

Background

The V&A's collections and corporate information each contain a growing quantity of digital assets. Digital assets comprise born-digital, hybrid and digitised assets.

At present the V&A does not have a digital preservation policy or strategy, and the management of assets is distributed across the organisation. Recognising the long term need to preserve and maintain its collections and corporate information, the V&A now seeks to audit its digital assets to assess their current status and the organisation's capacity, and to determine present and future priorities for digital preservation.

Goals and objectives

- Audit collection, archive and corporate information across V&A collections and sites, with reference to its digital preservation
- Produce a high-level gap analysis highlighting key risks, opportunities and priorities for the organisation, to inform future strategy. This should include indicative order of magnitude costings and, where appropriate, optionality around levels of investment and subsequent capabilities
- Produce recommendations for organisational digital preservation strategy, policies and procedures

Approach

A) Consult V&A teams to gather information on collection and corporate digital assets:

- Collection and archive
 - Art, Architecture, Photography and Design
 - Asia
 - Decorative Arts and Sculpture (including Wedgwood)
 - Performance, Furniture, Textiles and Fashion
 - Young V&A
 - VARI, National Art Library and Archives
 - Collections Care and Access
- Corporate
 - Directorate
 - Development
 - Audiences, Commercial and Digital
 - Learning and National Programmes
 - People and Change
 - Finance and Resources
 - Design, Estate and Public Programme

B) Make assessment of provision needed for organisational change, including new V&A sites and projects.

C) Provide regular progress reports to interim Digital Steering Group.

D) Compile full report covering the outputs detailed below.

Outputs

1. Assessment of current status of digital preservation for collection, archive and corporate information at the V&A and produce an initial digital asset register

- Collection and archive
Survey collection and archive assets to assess scope and provide an overview of the current arrangements with respect to:
 - Storage, preservation and management of digital objects and records and how this meets the current and future needs of the collection and archive
 - How hybrid and born-digital objects and records are made accessible to stakeholders including staff, visitors and online audiences
 - The procedures in place to define and manage access to sensitive data including but not limited to problematic, personal and legally privileged content, compliance with GDPR
- Corporate
Survey corporate information assets to assess scope and provide an overview of the current arrangements with respect to:
 - Storage of digital records and how this meets the current and future needs of the institution as corporate body
 - How born-digital records are made accessible to stakeholders
 - The procedures in place to define and manage access to sensitive data including but not limited to personal, legally privileged content, compliance with GDPR

2. Produce a gap and risk analysis

Based on your experience of current practice in the museums and archives sectors produce a high-level gap and risk analysis for the V&A, and associated prioritised recommendations with respect to:

- Capability
- Roles and responsibilities
- Senior stakeholder engagement
- Skills (including conservation, preservation, and collections management)
- Policies
- Workflows, processes and functions
- Scope of preservation
- Metadata standards
- Access control
- Version control
- Legislation compliance
- Auditability
- Digital repository
- Technology and tools (including back up)
- Resources
- Any other significant gaps

The recommendations will be used to develop the strategy and resourcing for digital preservation.

3. Advise on the organisation's production of a digital preservation strategy, and advise on how this work has the potential to dovetail with existing digital and digitisation efforts.

Make recommendations on the organisation's production of a digital preservation strategy covering all digital assets, including but not limited to born-digital collections (e.g. archives and artworks), digital derivatives (e.g. images, 3D scans), datasets, and corporate records.

Creation of a roadmap to get the organisation to the level of digital preservation defined through this process.

High-level costing models for differing levels of competency (i.e. gold, silver, bronze level of service).

Any other relevant information, observations or issues.

Milestones

Subject to agreement with the appointed consultant, a suggested work programme would consist of:

- Months 1: Interviews and visits with key staff and review of current state of play
- Months 1-2: Initial review of policies and workflows and provision of advice on format of digital asset register template
- Month 2-3: Provide assessment of state of digital preservation for collections, archives and corporate information
- Months 3-4: Produce gap and risk analysis and draft report
- Months 4-5: Follow up clarifications and produce final report

Your response

Please supply a response by email by 31 January 2023, addressing the following questions:

- Tell us about two recent projects that you have worked on that you think relate to the approach you would take on this project.
- Outline your proposed methodology and programme for approaching the project, including when you could start work.
- Tell us about the project team who would work to meet the requirements of the brief. Please include bios of the individuals who will be working on this project including any sub-contractors.
- Outline any risks for concerns you have with regard to the project's scope or achieving the proposed timeline.

Pricing:

A budget of £30k is available. You must set out below all of the proposed charges/prices to provide the services. The charges/prices must cover all requirements. All charges/prices must be expressed in pounds sterling and should be exclusive of VAT, all pricing information will form the basis of any resultant agreement. The price will remain fixed for the duration of the agreement.

You should include a breakdown of how many days work you envisage spending on the contract and your daily rate. Please note that the fee is inclusive of all travel and subsistence costs.

Selection process

Interviews will take place at V&A South Kensington, Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2RL, the week commencing 13 February 2023. If selected to attend an interview, you will be asked to present how you would approach the work and to talk through the detail of your response to the brief.

The successful applicant will be confirmed on Friday 17 February and is expected to begin work prior to the end of March 2023.

For any enquiries, please contact Corinna Gardner, Senior Curator Design and Digital at cj.gardner@vam.ac.uk