the Castle Keep for other audiences implies, imparts and facilitates learning. The relationship of education or preferably learning to accessibility and inclusion issues is rather entangled in other issues such as interpretational services or facilities. If not an initial major concern of the project there is of course educational or learning potential gained from a project based primarily on solving issues around access to the building fabric. It could be suggested that though not cited, access and education are, in this case, two inextricably linked issues.

**6: How, if at all, do these motivations relate to the strategies, aims and objectives of the heritage site?**

Unquestionably, the main motivating factor for this project, accessibility, relates directly to the main unwritten aims and objectives of the Castle Keep. It also relates tangentially by imparting issues of inclusion, education and marketing and promotion in its outcomes. Strengthening the argument that, in this case the aims

and objectives of the organisation are directly related to the motivations for implementing such a project, is the fact that increasing audience through broadening accessibility increases awareness; increased awareness breads and fosters good relationships with communities; in turn these encourage people to learn more, to become involved, to advocate the necessity for sustaining such a valuable heritage resource and hence assists protection and sustainability of the buildings fabric.

It is clear, that in this case, one prime-motivating factor of accessibility has served to accomplish the probable desired outcomes of projects initiated from different motivating factors such as inclusion or education.

## Case Study: The Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle: Website


Screenshot of the Museum of Antiquities Website http://museums.ncl.ac.uk/archive/

## 1: What and where is it? An introduction to the case study example: What; Where; When

The Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle is an archaeological museum that in 1995 was the first UK museum to create an online exhibition website called *Flints and Stones*, rather than just a front, marketing page (Allason-Jones, L. 21 August 2003, *pers. comm.*). Since then the museum's website has incorporated a number of internet based projects including educational initiatives such as the *Reticulum Project*, *Wallnet* and *Benwell, Centre of the Universe* whilst also including catalogues, an object of the month from the museum collections and a virtual book. *Reticulum* and *Benwell* were content led projects that were teacher based and child based respectively (*ibid*).

The website or its individual projects are not strangers to receiving significant acclaim from their users or from other museum professionals (Dawson 2002: 62) and the 2002 – 2003 virtual visitor figures show, to any person conversant with web statistics, that the website is massively popular. In this period they received over 750,000 unique visitors, averaging a time of 7.5 to 8 minutes per person per visit to the site. In web terms this an extraordinarily 'sticky' site. The *Flints and Stones* exhibition remains the most popular of all the projects and it is no wonder that the website is one of the most visited museum websites in the UK (Allason-Jones, L. 21 August 2003, *pers. comm.*).

## 2: Who's doing it? A brief background to the management/institution

Lindsay Allason-Jones, interviewee for this case study is Director of Archaeological Museums, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, and is responsible for the day to day running of the Museum of Antiquities and the Shefton Museum regarding archaeology.

**3: How are they doing it?**

The Museum of Antiquities website is delivered solely by internet and the numerous projects have focused on creating educational material prepared either solely by museum staff or a combination of museum staff project workers and teachers and/or schoolchildren.

**4: Data result summary.**

What follows is an edited summary of the main, most relevant points made by the interviewee during the course of the interview:

The main reason or motivating factor behind starting the Museum of Antiquities website was that the museum won a cheque, in 1995, totalling £1000 for an exhibition within the actual museum. At that time The University of Newcastle upon Tyne was talking about moving all services about and Ms Allason-Jones didn't want to spend money on something that would be wasted if the museum was relocated. A colleague had suggested that the exhibition for which they had won the cheque would transfer well onto the Internet (At that time still in its infancy amongst public organisations and indeed commercial organisations). Ms Allason-Jones gave the go-ahead and decided to see what happened. It was her feeling that an online exhibition would allow the museum to break out of the walls that were physically constraining it and to see if there was a global audience for the museum. Since this first project they have found that there is a global audience.

The interviewee noted that for a small but relatively important university museum the Internet presented a new space for exhibiting.

Largely the website came about from interest and intrigue in the World Wide Web. As a university museum part of the museums remit was to push forward new research, pushing forward new boundaries as well. The interviewee saw it first and

foremost as a research project, partly to see if they could do it, and secondly as a way of getting around the physical constraints of the building they were in.

The interviewee strongly commented that the website was motivated through the overall aims and objectives of being a university museum and partly to do with circumstances prevalent at the time.

Since 1995 the museum's strategic aims and objectives have remained the same. (interviewer note: interviewee was asked and agreed to send a copy of the museum's strategic aims and objectives, however, due to unforeseeable circumstances the document did not appear.)

The interviewee adamantly felt that the website helped and continues to help to deliver strategic aims and objective. She noted that it has raised the profile of the museum within the university and throughout the world. She also noted that the success and track record of the website projects have allowed the museum to take advantage of major funding initiatives, for example: The SINE (Structural Images of the North East) project that was funded by NOF (New Opportunities Fund) largely because of their track record. Also the museum and university will play host to the 'Digital Resource for the Humanities' conference in 2004, again because they now have a national and international reputation for delivering ICT projects. Finally the way that they used IT for educational purposes, particularly apparent in the Reticulum project, led to getting secondary funding to work with junior, rural schools in Northumberland again helping the museum to enhance its reputation within the region.

Nobody could have imagined that from £1000 the museum would have brought in about £3 to £4 million in project funding. This represents an excellent return on investment.

The interviewee saw the website as continually developing, always try to do new things and further the research of the museum. The respondent was however absolutely adamant that the website was not a good marketing ploy. On average only 1% of visitors were aware of the museum through the website and came especially because of that. The interviewee felt it was not worth taking money out of the marketing budget because of this but rather to take money from the 'research and outreach' budget.

Currently, the museum is about to move and within the sector there is not much funding for web type activities. The plan for the few years is to consolidate what they have and to make sure it is solid. Therefore, when future funding initiatives come forth they will be in a strong position to take advantage of them.

All updating of the website is done 'in-house'. About 80 hours per week, comprising of one full-time computing officer and 2 part-time project officers working on the Reticulum project are spent on website related work. However, the emphasis now is on maintenance and consolidation.

