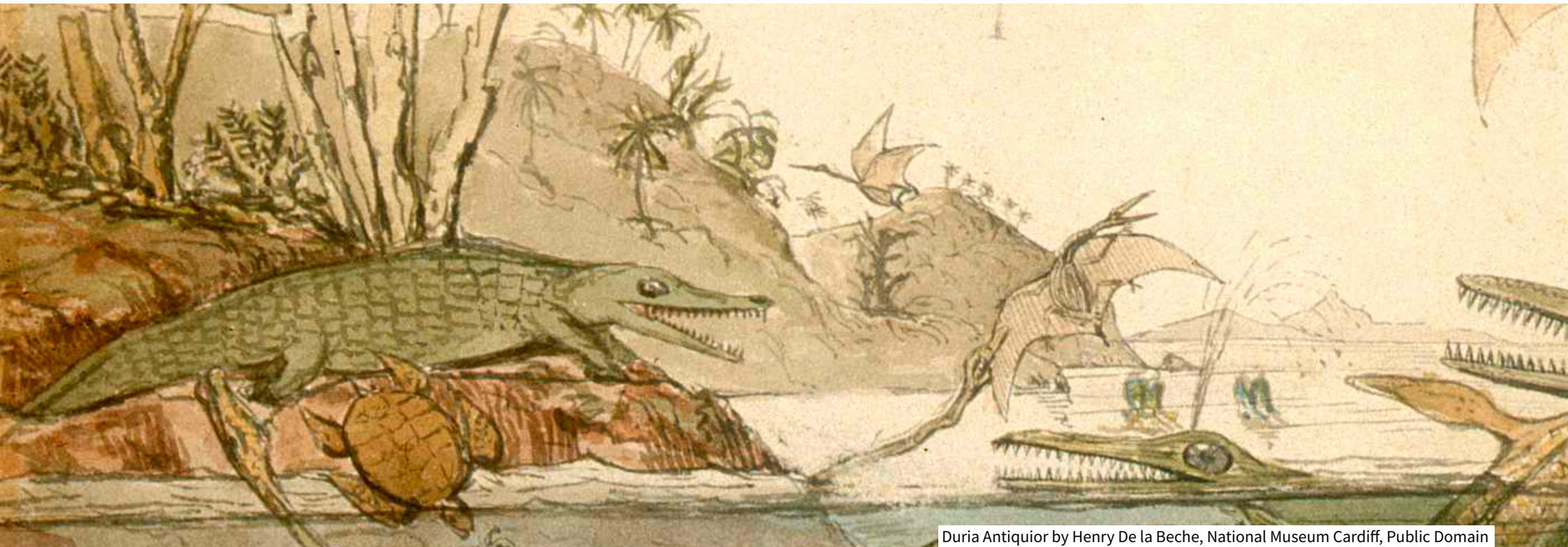


# DON'T BE A DINOSAUR; OR, *THE BENEFITS OF OPEN CULTURE*

*Here's what the world is missing when cultural heritage is closed.*

April 2024



Duria Antiquior by Henry De la Beche, National Museum Cardiff, Public Domain

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the digital space, a lot of cultural heritage content is not accessible, shareable, or (re)usable [openly](#), i.e., available for free and with few or no copyright restrictions on access and (re)use by anyone for any purpose. This inability to interact with manifestations and representations of cultural heritage in the digital space results in a disconnect between people and heritage. For example, often:

- scholars cannot freely reuse heritage for research purposes
- artists cannot remix heritage into new creations
- the general public cannot learn about the past to make sense of the present and shape the future — a reality that is hard to accept since according to [UNESCO](#) “a world without culture is a world without a future”

Several institutions are taking the leap to open their collections online, and while the road to open culture is strewn with [barriers](#), its benefits are well worth the journey, as we have heard from experts from around the world in our [Open Culture Voices](#) (OCV) series, and as we summarize in the present report. In short:

Openly shared cultural heritage:

- is easier to find
- reaches broader and more diverse audiences
- can be preserved, safeguarded and refined in digital form
- can be (re)used with more legal certainty

Open cultural heritage leads to:

- More resilient and relevant collection holders
- More vibrant research and more participatory education
- More dynamic cultural creativity
- More just, democratic, diverse, free, and equitable societies

Many people can benefit from open culture in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. By removing any distance between people and heritage it gives rise to a multitude of connections with, about, or through cultural heritage. As our CC strategy states, “open sharing is inherently an act of social solidarity, reflecting a belief that we all have a stake in our collective body of creative and intellectual wealth.”



