

Website Recommendations:

<https://ageofrevolution.org>

<https://www.mylearning.org>

<https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/>

<https://teesvalleymuseums.org/>

<https://www.culturenmuseums.co.uk>

<https://www.creswell-crags.org.uk/>

<https://museum.maidstone.gov.uk/>

<https://cliftonbridge.org.uk/schools-groups/schools/>

Website Advice, Structures and Methodology:

Age of Revolution

We have created our Age of Revolution site specially for teachers. It centres around our 'Revolutionary Collection' of objects from museums and galleries across the UK. The Education section features a whole suite of curriculum-linked resources, focusing on historical enquiry, creative, digital and critical thinking skills. These are closely linked to the revolutionary collection and include Learning guides and activities, videos, digital making - and real-world resources such as the Peterloo Graphic Novel and the Age of Revolution Top Trumps which schools can order for free. The site is about to undergo a revamp of the landing page and a few other tweaks to position it more clearly towards teachers, but it's pretty much there.

- The website has been tweaked from its original 'for all' approach as the need for content to be teacher centred became more apparent.
- Content is designed to encourage historical enquiry, but also creative responses to the curriculum through digital making.
- The educational resources and activities aim to be usable and high quality, but not too prescriptive; a guide for classroom teaching, rather than a plan. Teachers can choose to either dip in or go into greater depth.
- Although the online content is not designed for child users, the programme is supplemented by real-world resources such as trumps cards and a graphic novel, that have really helped to market the online resources. These are sent out to schools as free tasters and have proved extremely popular.
- Co-curated content has been created with both student ambassadors from the university of Kent and also museum-school partnerships funded as part of 'The

Maker Revolution' project. (See 'Creative and Digital Making Projects' in Education section of website). Each partnership was challenged to use content from the website to make something that others could replicate, and every resulting project created a 'How to' guide as part of their grant criteria.

- Key principles for creating a website of this nature:
 - o Collect everything in one place for simplicity
 - o Place teachers as the experts in learning – just provide them with ideas
 - o Produce real world examples to enhance online content

My Learning

MyLearning which hosts learning resources from arts, cultural and heritage organisations from across the country. We act as a hub for teachers looking for high quality content, without them having to spend time (they don't have) accessing lots of individual websites to try and find what they need. MyLearning is designed with teacher needs in mind, making it easy to search, find and store the content they are looking for. It is Arts Council England funded, and managed by Leeds Museums and Galleries.

Culture North Lanarkshire

The team have been developing a museum collections website over the past couple of years as part of a wider digitisation project. We wanted a site that would be really user-friendly and showcase the collections in a more engaging way than a basic search facility, so we developed a series of themes and related stories, which include star objects and multimedia resources, as well as an object map, blog posts and links to what's on.

We employed a part-time co-ordinator for the duration of the project – she conducted a series of focus groups and was responsible for user testing all the way through the process. Our initial target audience was for older local history enthusiasts but much of our content is suitable for schools. We've also just been awarded a grant to further develop the site and are considering resources that might be more geared towards school users.

We use Modes as our collections management system so worked with Surface Impression to develop the WordPress website, which uses a plug-in to pull data through from Modes. Our small curatorial team is responsible for publishing new content on at least a fortnightly basis and we've found this works well. It obviously needs some dedicated time but the actual process is generally pretty smooth, WordPress is so easy to use, and we have a support package with SI to deal with any technical issues. We've been continuing to update the site from home during lockdown, including adding a few low-tech activities, and have experienced no major problems (touch wood!).

Clifton Suspension Bridge

We are literally just launching a new website at this moment! It has been very simple for us to add information to and will support different media types. I still have a bit of tidying up to do when it comes to images, etc - but I think the front end is pretty user-friendly too.

It's been built using Wordpress, which I would recommend as a good way forward - especially if those adding the content aren't terribly confident with webby stuff. You can choose from lots of themes and templates to get things looking just how you like if you're doing it yourself - or get your web designers to customise all that stuff for you.

Further advice and consultancy

- I think carrying out research with your target audience at the beginning is very important – what do they actually want? Also user testing – get a few webpages mocked up and get some testers. This was one of the most useful parts and also you can then go back to the developers armed with the evidence to change the design if necessary (I found that the developer could be quite stubborn about certain elements of the design, but it's difficult for them to argue against data you've collected!) I found that I only needed about 10 testers at any one stage to get the feedback I needed.
- If you're not familiar with content creation and user design, doing a basic online course might help so that you are confident that you have asked the developers all the 'right' questions about accessibility, SEO etc. I am doing this now, but at the time that our website was redeveloped, I just had to trust that the developers knew what was best practice and were implementing it. Luckily they did and were, but I would have been more confident if I'd had more of an idea myself, or at least known what questions to ask.
- Martin Bazley provides expertise in this field - consultancy, website development, testing and evaluation and training for the museum, heritage and educational sectors
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