Evaluation of the actual product is mainly through deciding if they feel comfortable that they have done a good job and from email feedback, for example from American teachers.

The interviewee strongly felt that the website was a tack-on to the actual museum services.

**5: Why are they doing it? Motivations**

**a: Marketing & Promotion**

Though it was not possible through the researchers personal interpretation to establish whether marketing and promotion was a motivating factor for starting the

website and its numerous projects, the interviewee has clearly indicated that this was never a motivating factor. She has positively stated that in her opinion the museum website would not work as a marketing tool and has backed this with clear evidence to support her argument. However, although it does not act as a marketing tool in the sense that it increases the physical visits to the museums it has, arguably, promoted and marketed the museums profile as an international centre of excellence. The interviewee clearly stated that it has raised the profile of the museum within the university and internationally however when it came to being questioned about marketing she clearly saw marketing as directly related to the amount of physical visits achieved through such processes. It has been argued (Muller 2002: 27 - 29) that the virtual museum can be seen as a new exhibition space and in this sense the mere fact that the website has been so positively received and highly used must surely mean that it has acted as an effective marketing tool for itself as a new museum environment. Thus, although not a motivating factor for the implementation of the website it is certain that in some senses the website has acted as a marketing tool.

It is perhaps true to say that as the museum was pushing the boundaries when it first established its online presence in 1995 that the nature of its effectiveness or ineffectiveness as a marketing tool was not clearly known or foreseeable, hence such pro's and con's could not have been easily considered in making the decisions to implement such a project or group of projects.

**b: Access**

It is a common problem that museums and galleries don't have enough space to exhibit all of the artefacts within their collections. The interviewer noted that one of the main reasons for implementing the website was the potential that it had for the museum to break out of the physical constraints of the museum. Furthermore, such projects provided intellectual access to material otherwise difficult to access.

Tangential to this initial issue and motivation, but worthy of mention, is that the success of the initial project has given the museum a good framework or foundation from which to access funding for the museum. Notably the museum has made a superb return on investment, almost 2000 percent over the past seven years by bringing at least £2 million in funding. Though the notion that such a small scale project as the initial *Flints and Stones* internet version could bring so much funding in to the museum was not a prime motivating factor at the outset of creating their digital museum, after it was recognised as a good attractor for funding it must surely have become a motivating factor in continuing to create new and innovative projects.

**c: Inclusion**

The interviewee related nothing regarding inclusion issues, such as social inclusion, community or social regeneration. At the outset of the project in 1995 such issues were not so much at the forefront of the work of the cultural industries, so it is hardly surprising. Nevertheless there must be merit and crossovers between access issues and inclusion. The mere facilitation of better access to information and knowledge must by its own logic create a more inclusive audience.

Though not a remit of this research it would be interesting to observe whether, by increasing accessibility, the implementation of a website has created new issues regarding accessibility to its very self. Though the website may allow the museum to include more people in sharing its information, knowledge and collections, perhaps the website has other issues pertaining to accessibility and inclusion that exist only in the virtual world, rather than the physical.

**d: Education**

The prime-motivating factor for starting the website, according to the interviewee and from the researchers personal interpretation, was that of the educational opportunities it proposed. However, it was the researcher who felt from his own

interpretation that what had motivated the museum was the learning potential they could give out to more geographically diverse audiences as well as including people from within the region, especially school children, in the production of content for the website. What came to light in the interview was that in fact the museum saw this, and still do in many respects, as a research project that pushes the boundaries of what can be done with the internet. Of course this includes ideas regarding providing facilities for lifelong learning, including people and creating more accessible resources but in its essence the museum was primarily motivated by fulfilling one of its strategic aims or objectives and expectations of being a university museum, that of research.

**6: How, if at all, do these motivations relate to the strategies, aims and objectives of the heritage site?**

Unfortunately the researcher was unable to obtain a copy of the museums strategic aims and objectives. However, enough was mentioned within the interview for the researcher to understand how the motivations related to the delivery of the museums strategic aims and objectives.

Clearly the motivating factors for the implementation of the website were a mixture of circumstance and of the desire to fulfil aims and objectives of the museum. The circumstances of having extra cash, in itself a rarity, and of not knowing if the museum would be re-housed in the immediate future led to the decision to implement a website. The desire to push the project forward under the guise of research could be seen to be a sub-motivator, because this desire did not essentially sway the final decision to implement the project.

What is also clear is that many other primary objectives of any business, such as marketing and promotion, have been pushed forward by the website, though perhaps not in the moulding of traditional outcomes i.e. increased physical visitor figures.

Certainly the two main motivating factors, education and research, have fulfilled themselves way beyond expectation and have undoubtedly assisted in delivering the strategic aims and objectives of the museum and addressed many pertinent issues within the national agenda. A case in point being the amount of funding previous projects have brought in, due to their veritable status, to enable new ones.

Clearly there is a direct link between the motivating factors and the delivery of strategic aims and objectives though there are many inextricable links between the aims and objectives and the results of many of the projects.


Screenshot of the *Virtually The Ice Age* website. http://www.creswell-crags.org.uk

**1: What and where is it? An introduction to the case study example: What; Where; When.**

*Virtually the Ice Age*, website, IT installation and distributable CD-ROM project was formed by the enthusiastic genius of Creswell Heritage Trust staff. Situated within the old coal-mining area surrounding Worksop in Nottinghamshire, Creswell Crags is a limestone gorge that has opened up its treasures, which tell a detailed story about life between 50,000 and 10,000 years ago during the last ice age. The site is unique within Europe and on a global scale. It contains highly significant archaeological information and recent finds of cave paintings, the first in the United Kingdom, have been made. The heritage site is playing an integral role in the social, economic and environmental coalfield regeneration. The gorge itself forms part of the Creswell Heritage Landscape Area, again part of the Limestone Heritage Area and one of the overall visions is to achieve World Heritage Site status, a centre for lifelong learning as well as being a leading centre for research into the Quaternary period.