Primula Japonica by John Saul, Biodiversity Heritage Library, Public Domain Mark

# INDEX

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>WHAT OPENNESS DOES FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>	<b>5</b>
Heritage is easier to find	5
Heritage reaches broader and more diverse audiences	5
Heritage can be preserved and safeguarded in digital form	6
Heritage can be (re)used with more legal certainty	7
<b>WHAT OPEN CULTURAL HERITAGE DOES FOR THE WORLD</b>	<b>8</b>
1. More resilient and relevant collection holders	8
1. Elevated profile, bolstered reputation, increased relevance	8
2. More efficient and resilient economic and organizational models	9
3. Enhanced mission alignment	10
2. More vibrant research and more participatory education	12
1. Increased generation of new knowledge	12
2. Bolstered collaboration opportunities, increased unity, broader impact	13
3. More participatory and inclusive teaching and learning	14
3. More dynamic cultural creativity	15
1. Enriched pool of preexisting materials, increased creative reuse and remix	15
2. Democratized access to and participation in cultural creativity	16
3. Increased (commercial) collaboration and experimentation	17
4. More just, democratic, diverse, free, and equitable societies	18
1. Fostered intercultural connections and dialog	18
2. Greater diversity, equity and inclusion & social justice	19
3. Enhanced access to more reliable information	20
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>ANNEX</b>	<b>22</b>
List of open culture voices guest experts' recordings	22
Further reading	22
Image credits	22
Acknowledgements	22

# INTRODUCTION – A NEED TO (RE)CONNECT WITH HERITAGE IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

In times when [two-thirds of the world's population are connected to the Internet](#) and as an increasingly large part of our waking hours are lived online (a 2024 report shows people worldwide spend [more than six hours per day](#) on average surfing the web), it should come as no surprise that a lot of our cultural experiences take place in the digital space. The [COVID pandemic radically accelerated this trend](#). Yet, when it comes to experiences involving cultural heritage, things get slightly more complicated. In the digital space, a lot of cultural heritage content is not accessible, shareable, and (re)usable [openly](#), i.e., available for free and with few or no copyright restrictions on access and (re)use by anyone for any purpose. Worldwide only less than [1% of cultural heritage institutions share content from their collections openly](#). This inability to interact with manifestations and representations of cultural heritage in the digital space results in a disconnect between people and heritage. For example, often:

- scholars cannot freely reuse heritage for research purposes
- artists cannot remix heritage into new creations
- the general public cannot learn about the past to make sense of the present and shape the future — a reality that is hard to accept since according to [UNESCO](#) “a world without culture is a world without a future”

Entrusted with the mission to care for cultural heritage for the benefit of the public, collection holders are key interfaces between people and cultural heritage. They make up the “zone” where such interactions can happen. Nowadays, many people expect this zone to be not only physical — in the brick-and-mortar space — but digital, too. People also expect fresh forms of interactions that can only happen when culture is open, for example via popular open content portals such as [Wikipedia](#) and [Wikimedia Commons](#), [Europeana](#), [Flickr](#), [Openverse](#) and the [Internet Archive](#), to name a few. Merete Sanderhoff, Senior Adviser, Statens Museum for Kunst, Denmark, is often [credited](#) for saying that “if it isn’t online, it doesn’t exist.”

**Open culture** (sometimes shortened to **OC**) refers to the set of ideals, principles, and values promoting open access to cultural heritage and the knowledge and culture it embodies, notably in the collections of collection holders, their objects, and any associated metadata. Open culture may also refer to open access to contemporary creativity, i.e., creators choosing to openly license their own creations to everyone. In this report, we focus on a sub-field of open culture: **open cultural heritage**.

**Collection holders** include cultural heritage institutions, also referred to as GLAMs (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums), as well as more informal entities whose function is to steward the collection of cultural heritage materials, such as community or other non-institutional archives. For brevity, we refer to this group in general as “collection holders.”

Following in the footsteps of [open culture pioneers](#), many institutions are taking the leap to open their collections online, partly as a way to celebrate a sense of (re)connection with cultural heritage collections in the digital space. While the road to OC is strewn with [barriers](#), its benefits are well worth the journey, as we have heard from experts from around the world in our [Open Culture Voices](#) (OCV) series. Watch the series’ [introduction video](#) and each expert’s individual [blog posts](#) to find out more.

This report does not purport to be comprehensive or to cover all the possible benefits that open solutions could bring to accessing and using cultural heritage. It rather aims to distill the many views expressed in the OCV series and strives to reveal the patterns emerging from those conversations so as to paint a picture of the ways in which so many people can benefit from open culture and better sharing of culture, i.e. [sharing that is contextual, inclusive, just, equitable, reciprocal, and sustainable](#). Experts’ comments are italicised throughout this document and serve to reinforce some of the major points made during the OCV series — they have been edited for brevity and legibility and, when expressed in another language, translated into English. Generally, “open GLAM” has been substituted with “open culture” or “OC” where the intended meaning is the same. [A full list of the series’ guests with links to their video recordings is available at the end of this document](#). Next to each expert’s name we indicated the country in which they work to provide information on OCV’s geographical scope.

