Coordinating digital innovation in museums

The Louvre museum

Cultural heritage communities and audiences in today’s digital environment
The Louvre museum: key stats

65,000 m² of exhibition galleries

35,000 exhibits / 400,000+ items in the collection

8 curatorial departments (Egyptian antiquities, Near Eastern antiquities, Greek, Etruscan and Roman antiquities, Islamic Art, Paintings, Sculptures, Prints & Drawings, Decorative Arts) and an associated national museum (Musée Eugène Delacroix)

8M+ visitors each year

• 30% are French, 70% come from abroad
• 70% are first-time visitors

10+ temporary exhibitions per year

The Tuileries Gardens: 25 ha (0.25 km²) of greenery in the heart of the city

2,200+ staff including 1,500 museum attendants
In 2017, the Louvre established its first digital steering committee, with members of the curatorial departments, operational departments and the IT department.

The Louvre’s digital steering committee:
- Delineates the museum’s digital strategy
- Organizes “knowledge hubs”, i.e. staff sharing a specific group of digital skills who will focus on specific issues such as “enhancing visitor experience” and who will steer related projects
- Prioritizes projects
- Monitors project advancement
The Editorial and Documentary Resource Division

Within the Research and Collections Department, we coordinate:

Libraries

Coordinating the Louvre’s 10 research libraries, hosting more than 200,000 books and periodicals, open to in-house staff and outside researchers.

Translations

Providing multilingual resources for our non-French speaking public: gallery labels and panels, interpretation tools in the gallery, audioguide, websites, apps, press releases, research papers....into more than 10 languages (English, Spanish, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, Korean,...)

Collection databases

Managing and disseminating scientific metadata relating to the Louvre’s collections.

Images of the collections

2D and 3D-digitization of artworks in the collections.
Enhancing artwork dissemination

The Louvre was one of the first museums to launch its official website in 1995.

The Atlas database of exhibited artworks is still widely used by visitors and researchers alike.
Enhancing artwork dissemination

2018: the Louvre’s collection made available to its 2,200 staff
Enhancing artwork dissemination
Enhancing artwork dissemination

2019: launch of the web version of Online Collections

**Stakes and ambition:**

- Providing accurate and up-to-date data about the Louvre’s collection
- Allowing researchers to prepare their request to access artwork currently in storage
- Allowing the wider public to navigate our complex collections

**What the project will focus on:**

- Simple and user-friendly interface (Focus groups)
- Permanent identifiers (ARK)
- Aligning the Louvre’s highly specific thesauri with other international thesauri, by leveraging the Ministry’s existing tools
- Interoperability (with the Ministry’s aggregator and Europeana....)
Enhancing artwork dissemination

The ReACH initiative: an ongoing effort by cultural institutions to encourage digital dissemination

A global research program exploring the digital reproduction of cultural heritage, launched by the V&A in 2017 and supported by the Louvre and other key partners.


Core message: stewards of artworks and cultural heritage should leverage digital technologies to foster and enhance public engagement with artworks and scientific knowledge

https://www.vam.ac.uk/research/projects/reach-reproduction-of-art-and-cultural-heritage
VISION

This declaration promotes the vision that works of art and cultural heritage should be preserved and shared as widely as possible throughout the world.

Through advances in technology and connectivity, we now have a revolutionary opportunity to enhance learning, creativity and innovation, and to reach new audiences worldwide, through the reproduction and sharing of works of art and cultural heritage (“Works”). Furthermore, digital technologies can enable us to record, document and, in some instances, recreate Works that are threatened by environmental hazards, conflicts, terrorism, rapid economic development, mass tourism, thefts and other natural and human-made disasters (“Endangered Works”) or that have been lost.

For cultural institutions that hold collections for the benefit of the public, the opportunity to provide open access now or in the future to Works in a digital format is an exciting new frontier in their mission to preserve and transmit knowledge, culture and history for present and future generations. Such opportunities also present responsibilities. Digital Records need to be responsibly created and safeguarded for the long-term to ensure integrity as well as retrieval and reuse by future generations. Furthermore, as the means and skills required to use and access digital technology are not distributed evenly around the world, it is incumbent on those with the capacity to do so to provide support and training to those with fewer resources.

This Declaration is intended for both institutions and individuals to promote the production, sharing and preservation of digital records and reproductions (‘Records’). Owners and Stewards of Works and others involved in the process of generating these Records are encouraged to disseminate and use the ReACH Declaration as widely as possible.

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The text herein is the result of an extensive global consultation on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the 1867 Henry Cole Convention for Promoting Universally Reproduction of Works of Art for the Benefits of All Countries. The Convention, inspiring in its clarity, practicality and openness to the creation and sharing of reproductions, served as the basis for the establishment of this new ReACH Declaration.

The ReACH Declaration for Promoting Universally the Reproduction, Storage and Sharing of Works of Art and Cultural Heritage Through Digital Technology was adopted at the final ReACH roundtable held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London on 8 December 2017.
Fostering digital collaboration on research projects

The RIM project: a descriptive index of iconographic motifs on Meroitic artefacts
Project director: Vincent Rondot, director of the Department of Egyptian antiquities
Digitizing the collections

3D-digitizing: pendant with the name of King Osorkon II

https://www.photo.rmn.fr/archive/R5N338960-2CO5S90RLXAW.html
Digitizing the collections

3D-digitizing: Sethos I’s panel
Endangered heritage

3D modeling: recreating the palace of Darius in Susa

Photo credit: Musée du Louvre / Angèle Dequier; Musée du Louvre / Raphaël Chipault
Endangered heritage

3D modeling: recreating the palace of Darius in Susa
Endangered heritage

Eternal Sites, 2016: combining physical and digital exhibits

Photo credit: Rmn-Grand Palais; Iconem
Endangered heritage

Eternal Sites, 2016: combining physical and digital exhibits

Credit: Iconem
2017 - 2019: bringing core projects to fruition

- Making the librairie’s catalogues available online
- Publishing 60% of the Louvre’s collection on the web
- Providing engaging interpretative resources based on current research
- Leveraging the tools made available by the French Ministry of Culture and other structure
- Developing tools to allow collaborative research in an international context
- Using digital technology to bring endangered heritage to the forefront