Core to the management activities are the management and presentation of Creswell as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Scheduled Ancient Monument within the terms of the lease from Welbeck Estates. The main funders of this function are Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire County Councils. Furthermore since 1995 improvements to interpretation facilities have been made including the museum display, studio refurbishment, interactive computer systems, educational materials, factsheets, guides etc. Funded through Resource's 'ICT Challenge Fund', The Coalfield Regeneration Trust and furthermore by European Regional Development Funding the *Virtually the Ice Age* project was completed and launched in July 2001. The Trust believes that the website is, "an innovative and nationally important interpretative resource" (Creswell Heritage Trust 2002: 8), a claim substantiated through the receipt of a Channel 4 ICT Award for Excellence.

**2: Who's doing it? A brief background to the management/institution**

Ian Wall, interviewee for this case study, is 'Visitor Services and Project Manager' at Creswell Heritage Trust, has significant experience in developing and implementing interpretive projects and was project leader for the *Virtually the Ice Age* project. Overseeing visitor services operations on site he is the direct manager of the Principal Heritage Ranger who together manage the provision and quality assurance of visitor services delivery. His position as project manager is directly related to bringing funding into the Trust that in turn relies heavily on project funding to sustain it's existence. Mr Wall is second in command in the management line that reports to the Trust's Council of Management (*ibid*).

**3: How are they doing it?**

Delivered by three methods, the internet, a touch-screen IT installation (sited in the Creswell Crags museum) and a CD-ROM for re-sale to schools and individuals, the project was first conceived in 1999 as a reflexive measure to attract funding (Wall, I. 22 August 2003, *pers. comm.*).

**4: Data result summary.**

What follows is an edited summary of the main, most relevant points made by the interviewee during the course of the interview:

There has always been pressure, as a museum and organisation that has a lot to say about the site, to actually get the information out to people. The Internet was an obvious medium for that. The organisation had already embarked on a European Regional Development Funded project that comprised a two year programme, from 1999-2001, looking at the presentation of the site's archaeology. At that point it involved on-site improvements, looking at interpretation panels, new videos and maybe an audio tour. Then fortunately, the ICT Challenge Fund (see Appendix 2), a DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) fund, delivered through Resource became available. The organisation applied for money from this fund and when it was successful it put a substantial extra amount into their reserves. The

organisation also tried to attract extra money from the Coalfield Regeneration Trust. With more money available for the project the organisation then decided to look into more detail at creating *Virtually The Ice Age* as a more remote means of disseminating and delivering the information. *Virtually The Ice Age* launched in July 2001.

The main motivating factors behind starting the project were evidently the learning potential from the museum and the potential of actually giving people an expectation of what they might see and experience on site, prior to a visit. The interviewee strongly noted that in no way was the project seen as a substitute for the real thing or for that matter a threat for people visiting; it could only have enhanced the intention of people to visit.

Collections: The site has been excavated from the Victorian period onwards and artefacts are held in over thirty different museum departments in different countries. The project contained an element of taking the best artefacts from the site and pulling them together in one place thus making them, and the sites' history, more accessible. The interviewee, when asked, responded that the main issues motivating the *Virtually the Ice* Age project were accessibility to the site and the collections, educational issues and marketing issues. The interviewee adamantly believed that such a project was a very effective marketing tool.

The virtual tours provided within the project allowed the organisation to address conservation issues by opening up the caves virtually rather than physically. This part of the project allowed them to the protect layers of archaeology remaining in the caves whilst also increasing accessibility to the site itself.

When asked if the introduction of the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act (1995)) had any bearing on the project the interviewee responded that the onsite touch screen

version of *Virtually the Ice Age,* that meant visitors could virtually go down the cave rather than go on a cave tour, helped the organisation to address some of the DDA needs. The majority of the caves are not accessible at all to wheelchair users. The 'steps only' access to most caves means that even people with mobility impairment find it difficult.

The interviewee felt that the project did help, to a certain extent, to address the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation however he did note that the aims and objectives are so broad that it would be difficult for them not too. In the interviewees opinion the project certainly delivers the mission statement and it helps to address the image problem of the coalfield area.

At the moment the project is updated only to the extent of events scheduling and the news and views pages. The interviewee noted that there is a resource issue and so they are possibly not on top of it as much as they should be. The message board is still being used but is not too onerous to keep up to date. About half a day per week is spent on average, updating the site. With the recent discovery of rock art on the site they will now be looking at a project that will add an art element to *Virtually the Ice Age.* Art adds to the humanity of the archaeology and helps people to access the story. The interviewee noted however that this extension of the project would be dependant on funding.

The organisation had no specific policies or strategies that guided the project save the brief that was given to the contractors. The organisation has an education and access policy and a learning strategy but nothing that formally guides the project. It was in their heads, but the interviewee agreed that it was time to put something down on paper. Learning and access was definitely a lead in the project motivations and certainly the marketing plan helped to identify the product and the audience that they should be marketing to.

A requirement of the funding was that the project involved partnerships. This project involved collaboration with the British Museum and Derby Museum and Art Gallery, that proved to be extremely effective. The project also employed the independent expertise of Mindwave Media who were awarded the contract for creating CD-ROM, Website and IT Installation. This design agency had significant previous experience within the cultural sector having worked on projects at the ARK in York, in Boston, USA medieval town and in Denmark. This really inspired the interviewee to believe that the company was competent in the delivery technology and that they had the necessary empathy with archaeology to be able to communicate it in a way that was fun.

Finally the interviewee felt that the project helped to raise the profile of the Trust as a centre of excellence. The project was given a high profile by the British Museum who accorded it international significance, also accentuated by the links with other cave sites in France. People locally as well as internationally could therefore see the value of the resource.