“The main benefit of open culture is the **connection that is achieved with the user**, or making the user part of the story, part of the heritage, not just an observer, but someone who brings life to the material and who therefore gives it relevance and momentum.” — *Ariadna Matas, France*

“One of the biggest benefits is really thinking about how we ensure our **collections stay vital** and that vitality comes through use and meaningful interactions with those collections.”  
— *Stacy Allison-Cassin, Canada*

“A feeling of **belonging is really fundamental** to having transformational experiences from art. As well as serving more knowledgeable audiences, open digital experiences in the GLAM sector can be a gateway to access to enable others to experience that transformational power of art and culture if we can harness it right.”  
— *Rebecca Giblin, Australia*

The document is divided into two main sections: (1) how openness can enhance various aspects of cultural heritage and (2) how cultural heritage, once open, can be of advantage to key areas, such as the research, education, creativity and wider social and societal domains, with the understanding that these areas may overlap and cross-pollinate.

“As for the user perspective, it involves **understanding our users’ needs**, what they want from us as an organization, how we enable them to do what they want to do more easily and effectively, be they a person who’s taken a casual interest in the collection and wants to gather information and then share it with family and friends, or a creative industry, a company that wants to repurpose something and create a new product, or a research institution that wants to look at the information in ways that would be **impossible unless it was open**. The starting point for understanding the benefits of being open is to consider these things and to think what difference it could make in reality if we were to remove these barriers.” — *Dafydd Tudur, Wales (UK)*

“Adopting open policies that go towards the opening of the contents as a necessity to preserve cultural heritage, and thus digitize it, but not as an activity for its own sake, but aiming also at the dissemination of culture and therefore **as a tool for promoting knowledge and finding enrichment in sharing**, and encouraging study and research activities, as well as an incentive of the creative industry. Open access policies also create a competitive advantage for institutions.”  
— *Deborah De Angelis, Italy*

### In summary:

Openly shared cultural heritage:

- is easier to find
- reaches broader and more diverse audiences
- can be preserved, safeguarded and refined in digital form
- can be (re)used with more legal certainty

Open cultural heritage leads to:

- More resilient and relevant collection holders
- More vibrant research and more participatory education
- More dynamic cultural creativity
- More just, democratic, diverse, free, and equitable societies

# WHAT OPENNESS DOES FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE

In this section of the report we look into how open access can improve the way we can all better connect with cultural heritage. In short, when shared openly, cultural heritage collections and related (meta)data:

- are easier to find
- reach broader and more diverse audiences
- can be preserved, safeguarded and refined in digital form
- can be (re)used with more legal certainty

## HERITAGE IS EASIER TO FIND

When shared openly, collections and related data are:

- **more discoverable**, including through portals like Europeana, Wikipedia / Wikimedia Commons, Openverse, the Internet Archive, and Flickr
- **more visible**, presented in various ways, moved from the fringes to the center
- **better searchable and findable** through (linked) metadata
- **more interoperable and compatible** thanks to licensing and labeling standards
- **enriched** through user contribution and co-creation

*“Standardized licenses support **interoperability and compatibility** with other collections. All of this means that users are able to find, access, and use our content with fewer barriers and less friction, and this makes it easier for them to learn, share their learning, to create and innovate.”*  
— *Christy Henshaw, England (UK)*

*“There are many benefits that lie in the value of co-creation into making cultural heritage more discoverable and **enriching the data** that is attached to it.”* — *Mariana Ziku, Greece*

*“Institutions can use **better findability, searchability and spaces of innovation** that we don't yet know in AI and machine learning and other forms of technology that will really augment people's experience of open GLAM.”* — *Jennie Rose Halperin, USA*

*“OC allows us to **highlight less-exhibited collections** and also all the knowledge that is associated with these collections.”*  
— *Charles Riondet, France*

*“OC allows for a source of enrichment and documentation of collections. We are working on animation via social networks, via a blog to encourage users to gather knowledge and to document these collections with us. For us, open culture is fully in line with an approach of **involvement and commitment of the public**, which is consistent with the values underlying the actions of society.”* — *Céline Chanas, France*

*“The main benefits are creative and novel uses of data and digital assets. In the present day, views and usage of data and digital media assets **scale exponentially across platforms** beyond an institution's website.”*  
— *Neal Stimler, USA*

## HERITAGE REACHES BROADER AND MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCES

When shared openly, collections and related data are:

- brought to a **greater, wider range of users** (including potential onsite visitors) all over the world, close by and far away, on local, national, regional and global scales.
- potentially available **in multiple languages outside** of a collection holder's physical location.

