

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION**

**HEFCE Review of JISC**

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**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Collections Trust is grateful to HEFCE for extending this opportunity to contribute to your reflections on the role and impact of JISC.
- 1.2 We believe that JISC has had a strong and positive impact on UK museums, their collections and their users, and that there is considerable scope to extend this impact in future.
- 1.3 In addition to the direct and tangible benefits for museums of JISC's work, we urge HEFCE to take into account the important indirect and less tangible benefits arising from its role as a world-leading centre of expertise.
- 1.4 We would welcome an opportunity to discuss further how this potential impact might better be exploited in future.

**2. The Collections Trust**

- 2.1 The Collections Trust is a UK-based independent organisation which provides support, standards and professional development to museums, archives and libraries, helping them to deliver more cost-effective and sustainable services to the public.
- 2.2 The Collections Trust works with the international community to export UK expertise and best practice in Collections Management, import knowledge from other countries and to seek out and exploit opportunities for international collaboration.
- 2.3 The Collections Trust has worked with JISC as both a project partner and a client of JISC funding.

**3. Value Added by JISC**

- 3.1 A strong academic research base is arguably the single most important component of the future economic growth and prosperity of the UK. From it will come the innovation and solutions which will enable UK industry to achieve and maintain competitive advantage.
- 3.2 Building a globally competitive research community in an Information Society depends in part on harnessing the power of digital technologies as tools for communication, collaboration, investigation and discovery.
- 3.3 In JISC, the UK HE/FE sector is fortunate to have access to a world-leading Centre of Expertise which is well-positioned to help it understand and capitalise on technology both as an enabler and driver of innovation.
- 3.4 Although we recognise the severe constraints operating on Government investment, we would strongly urge HEFCE to recognise the strategic imperative to protect investment in JISC as an investment in the future competitiveness of our leading academic institutions.

#### **4. JISC and UK Museums**

- 4.1 JISC's impact on UK museums is not limited to the c.100 publicly-accessible University museums or the c.300 teaching collections cared for by Universities. It extends to include the broader community of 2000+ museums across the UK who have benefited from its work in a variety of ways.
- 4.2 JISC's impact on UK museums takes two main forms:
- *Direct*, tangible impact in the form of investment and support provided to museums through JISC programmes, specifically *JISC Advance* and the *JISC Digitisation Fund*.
  - *Indirect* impact in the form of advances in knowledge and the provision of models which can be applied to the work of UK museums.
- 4.3 Although it does not hold a formal mandate to support the wider museum community, JISC has extended the reach of its work both through its partnership with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and through a number of its programmes.
- 4.4 Key areas in which JISC has developed new thinking or established models which have had a positive impact on the wider museum community include Copyright & IP Management, Digital Standards, the use of Collections to support Research, Business Model innovation, technology infrastructure, user authentication and models for the aggregation and delivery of eContent to learners.
- 4.5 JISC's commitment to open publication and dissemination of the research outputs generated by its work has greatly facilitated culture-sector organisations in benefitting from this new knowledge. This is of particular importance given the relatively limited resources of the museum sector to support technical research and development.
- 4.6 This openness to collaboration with the UK museum sector has also achieved benefits for their HE/FE counterparts. It has enabled JISC to aggregate research resources from museums for use in teaching, learning and research.
- 4.7 In general, the UK museum community is a tremendous beneficiary of the intellectual capital and new knowledge generated by JISC, and would be significantly impoverished by the loss of it. Indeed, as noted below, there is scope considerably to extend this value in future.

#### **5. Potential future role of JISC**

- 5.1 The impact of JISC's work on museums has been limited only by the constraints on its operating scope and by the absence of a more formal commitment to partnership with sector organisations.
- 5.2 We suggest that there is tremendous scope for greater direct collaboration between JISC and the UK National Museums (leading research institutions in their own right) in order to drive innovative approaches to the Digitisation, aggregation, description and dissemination of Collections-based resources as primary research material.
- 5.3 Further, we believe that there should be scope for museum sector organisations to pick up on and more proactively disseminate JISC outputs within the UK museum community, particularly in the fields of eContent, Copyright, Digitisation, Digital Standards and Social Media.

- 5.4 We would urge HEFCE to maximise the latent research value in museum collections by enabling JISC to work directly with the museum sector. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss further how this potential could be realised.
- 5.5 We are grateful for this opportunity to contribute to HEFCE's deliberations, and we look forward to the outcome with interest.

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