**5: Why are they doing it? Motivations**

**a: Marketing & Promotion**

Through the researchers own interpretation of the project and as the interviewee strongly indicated, the potential for making people aware of what the site had to offer and what people could expect if they went to the site was a strong motivating factor for implementing the project. The interviewee presented the case for seeing such a project as a promotional tool, noting that being able to give 24/7 access to a wealth of knowledge and pictures of the site itself was an excellent way of promoting the site and the area surrounding it. The interviewee also noted, that by no means did they believe the project substituted for a real visit, though for those who geographically could not make the visit it represented an excellent alternative. Furthermore, by fostering knowledge and awareness of the site sensitivity for the

importance of the site and the Coalfield Regeneration Area could be harnessed in turn helping to promote the necessity to conserve and sustain the resource and to regenerate as far as is feasibly and ethically possible.

Marketing and promotion, of the site, of the surrounding area, of the needs and requirements of the locality and for the encouragement of inward investment was most definitely one of the main motivating factors towards implementing the project as was the positive result of raising the profile of the organisation as a centre of excellence for learning.

**b: Access**

The interviewee noted, (as can be seen by looking at the website version of the project) that the organisation saw an extremely important need to facilitate access to the wealth of information that the site contained. Not only did the organisation feel that they needed to make information available to as diverse an audience as possible, highlighted by the original project that this one spawned from, that of revising interpretive and educational facilities, but they also saw the opportunity to open up areas of the site that were either previously closed to the public for conservation reasons or closed to members of the public with any kind of physical impairment. Implementing virtual tours of the caves not only provided a reasonable substitute under the terms of the DDA but also opened up areas that people never would have seen, increasing accessibility to the knowledgebase held within the site.

The interviewee also noted the potential that they saw and are implementing to bring artefacts from the site, that are currently widely dispersed, into one coherent collection, something that could not easily be achieved in the physical boundaries of the museum.

**c: Inclusion**

As already mentioned in the previous case studies inclusion has inextricable links with accessibility and educational provision. Although the interviewee did not specifically highlight this as a motivating factor he agreed that this was 'part and parcel' of the project.

It could also be argued that this was an inherent motivating issue, inextricably involved with the managements' desire to make the information about the site available and accessible and with the further hope of fostering sympathetic attitudes towards the site and its surrounding area.

**d: Education**

There is no doubt, either from the researchers own interpretation of the project, or from the statements made by the interviewee that there is learning potential from such a project that allows access to previously closed areas and brings diasporic collections together. Furthermore, offering a wealth of other information for educational purposes, interpreted from the many years of scholarly research on the site, was one of the prime motivating factors for implementing the project. It was purely fortune that the ICT Challenge Fund came along at the right time to enable the organisation to extend the ongoing revitalisation of interpretative and educational facilities at the site. The motivation was obviously there and the introduction of a new funding stream was the catalyst.

**6: How, if at all, do these motivations relate to the strategies, aims and objectives of the heritage site?**

The interviewee stated, and as observed by the researcher (Creswell Heritage Trust 2002: 3), that the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation are rather broad. In such a case it is rather difficult for a project not to fulfil at least some parts of the strategy. However, it is most notable that the project has succeeded in raising the organisation's profile not only as a centre for learning but also as a centre willing to

push the boundaries. The project also helps to deliver accessibility to the site in a fun and enticing way, both facilitating remote access and encouraging physical access, a double nuance of accessibility and marketing and promotion.

Additionally, the recognition of the project has obviously helped to establish the organisation as a Centre of Excellence and the exposure that it provides for information, knowledge and understanding of the Quaternary period and of the local area today have undoubtedly, in the minds of the management, managed to promote the site as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), as a SAM (Scheduled Ancient Monument) and most meaningfully as a place for enjoyment of our heritage.

There is no doubt that the project motivations directly relate to the delivery of strategic aims and objectives and have delivered vastly more in the way of outcomes that affect strategy than was originally anticipated.

The research case studies were analysed in relation to the information gleaned from the literature review, that was at best tangential. Nevertheless four criteria (marketing and promotion; access; inclusion and education) for overtly analysing the case studies were devised from the literature, because they appeared to be the most important issues being debated and researched at this moment in time. These four criteria therefore create the structure for this section and also for the concluding chapter, which although not referring back in great detail to the literature review, because of the tangential nature of the majority of the literature, nevertheless sets a general framework for action.

Each of the three case studies is in its own respect individual in circumstance and in content. They are clearly three very different projects in approach and in content but they do have many similarities when it comes to motivating factors and the delivery of strategies.

In this respect the three case studies bear resemblance to each other. Two of the projects, the *Castle Keep Disabled Access Project* and *Virtually the Ice Age*, were extensions of existing projects emerging from the necessity to provide better accessibility and to tackle tangential issues such as social inclusion and lifelong learning. In a sense the Museum of Antiquities website was, at least in its infancy, also a logical extension of an existing project but it could be argued that it was more the necessity to do something with the money they had won, so that it would not be wasted, and to push forward one of the main objectives of the museum, that of research, which motivated the implementation of the website.

***Marketing & Promotion***

Clearly, the case studies have shown, that in this small sample of ICT projects, marketing and promotion is an inevitable by-product of the project. Though the organisation may not view the project as a distinct marketing tool, The Museum of

Antiquities being a case in point, increasing the demographics of audience, by virtue of the Internet, from regional or national to international can only have served to raise organisational profiles, though of course this may be positive or negative. Indeed, any work that directly addresses strategic aims and objectives is likely to increase organisational profiles in one respect or another, be that within the greater institution, like Newcastle University or even just within the profession itself.

Though the *Castle Keep Disabled Access Project* has not yet launched it is clear that its motivating factors of increasing accessibility and tackling social exclusion of marginalized people such as those with disabilities or those on low incomes, will produce an increased profile and thus serve the efforts of marketing and promotion. What is also clear in all cases is that the projects must be reflexive and respond to popular opinion if the projects are to be positive in their contribution to marketing and promotion.