*“With open culture, institutions can finally reach a larger and more **diverse audience**.”* — *Giovanna Fontenelle, Brazil*

*“Many of the items in our collections are obscure and without meaning to the majority of the world so releasing them digitally actually gets them **seen by new audiences** — their relevance becomes understood and they are appreciated and discussed.”* — *Jill Cousins, Ireland*

*“It encourages cultural professionals but also citizens and the general public to take an interest in cultural heritage and it also pushes culture **beyond the walls of institutions** and cultural organizations.”*  
— *Charles Riondet, France*

*“Using public domain tools or open licenses makes it easier to disseminate our collections much further and reach a wider and more diverse audience via aggregators on an international scale.”*

— *Christy Henshaw, England (UK)*

*“It is a fantastic opportunity to increase their cultural reach to have their collections and information about their collections expand beyond their own language into **multilingual environments**, such as Wikipedia.”*

— *Douglas McCarthy, Netherlands*

*“It enables us to succeed in creating as **many entry and engagement points** as possible for as many parts of society as possible, with our collections.”* — *Julia Pagel, Germany*

*“OC has a tremendous impact in terms of the availability and public understanding of our culture and history. There are vast stores of materials that are locked away inside some very large and well-off institutions, like the Library of Congress, Harvard University or Duke University. These institutions have a real mission to take these treasures and **expose them to the world** so that more people can gain access, more people can learn, more people can experience what has in previous times been limited to just a very small group of people who happen to be wealthy enough and fortunate enough to be able to gain access.”*

— *Dave Hansen, USA*

*“It increases the audience exponentially, **including the face-to-face audience**, the number of visitors to the institution.”*

— *Sandra Soster, Brazil*

## HERITAGE CAN BE PRESERVED, SAFEGUARDED AND REFINED IN DIGITAL FORM

When shared openly, collections and related data are documented in digital form which can help to **enable their preservation and safeguarding**.

*“The more existing and preserved information is easily available through GLAMs, the more **we contribute to the protection** of cultural heritage, by publishing and sharing it with the largest possible number of people.”*

— *Pierre el Khoury, Lebanon*

*“The artistic and creative expressions and endeavors of humanity are some of the best ways to experience the best of our human efforts. Our mission derives from the idea that we should save and preserve these for future generations. **[Open culture] helps drive more digitization of collections in general**: the more available, the more benefit to society.”*

— *Kyle K. Courtney, USA*

*“Documentation of collections preserved online is very important. And, unfortunately, many **collections are lost** due to accidents, for example, the 2018 fire at the National Museum [in Brazil]. Having the documentation saved online, at least **we still maintain information** of what may be lost.”* — *Sandra Soster, Brazil*

*“By inviting people in, it makes people excited about history and historical preservation. **It strengthens our connection to the past**, our ancestors, and to the people and places that came before us. It makes the case for why preserving the heritage matters.”*

— *Nicole Kang Ferraiolo, USA*

*“One of [the benefits] is greater public awareness of the collections and the **importance of safeguarding them**. Collections will have greater visibility of their contents through important platforms that build these collections of our cultural heritage on a daily basis. It will also give the opportunity to access and reuse cultural heritage.”*

— *Jonathan Hernandez, Mexico*

## HERITAGE CAN BE (RE)USED WITH MORE LEGAL CERTAINTY

When shared openly, collections and related data are used with more **legal certainty**, as users are relieved of their “[copyright anxiety](#).”

*“From the point of view of users of online collections, one of the first benefits is the clarity and solidity of the conditions of use of the content, **ensured in particular by the use of Creative Commons licenses**. Indeed, the conditions of use of digitized content vary from country to country and from institution to institution and are not limited to a legal definition. A typical example is the definition — which often draws the line between free or paid content — of what is really a commercial or non-commercial use: this is interpreted in very different ways depending on the institutions and is not subject to any legal harmonization. These conditions also correspond, quite simply, to the cultural uses of our society today, which are largely based on digital technologies and the circulation of images.” — [Martine Denoyelle, France](#)*

*“A really big benefit is that openness allows us to **avoid creating an absolute rights nightmare for future generations** in the GLAM sector. We've only had digital and digitized content for a very short period of time, relatively speaking, and we've already got an absolute minefield of rights information to do with the digitized and digital content that we as the sector have created, let alone what we've collected. Avoiding that is an absolute benefit.” — [Fred Saunderson, Scotland \(UK\)](#)*



Bäume im Ateliergarten by Ferdinand Hodler, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Public Domain



# WHAT OPEN CULTURAL HERITAGE DOES FOR THE WORLD

Collection holders and their communities can benefit from open access to cultural heritage, which can be put to novel, original, and unanticipated uses. Chief among the beneficiaries are collection holders / institutions themselves, the research and education sector, creators and creative industries, as well as society at large. In this section of the report, we look at those various groups of beneficiaries and highlight how openness unlocks a wide range of opportunities for culture to blossom.

In short, open cultural heritage leads to:

- More resilient and relevant collection holders
- More vibrant research and more participatory education
- More dynamic cultural creativity
- More just, democratic, diverse, free, and equitable societies

## 1. MORE RESILIENT AND RELEVANT COLLECTION HOLDERS

OC can transform collection holders for the digital world, thereby ensuring their continued relevance, mission alignment, and service orientation.

What is **impossible** today because culture is not open?