Nevertheless, although this has been highlighted in the literature review only one of the three organisations, Creswell Heritage Trust, initially saw their project as a positive factor in delivering their promotional strategies. Indeed the Museum of Antiquities had never seen the project as a promotional vehicle, though it acknowledged that one of the outcomes of the project was a significantly increased profile for the museum and the work of the museum. This may be to do with strategic thinking about what the website actually constitutes within the context of the physical environment. As it was taken more as a research topic than anything else, it is fair to assume that the project was seen as a sub-activity of the greater museum's mission. Yet, what would appear to have happened is that it has in itself become a new environment of the museum that should lay side-by-side that of the physical museum environment within the strategic planning process and thus be subject to the same scrutiny when it comes to access, inclusion and education policies.

***Access***

All three case studies, in one way or another, pro-actively acknowledged the issue of accessibility to information, resources, collections and knowledge as motivating factors for the implementation of the projects. In every case the key has been first and foremost the ability to engage new audiences with content not previously accessible to them due to the physical limitations of the organisations environment.

In the case of the Castle Keep, its operational capabilities to attract new audiences and include sections of the population with mobility disorders were limited by the actual fabric of the resource. The project would in theory allow access to all, at least in a capacity that provides, within the circumstances that prevail, a suitable alternative service.

In the case of the Museum of Antiquities website, the ability to break out of the physical constraints of the building and its exhibition space and display artefacts, that were not normally on show was one of the prime motivating factors.

Finally, in the case of *Virtually the Ice Age* the ability to not only overcome some of the physical, unalterable constraints of the heritage resource, but also the ability to pull diasporic collections together and into context with the wealth of information that the trust holds, was one of the prime motivating factors for implementing the project.

One of the key attributes that ICTs have is the ability to engage extremely diverse and vastly dispersed audiences, particularly via the Internet, in new ways that create dialogue and could help to create a sense of ownership. All of the three projects would seem to engage the audience by allowing them access to material previously more difficult to gain access to, and to engage, to motivate and to encourage some of the key issues that all cultural organisations try to facilitate.

Clearly, accessibility is a national issue, not only because of the introduction of the DDA (1995) but also because of pressure mounted by organisations such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB). Taking this, in combination with the abilities of ICTs, it is not surprising to see that all of the case studies have been motivated, to greater and lesser extents, by the desire to increase access to their cultural capital. By doing this it is clear that on this topic of discussion the motivations are directly related to the delivery of visions, aims and objectives.

***Inclusion***

Evidently, though none of the case studies really puts forward inclusion as a prime motivating factor behind the implementation of their projects, the links between inclusion, education and accessibility have played a significant part in their implementation.

The Castle Keep project has by its very nature of facilitating wider access to the cultural resource included sections of the population that were previously excluded from active participation. The *Virtually the Ice Age* project has done similar and extended this to including informal learners around the globe. The Museum of Antiquities again has facilitated this by providing access to collections and information for formal and informal learning and enjoyment to people from around the globe.

All of these institutions have an obligation to be inclusive and it is clear that the projects motivations, indirectly, go some way to addressing this issue.

***Education***

Creswell Heritage Trust and The Museum of Antiquities were the only two organisations to directly recognise educational potential as a motivating factor and relate it to the delivery of their strategic aims and objectives. In the case of the

Museum of Antiquities this was initially a cultural sector related activity, where they were pushing research to expand the boundaries of what could and could not be done, but evidently this evolved into supplying vast and dispersed audiences with engaging material that encouraged and facilitated learning. Creswell Heritage Trust on the other hand saw their project as an extension of overhauling interpretational facilities and as a medium for delivering and disseminating the vast amount of information left unpublished or edited out of on-site interpretational boards. The project also, in facilitating access to normally inaccessible areas, opened up new realms for general learning, because the public were now able to access areas previously only opened to archaeological and research professionals.

Therefore, there can be no doubt that education, as a motivating factor for these projects has directly facilitated the delivery of strategic aims and objectives.

The Castle Keep on the other hand, though it has an undocumented strategic objective to provide educational resources, never intentionally saw the access project as being educationally orientated and therefore as helpful in delivering strategic agendas relating to education. Indirectly though, because it was an extension of the *Timeline* project, it has succeeded in doing so and arguably also because in its essence it allows wider access to the cultural resource.

## 1: Conclusion

The logical conclusion from the research is that there is a blurred line between motivations for implementing projects and the delivery of strategic aims and objectives. It would appear that the projects in question were reflexive in their initiation, resulting in the main part from circumstance rather than from particular strategic planning.

Nevertheless the projects appear to have greatly assisted in the delivery of strategic aims and objectives, indeed they have delivered on issues that categorically had very little to do with the factors that motivated their implementation.

It is also clear that the heritage sites involved in this research still lack sufficient, strategic direction in respect of ICT–based projects. This is not to belittle or offend any of the work that has been done so far (which in the researchers view is superb), it is simply to note that as all of the case studies were born out of reflexive measures, the cultural sector, if it can be generalised to this level, should attempt to be more objective about the future.

### *a: Criticism of methodology*

Regarding the recording of telephone interviews, one criticism that the researcher has, though it was foreseen in the methodology, is that the quality of recording for the first interview was poor. This was due to use of a tape that already had a recording on it which when recorded over did not fully erase the original recording, creating background noise. This made the task of transcribing the interview rather difficult though field notes taken by the researcher helped to fill the gaps. The second and third interviews were therefore recorded using new tapes.

The other criticism of the methodology would be the practicality of gaining access to printed documentation of business strategies. Although the researcher requested

copies prior to interview and again during interview this was not always possible due either to a lack of written documentation detailing strategy or due to the workload of the interviewee that prevented the furnishing of these documents. None of the interviewees however were averse to the idea of revealing their business plans to the researcher.

In general however the methodology guided the dissertation extremely effectively and no major criticisms need to be observed.

### *b: Recommendations*

This new virtual environment, in my view as a veteran of the commercial dotcom boom and gloom, should be subject to the same policy and strategic structures as the *real* environments and held accountable for the way in which it delivers its content to the UK population. In other words, the principles, ethics and moralities which apply to museums, galleries and heritage sites through key legislations and policy guidance documents such as the Disability Discrimination Act should be applied to the *digital environment* as far as is practicable (at least until similar constraints guide web content). Websites delivering content can no longer be seen as a 'tack-on' to a museum's usual remit and work. It must stand-alone and be connected with all other policies and strategies within a museum.

Another question begs answering before a heritage site enters the digital arena: Is it fair or possible to assume that a website can deliver the same or a similar parallel cultural, educational and accessible experience as the real thing? Does it need to? Is it just one arrow in a quiver, not meant to solve all strategic issues? What constitutes the 'real' experience/thing? Are we just stuck in our ways? Do we need to think more broadly of 'digital museums' as a new space, with their own remit and boundaries, that with the right strategic direction may eventually be viewed as a valid separate and independent operation adding significant value to the overall

operation? These are all questions that an organisation should ask itself before moving forwards.

The need to provide an engaging experience that creates almost a 'sense of place' is of great importance for many people. It is not just certain groups of people with disabilities that cannot physically access certain cultural attractions. People from abroad, other areas of the country, local people without transportation may want to access the culture of a certain attraction. But what sort of experience are they looking for?

What is most important then is to understand the sort of experience(s) that people wish to get. These experiences will by the very nature of human beings differ in a wide variety of ways and this should be the subject of further research.

Mistakes have already been made in the commercial sector of the Internet that tried to run before it could walk, with relative business chaos ensuing. To competently harness these technologies and deliver the most sustainable and accessible digital strategies for future generations museums, galleries and heritage sites must tackle issues that are redefined by the very nature of the virtual environment, for example accessibility for the partially sighted or access for the mobility impaired. Motivations, as much as they might seem right at the time must be evaluated and put into context of the new environment, before starting, so that project planning can highlight possible troublesome areas in the delivery of aims and objectives using such a new, undefined environment.

Muller (2002) also alludes to the idea that digital strategy should be built into the overarching museums', galleries' or heritage site's strategic plan, offering new opportunities to engage the shareholders. The website of any of these types of

cultural attractions is not a "subsection of another activity" (Muller 2002: 29) within that attraction.

"The false dichotomy of real versus virtual – or authentic versus copied – over simplifies the multiple meanings objects acquire through cultural history" (Muller 2002: 28). Of course there are differences between real and virtual but museums are artificially constructed environments too. Muller asserts (2002: 28) that the representation of objects on websites only mirrors the original transfer of objects to the 'artificial museum environment'. The web only challenges the relocation of objects to the original museum and thus the value and meanings of the objects, by allowing a new experimental space that permits visitors/ "virtual visitors to become commentators, contributors or even co-producers." (Muller 2002: 29).

"Museums are experts in framing objects in new contexts, and the web is just one of them" (Muller 2002: 28). In a normal museum context the content requires to be as accessible as possible to as wide a variety of people as possible, in physical and intellectual terms, even if the original stated purpose for said museum or gallery was for example purely academic research. In modern society it is no longer acceptable to hold fast to such ideals and museums, galleries and heritage sites are being called to account and challenged morally and legally to change. Museums, galleries and heritage sites usually now produce access policies, education policies, departmental policies and the like. It would not be unfair to expect them to devise policies relating to the display of objects, information and learning information within this new *virtual* environment (Muller 2002: 28). By extension it would also not be unfair to expect museums to make revisions of their access and education policies in light of issues raised by the new 'virtual environment'.

Therefore the researcher recommends that museums, galleries and heritage sites do the following:

1. Decide whether the ICT projects are to be integrated parts of the whole or whether they will create two distinct locations, one online and one offline.
2. Having decided point one, re-address pertinent national agenda and localised issues, such as the current issues of accessibility, social inclusion, regeneration and lifelong learning to take account of new problems that may be raised by the *virtual environment.*
3. Look at the issue in a global perspective if the project is to involve the delivery of resources via the Internet. Look at global or multi-national initiatives and relate them downwards to the organisational aims and objectives.
4. Understand the difference between the *virtual* and the *real* and thus set the boundaries by which the organisation will deliver content, disseminate information, engage and network.
5. Most of all, be open to new ideas, be open minded to an environment that is still in its infancy. Think 'out of the box'.