- Institutions cannot meaningfully connect with remote audiences.
- Institutions risk losing their relevance in the digital age.
- A lot of time and resources are ill-spent on rights management and permission mechanisms, leaving staff less available for more intentional work.

Who benefits? **Collection holders.**

Key benefits:

- Elevated profile, enhanced reputation, increased relevance
- More efficient economic and organizational models
- Enhanced mission alignment

## 1. ELEVATED PROFILE, BOLSTERED REPUTATION, INCREASED RELEVANCE

When collections and related data are shared openly, collection holders can:

- gain increased **exposure** and see their **global profile** raised.
- boast about heightened **recognition**, an **improved image** and enhanced **reputation** and **credibility**.
- achieve greater **relevance**.

*“The main benefit is the increase in **awareness and knowledge of these institutions’** work to preserve and share their collections.”*

— *Ivan Martinez, Mexico*

*“The institutions themselves develop their public service mission in an innovative way, **renewing their relationship with their public** by taking part in the sharing process. They also gain in terms of national and international influence, and in terms of brand image.”*

— *Martine Denoyelle, France*

*“OC helps to get your collections known and recognized more widely which has a **direct repercussion on the interest shown** in the cultural heritage institution.”* — *Jill Cousins, Ireland*

*“OC automatically gives your institution the kind of reach to people **who you could possibly work with in the future** as well.”*

— *Medhavi Gandhi, India*

*“One of the main advantages is to give us a very positive image of our accessibility by creating a kind of digital museum online and by reserving for the public, for Internet users, the same conditions of access to heritage as in the physical space of the museum. This very **positive image has been noted in the professional community**, which is certainly important, but also in relation to users. Even if we had chosen from the start not to track the uses that could be made, we had two very positive feedbacks which led us to improve the nascent system, notably from the communities to which we were very close, like the French Wikimedians.”* — *Céline Chanas, France*

“Another consideration is the message that this conveys about us as organizations, what it says about our relationship with the collections in our care, and how and where we would like them to be seen and used. The truth is that **we are eager to see the collections being seen and used** as widely as possible, and bringing benefit to the public as much as possible.” — *Dafydd Tudur, Wales (UK)*

## 2. MORE EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT ECONOMIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS

When collections and related data are shared openly, collection holders can:

- benefit from an **elevated brand recognition**, which can be leveraged for revenue generation that does not compromise on or curtail free and open access.
- experiment with **alternative value-creation models** and participate in the digital economy by exploring fresh monetization options based on user experiences and partnerships.
- **transform the organizational culture**, streamline workflows, and redirect resources towards primary activities where key expertise lies.

“OC is **one of the best ways to market your institution**, even to those who may never have an opportunity to visit your institution.”  
— *Medhavi Gandhi, India*

“GLAMs’ brand and trademark may have greater agency and value in **building community, commercial and content partnerships** to produce new potentially mutually beneficial products and services.”  
— *Neal Stimler, USA*

“Having our collections 2D and 3D digitized available under the CC Public Domain Mark has led to new business opportunities **the ability to actually earn money** on the material despite them being in the public domain.” — *Jill Cousins, Ireland*

“OC is a way of **better directing the resources we have** in our institutions and especially in public institutions. In other words, instead of having to attend to particular queries, we can concentrate on cataloging more material to classify the good, to improve our, everything we produce, everything we study, which allows us to reach a larger audience, with better quality and it is part of our job to preserve all these documents, all this patrimony for the future.”  
— *Mauricio Genta, Argentina*

“OC enables the acceleration of the necessary transformations within institutions of collective memory such as museums, archives to reposition themselves and review the strategies for the development of collections. The main benefit for an organization is the transformation of the organizational culture. Open culture **promotes the changes in thinking and value creation models** necessary to create new forms of collaboration in a digital world, a world that has emerged from the industrial period.” — *Josée Plamondon, Canada*

“[Open culture enables] access to new perspectives, development and change, because [...] we as institutions and organizations **also gain new perspectives on the objects and the knowledge and skills that we preserve** in our collections. That comes with a lot of potential for development and change in organizations that we really need in order to become resilient institutions, fit for the future.” — *Larissa Borck, Sweden*

“For the sake of financial benefit and sustainability of museums, a **more engaged and diverse audience also means that we will generate more income**, ultimately selling more tickets, providing a more extensive offer around the museum, such as targeted programs around learning and creativity. Being relevant to a larger part of society also helps museums advocate for more and sustainable public funding that goes beyond support for culture, but understands museums’ role as agents for social change for resilience and cohesion.” — *Julia Pagel, Germany*

“We like that we don't have to spend time allowing people to use our images, so the **administrative costs** which are quite big sometimes and the action to approve each single public domain work for each use are **simply gone** and you can focus on something else.”  
— *Michal Čudrnák, Slovakia*

### 3. ENHANCED MISSION ALIGNMENT

When collections and related data are shared openly, collection holders can:

- celebrate and accomplish their **public interest mission** in the digital era.
- increase and measure their **impact** with reliable metrics.