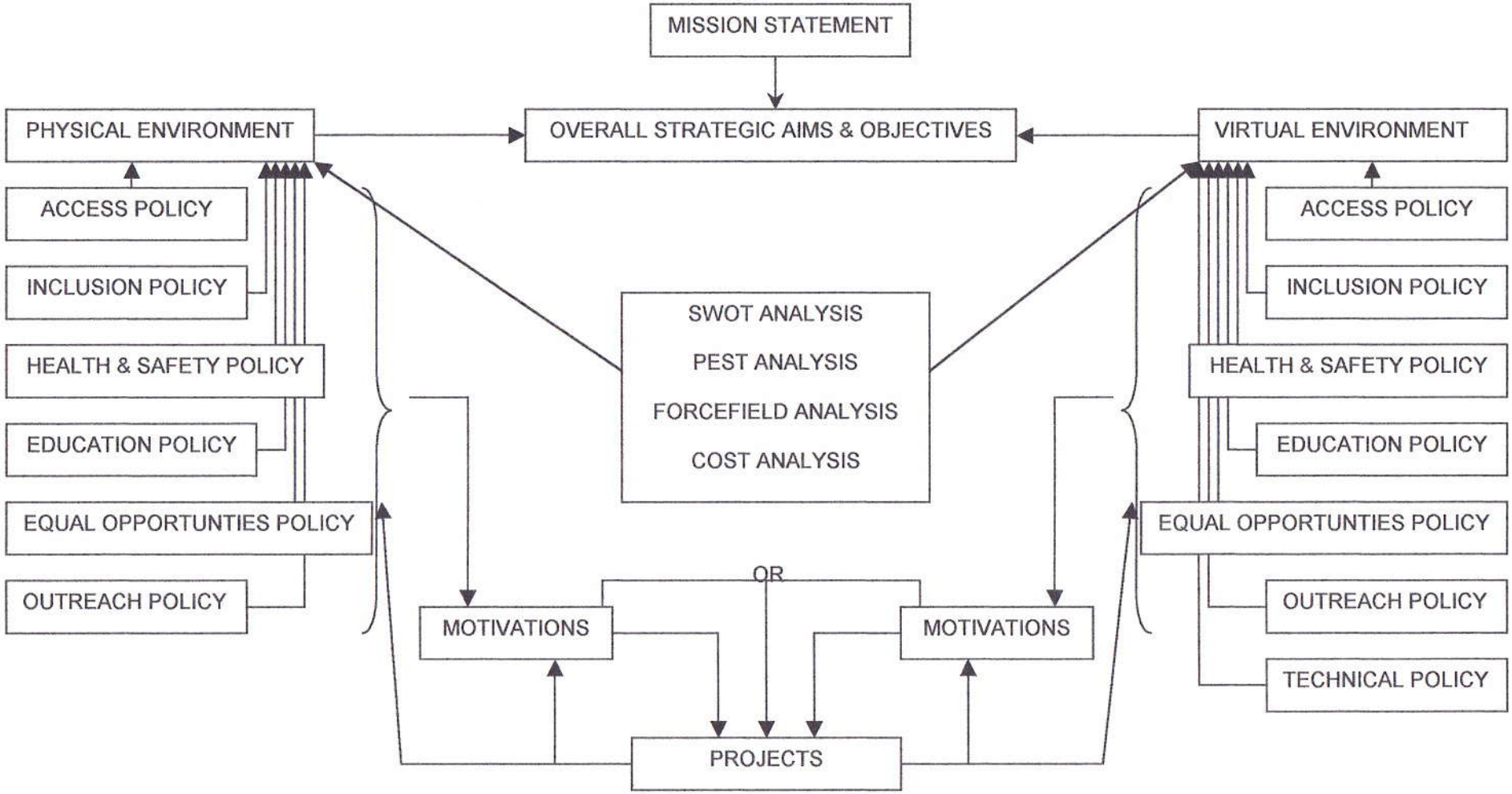
Of course, researching, devising and revising the best strategy for delivering aims and objectives will take significant time, but it will be time well spent. Cultural organisations spend a lot of time devising and revising normal business models, as does any business because it is the key to success. Therefore if ICTs are to play a sustainable part in helping to deliver aims and objectives the same amount of effort must be administered to planning their futures alongside that of the physical environment.

### *c: Digital Strategy Toolkit*

There appear to be three distinct models that can be followed:

1. Real & Virtual environments both mirror each other, are an integrated whole and are directed to achieve the same overall aims and objectives.
2. Real and Virtual environments both directed to create distinctly separate locations that achieve separate overall aims and objectives.
3. Real & Virtual environments both directed to achieve same overall aims and objectives, though contents of each may vary considerably or may indeed be distinctly separate locations.

The following is simply a suggestion for cultural institutions to use as guidance in aligning their ICT projects with their current business strategy to achieve optimal performance and delivery of strategic aims and objectives. The diagram that follows is based on models one and three above. Following the diagram are some points for consideration when setting out strategic guidance policy for the *virtual environment.* If it is the choice of the organisation to create two distinct locations with ultimately different overall aims and objectives then it may still be advisable to consult the list of considerations for digital policies concerning access, inclusion, education, health and safety and the like that follow the diagram. It may also be that this model can be followed to achieve two distinct locations as long as their ultimate aims and objectives are exactly the same.


MISSION STATEMENT
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
OVERALL STRATEGIC AIMS & OBJECTIVES
VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT
ACCESS POLICY
INCLUSION POLICY
HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY
EDUCATION POLICY
EQUAL OPPORTUNTIES POLICY
OUTREACH POLICY
SWOT ANALYSIS
PEST ANALYSIS
FORCEFIELD ANALYSIS
COST ANALYSIS
ACCESS POLICY
INCLUSION POLICY
HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY
EDUCATION POLICY
EQUAL OPPORTUNTIES POLICY
OUTREACH POLICY
TECHNICAL POLICY
OR
MOTIVATIONS
MOTIVATIONS
PROJECTS

## Virtual Environment: Points to consider

### Access Policy

- What unique qualities does the virtual environment have over the real, physical environment in terms of making resources accessible.
- In using ICT to solve access issues pertaining to the physical environment, are new access issues raised?
- What are the technical barriers of the ICT project?
- What audience are you trying to reach and will you marginalize some of this audience because of the types of technology and programming you are using.
- Just because you want to reach a specific audience is it fair to marginalize others?
- Does this audience have good enough access to the facilities required to view and participate in your project?
- Does the ICT project, as far as is possible, provide for the needs of the physically, mobility, visually and aurally impaired?
- If not, what can be done to address such issues?
- Do you want to set technical standards that guide the accessibility of your ICT projects?
- Have you looked at the technical standards of the New Opportunities Fund, the World Wide Web Consortium (See Appendix 2) and other bodies with a statutory interest in making cultural resources available to currently marginalized people?
- What implications does the virtual environment have on the sustainable physical access of your resources?
- How will you preserve your digital cultural resources to ensure they will be accessible for future generations?

- Will you work as a collective with other cultural institutions within the UK and abroad?
- Have you taken into account that if you are delivering projects via the Internet your access policies need to be related to a global audience?

**Inclusion Policy**

- How will you harness the multi-directional networking capabilities of ICTs, especially the Internet, to engage and include. How will you set this in context with the relatively uni-directional interaction of the physical environment? Do you need to?
- What staffing measures will be needed to maintain user-organisation contact?
- Have you taken into account that if you are delivering projects via the internet your inclusion policies need to be related to a global audience?

**Education Policy**

- What opportunities does ICT propose that the *real* environment does not?
- What new audiences can be engaged?
- How best can you disseminate your information?
- Is it enough to just have a database of information or does it matter how the information engages the user?
- How do you know how people will interact with content on the internet? How will you tailor educational material for such an unknown audience.