*“For me, the greatest benefit is the possibility of supporting the **core mission** of these institutions.” — Antje Schmidt, Germany*

*“OC supports the **mission of institutions**.”  
— Douglas McCarthy, Netherlands*

*“The main benefit is the fact that, when the institution applies its OA guidelines, it is able to address and fulfill its institutional mission. Typically, cultural institutions have missions **to develop society** or even just its visitors. They are usually educational and cultural missions. For me, [open culture] is the only **really efficient way** to accomplish this mission.” — Giovanna Fontenelle, Brazil*

*“OC is simply part of what cultural heritage institutions actually want to achieve. Its principles are not necessarily a new trend. In reality they are in line with the traditional mission of cultural heritage institutions, only with **a rebranding that underlines the implications of that mission** in the digital world.” — Ariadna Matas, France*

*“OC allows institutions that protect cultural heritage to fulfill their missions, **giving people access** to their contents and promoting their knowledge and disseminating them, **because they belong to all of us**, and also ensuring their protection and preservation over time through digitization.” — Patricia Diaz-Rubio, Chile*

*“It is also part of the public mission of what cultural heritage institutions are, what they are doing, according to the current definition of ICOM [International Council of Museums] of what museums are doing: they are serving society and are open to the public. So this is also **a call to be coherent and consistent** towards these principles and concepts.”  
— Mariana Ziku, Greece*

*“On the one hand, reuse and being able to share different cultural content allows people to better appropriate the contents, that they can resignify, too. We always hold that we stand next to cultural institutions promoting their mission, which is **not simply to preserve history and culture**, research it and spread it, but to make it available to the public, **so that culture can be transformed and re-adapted to the present**. Culture is a dynamic field and not static in time. [Open culture] enhances the mission of cultural institutions, promoting greater access to the collections, to information about the collections, to documents, so that people can use these and can transform them and can re-use them in different creative ways.” — Angie Cervellera, Argentina*

*“OC is the ultimate way to fulfill your mission of spreading knowledge and giving the power of using your collections to everybody, **irrespective of the social or demographic barriers**.” — Medhavi Gandhi, India*

*“From a strategic perspective, it’s a matter of considering how being open applies to our mission as organizations. In our case at the National Library of Wales, we collect, preserve and give access to knowledge in all forms, and we can see how **being as open as possible with information that we hold enables us to better achieve this**.”  
— Dafydd Tudur, Wales (UK)*

*“OC increases the impact of GLAMs in general. If we look at what happened with the pandemic and working remotely, that shows that not everybody has access to physical content. There should be more information available online. We live in an age where people want to consume media and information (whether it's excessive or not). Simply looking at social media for example, there’s a growing nostalgia to days of the past, and GLAMs have this information. By making it open and available online, **it increases the impact but also meets a need of the public**.” — Alwaleed Alkhaja, Qatar*

*“Institutions can provide a direct and **measurable impact fulfilling their missions** by the numbers to board members, donors, corporate sponsors and the public.” — Neal Stimler, USA*

*“OC makes it easier for a new user that may arise, access to what is already a common good for all. It is **an obligation that we have towards all the communities**, all the people of the planet.”  
— Mauricio Genta, Argentina*

“There are many reasons that should trigger GLAMs to open and the main one is that it is simple. **Openness essentially involves one decision.** The institution must decide if it wants to share its collections, data and contents.” — *Iolanda Pensa, Italy*

“GLAMs have the wealth of human knowledge and experience within their collections, and it is their responsibility to share that with the world. GLAMs should seek to educate, enlighten, and entertain. Increasingly, the ability to share is becoming ever more feasible because of the digital realm. This feeds into a participative user culture where people can discuss, share, and remix their content. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the importance of the public digital accessibility of cultural material and how open GLAM can respond to such demands. For example, between March and November 2020, at the height of the pandemic, the 50 most viewed U.S. National Gallery of Art images received a total of 40 000 views on their institution’s websites. However, those same images, which the Gallery could donate to Wikimedia, received over 39 million views on those platforms. So, were it not for the impact of OC on the National Gallery of Art’s decision to move to a CC0 tool, **this massive and unrestricted public access to public cultural heritage material would not have been possible.**”

— *Simon Tanner<sup>1</sup>, England (UK)*

---

<sup>1</sup> This quote is derived from “Open GLAM: The Rewards (and Some Risks) of Digital Sharing for the Public Good,” Simon Tanner, King’s College London, in *Display at your own risk*, by Andrea Wallace and Ronan Deazley, <https://displayatyourownrisk.org/>.



## 2. MORE VIBRANT RESEARCH AND MORE PARTICIPATORY EDUCATION

OC can galvanize researchers by offering them access to untapped resources and empower educators and learners to create and remix resources. OC helps create a bigger, richer and more meaningful conversation around collections outside of an institution's four walls for people to express themselves in their own voices, to make new discoveries, create new narratives or reshape those distorted through history, find new meanings, offer new (critical) perspectives, and make new interpretations of our past to inform our futures by opening new horizons.

### What is **impossible** today because culture is not open?

- Researchers and scholars cannot freely access and reuse cultural heritage and information about it for the purpose of research (despite heritage being in the public domain or reliance on a copyright exception). As a result, research is slowed or outright thwarted — our global knowledge about cultural heritage, its context, and impact on our world is impoverished; historical biases pervade.
- Teachers and educators are not able to legally access and share online the digital materials from cultural heritage collections they need to exchange knowledge.
- Learners are deprived of knowledge resources essential to their program.

### Who benefits? **Researchers, scholars, teachers, educators, and learners.**

#### Key benefits:

- increased generation of new knowledge
- bolstered collaboration opportunities, increased unity, broader impact
- greater possibilities for remote education and online teaching
- more participatory and inclusive teaching and learning

## 1. INCREASED GENERATION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE

When collections and related data are shared openly, researchers and scholars can:

- **dynamize research.**
- **unlock knowledge** held in collections, exchange it, interpret it, augment and enrich it, ask questions about it, curate it, build upon it and **share it widely**, including with the collection holders themselves.
- encourage institutions to play a more active role in triggering the **creation of new knowledge** around their collections.
- become more involved in **giving meaning** to heritage.

*“Some of the benefits [of open culture] are really the opportunity to explore and find things. The first work of a researcher is really to understand where am I, what is here. Instead of having to go into institutions one by one and often with lots of rituals around taking care of precious original artworks and wearing white gloves and this kind of thing, you basically have a number of collections at your desktop, and that's something that's really useful, it **makes the research much more vibrant and it means that you can make comparisons and links between things from one place.**” — Temi Odumosu, USA*

*“There will be **research on that culture and many derivatives** of new works that will be present in that culture.” — Hardiansyah, Indonesia*

*“It introduces the opportunity for GLAMs to learn new things about their collections. **It's amazing what people can create and inform museums around** when they have the ability to through open access. So OC means some happy surprises. If you let things happen, it's almost always a very positive outcome.” — Douglas McCarthy, Netherlands*

*“They can **amplify their reach beyond the area of research and**, at the same time, even **improve research**, as the knowledge that the institution helps to maintain can finally be known and analyzed by more people around the world.” — Giovanna Fontenelle, Brazil*

*“In general, the more available, the more benefit to society, which in turn, inspires future researchers, scholars, and students to maybe even **stand on the shoulders of giants** — their predecessors — to find **new and interesting ways of expressing** their own creative version for the future. By digitizing the past we're opening up that ideal future.” — Kyle K Courtney, USA*

“OC is relevant to our strategic aims for the years ahead. We want to be at the heart of national life. We want to **lay a foundation for the knowledge economy**. We want to empower learning and research. Being open allows us to achieve these more effectively.”

— Dafydd Tudur, Wales (UK)

“OC can lead to **new ways of interpreting and understanding** the past.”

— Ellen Euler, Germany

“You create a lot more opportunities for people to see the things that you look after so there's a basic increase in access to your materials. Your collections will mingle with other materials in new ways, new stuff from different places, and those sorts of **collisions and combinations create new uses for your materials**. These arrangements are probably things that you wouldn't conceive of or have time to put together yourselves. There's a chance to gather new perspectives on your holdings and new stories about them, and this will allow you to introduce your collections to new people and build new communities around them.”

— George Oates, England (UK)

“Open access gives **endless opportunities** to people to tell new stories, new interpretations of history.” — Kristina Petrasova, Netherlands

“The main benefit is that you have access to the community that knows what's possible to do with open collections. To name one example, the community around Wikimedia Commons has been able to ingest and scrape the data from our online catalog into Wikimedia Commons and now those public domain images are available in Wikimedia Commons and are being **enhanced by the community**. For example, there is a project called "Sum of all Paintings" which is listing and making paintings from galleries available and people are translating and reusing the images on Wikimedia entries.” — Michal Čudrnák, Slovakia

“Museums are part of their community and their collections come with history and societal connections, but sometimes these collections have been lost or ignored, so reconnecting and opening up and using our collections to help people understand and engage with other players in the world, complex topics, especially in times where traditionally agreed truths are being challenged, is **a duty and also a chance for museums to be part of and partner with their communities**.”

— Julia Pagel, Germany

## 2. BOLSTERED COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES, INCREASED UNITY, BROADER IMPACT

When collections and related data are shared openly, researchers and scholars can:

- engage in **enhanced collaboration** across the world, thereby enabling progress, especially when it facilitates connections between people with diverse perspectives, skills, talents, and energies.
- help make strides to **address global challenges** and find solutions to the world's biggest problems, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and public health crises such as the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

“OC is a way of recruiting and drawing on all available talents, all available energies, in order to **realize the potential of culture as a driver of development**. It provides a means of recruiting other people, other actors, other players with a wider range of skills. For example, it's something that we certainly look to do within the library field, i.e., promote the idea that libraries drawing on their collections, their recognizability, their name recognition, can combine with others who have different skills, different talents, different possibilities in order to do something new, in order to produce new services, to create a broader range of types of impact, to have that broader positive impact on society as a whole. This is something that is facilitated when they are able to open up their collections, and are able to actually work with others.”