**Equal Opportunities Policy**

- Will you give staff the same opportunities for training to deliver content via ICTs.
- Will you be able to give equal opportunities to all sections of the audience, considering how global this audience could be?

**Outreach Policy**

- Given the global nature of the internet how are you going to set boundaries for your outreach work? Do you need to?
- Have you realised the potential for reaching out, engaging and starting a dialogue with people from all over the world, from different backgrounds, cultures, economies and religions?
- It is worth looking at how some marginalized peoples and diasporas have used the internet, networking and cultural exchange for their own community re-affirmation and preservation of values. Can we learn from that in our social work?

**Health and Safety Policy**

- If you are going to employ staff to work on ICT based projects make certain that health and safety laws regarding the use of computers and electronic equipment are observed.

**Technical Policy**

- Consider what type of technologies you will employ and make sure you understand their strengths and weaknesses.
- Always seek independent advice if using contractors.
- Understand how the technology will affect the delivery of your projects and also the physical environment of your organisation (if you will be serving the projects from hardware that you have purchased).
- Make sure you have relevant software and hardware licenses.
- How will you protect any copyrights you hold when you deliver projects via the internet?

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1) Hello this is Ben Smith from the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies. We pre-arranged this time to conduct a short telephone interview for the purposes of my dissertation research. The interview should take no longer than 30 minutes. This interview will focus on your/the _____

_____

2) Just for clarification you have agreed that the _____ is happy to participate in this research? ☐ yes ☐ no

3) You should have received a copy of the aims and objectives of the research and of the main structure and content for this interview. Is that correct? ☐ yes ☐ no

4) Before we start the interview are there any points about the research topic that I can clarify for you?

5) Would you prefer your personal name to be kept anonymous within the research report? ☐ yes ☐ no

6) What is your name?

7) What is your position in the organisation?

8) Can you give me a brief summary of your job description:

9) Could you give me a brief summary of what_____ project is and what delivery methods it uses (e.g. Internet, IT Installation using PC and projector etc).

10) Do you have any usage figures for the project in question and if yes would you permit me to use these figures in my research if necessary?

    a. If yes can you email me a copy please?

11) When did your museum first start (from time of first idea) the website/ICT project in question?

12) What were the main reasons/motivating factors behind starting _____?

13) Was/were this/these motivation(s) led or influenced by new, government legislation such as the DDA, by guidance reports from professional counterparts or purely by organisational objectives?

14) What were these (probe for clarification)?

15) Can you identify out of all the motivations, the main motivating factor for starting the project in question? If yes, please summarise...

16) Do you have a copy of organisational strategic aims and objectives from the same period of time as when the project started?

    a. If yes, can I have a copy?

    b. If no, can you summarise them please?

17) In your opinion how, if at all did this project help and/or hinder the delivery of organisational strategic aims and objectives?

18) Does the project continually develop or has it's content remained relatively static since its inception?

19) What are the reasons for this?

20) Your project in question has been running for X____ years. What motivations keep the project going?

21)

    a. Did your organisation send me a copy of current strategic aims and objectives and are they the same as when the project was first started?

    b. If not would you be able to?

22) Does the project continue to help you to deliver your organisations strategic aims and objectives?

    a. If yes, please explain:

    b. If no, please explain:

23)

a. What are the organisations aspirations for ICT based projects?
b. Do you have a guidance or development policy document for the future?
c. If yes could I have a copy please?

24) Did your project utilise independent expertise in its' creation or was all the work carried out in-house?

25) If in-house how many man-hours per week were spent on work related to your website?

26) Approximately how many man-hours of your staff are currently spent on maintaining and developing the project in questions?

27) Is the emphasis on maintenance or developing and furthering the project concept?

28) Do you have a separate strategy for ICT based projects?

29) If yes, how does this strategy fit in with your organisational strategic aims and objectives? (Can I have a copy please?)

30)

a. Do you have a means of evaluating/auditing/testing your ICT projects and the delivery of your organisations strategic aims and objectives?
b. Would it be useful for you to have a relatively standardised way of auditing/testing/evaluating the relationships between motivating factors behind implementing an ICT based project, ICT project aims and objectives and overall strategic aims and objectives?
c. If yes, what would be the most useful tools and/or information?
d. If no, please explain:

31) Do you have any further information or points of clarification you would like to express?

a. If yes: please continue

32) Would you like me to send you an electronic copy of this interview once it is typed up?

33) Do you want to sign-off the contents of the interview before it is used in the research?

34) Would you like me to send you an electronic copy of the dissertation upon its completion and subsequent marking (this is likely to be September 2004)?

On behalf of myself and the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne I would like to thank you for your participation in this research. The information that you have provided will certainly be useful and full acknowledgment will given when referring to this interview.

**ICT** – Information and communication technology.

**NOF** – New Opportunities Fund: A £50 million fund created by the DCMS to fund innovative projects that would lead to the generation of content suitable for informal learners that could be showcased on *The Peoples Network*.

**ICT Challenge Fund** – The ICT Challenge Fund was a way of developing innovative projects in ICT – so that they could be used as case studies by other organisations in their development of IT type projects.

**NGfL** – National Grid for Learning.

**W3C** – World Wide Web Consortium – Headed by Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the internet, the organisation amongst other things provides guidelines for the creation of accessible websites. For more info visit http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/

**DDA** or **DDA 1995**– Disability Discrimination Act 1995

**Sticky site** - a term commonly used in the internet industry to describe the length of time a unique visitor stays navigating a website.

**DCMS** – Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

**SAM** – Scheduled Ancient Monument

**SSSI** – Site of Special Scientific Interest

**VLmp** – Virtual Library Museum Pages available http://www.icom.org/vlmp

**The Peoples Network** - The *Peoples Network* was and is to be the showcase for material created by cultural organisations, for informal learners, funded through the *New Opportunities Fund* that gave out £50 million in grant funding.