— Stephen Wyber, Netherlands

“Openness in general is the right thing to do. **Closed knowledge is not the natural thing to do**. If it's open then you give a big opportunity for partnership. If it's open I can do research with other people in other continents.” — Hala Essalmawi, Egypt

“The main benefit is the gradual emergence of the commons, which is shared information and content about cultural heritage that can be **combined together from different perspectives**. Permissive sharing conditions allow extracting information from text and media, combine it with other content and therefore accumulate knowledge in collaboration with several other people.” — Susanna Änäs, Finland

“One of the key features that open culture can foster is universal participation. Cultural institutions constantly struggle to attract and establish lasting and meaningful relationships with their audiences, and **crowdsourcing and citizen science initiatives are becoming more and more popular** in the cultural heritage sector. The open culture model is the best suited to foster and better exploit these participative approaches, actively engaging citizens with their heritage.”  
— *Marco Rendina, Italy*

### 3. MORE PARTICIPATORY AND INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

When collections and related data are shared openly, teachers, educators and learners can:

- share and reuse cultural heritage content **in the classroom, in remote education** and online teaching.
- include them in learning programs and materials, including **open educational resources** (OERs), providing high-quality cultural materials for educators and learners to use.
- stimulate more **creative learning experiences**.
- benefit from more **affordable materials**.

“Some of the benefits are making collections more accessible [and] reusable [and being] able to **integrate materials into teaching** more easily or into different kinds of research projects.”  
— *Stacy Allison-Cassin, Canada*

“[One benefit is] the full use of museum material in education, [including] academic research so that we can mine the archives. The kinds of things that [CLARIN](#) has done under the pandemic and putting out data at speed is a very good example of [how] it's used in the classroom. The Hunt Museum had a major advantage when we all had to create museums from home at the start of the COVID pandemic, partly because a sizeable chunk of the collection was available in digitized form under PDM or CC0. We'd already had experiments with Mozilla Hubs and could reach out to schools and parents to provide curricular-supported learning using the museum's objects. **Schools and teachers want to operate legally** and they can use 99% of our objects **without fear of breaching copyright**, including the 1950s and 1960s Sybil Connolly fashion collection which has been dedicated to the public domain by the heir of Sybil on our request.”  
— *Jill Cousins, Ireland*

“Open culture allows uses of cultural heritage materials and education and research settings. This is most important because, **you can't interest kids for museums or for cultural settings, but schools can.**”  
— *Ellen Euler, Germany*

“**Art history book publishing also becomes less expensive**, consequently, making these books more affordable. When everybody has access to this, the sector ceases to be niche.” — *Medhavi Gandhi, India*

“If it's easy to access and reuse, then it can be **more easily integrated in school programs.**” — *Marco Rendina, Italy*

“OC is a crucial approach to building open educational resources (OERs) that can **benefit learners and teachers as resources** can be retained, remixed, revised, reused, and redistributed — the “5 R” activities.”  
— *Neal Stimler, USA*

“The benefits of [open culture in] creating more participatory classrooms, creating **more inclusive classrooms for different learners**, where people actually are encouraged to creatively respond to what they're being taught instead of memorizing information [will be immense]. We can really make a big difference if we can make these artworks accessible to teachers across the country and they can start introducing art in their classrooms through this open collection. We've realized that it's really beneficial to us to our goals as a museum initiative and to people we work with if they are able to use it in a constructive and structured way.” — *Sumona Chakravarti, India*

### 3. MORE DYNAMIC CULTURAL CREATIVITY

OC can stimulate creativity and inspire new creative enterprises with positive economic and social spillovers. OC enlivens arts, culture and creativity to help us live richer lives.

What is **impossible** today because culture is not open?

- Artists, creators, and creative entrepreneurs are prevented from reusing and remixing cultural heritage elements which are in theory legally free to use. This hampers the expression of their creativity and negatively impacts creativity-based economy.

Who benefits? **Artists, creators, creatives, and creative entrepreneurs.**

Key benefits:

- enriched pool of preexisting materials, increased creative reuse and remix
- democratized access to and participation in creativity
- increased commercial and non-commercial collaboration and experimentation

#### 1. ENRICHED POOL OF PREEXISTING MATERIALS, INCREASED CREATIVE REUSE AND REMIX

When collections and related data are shared openly, creators and artists can:

- interrogate them, be inspired by them, and creatively reuse them to **produce new creative works**.
- contribute to **virtuous creativity cycles** of cultural production and regeneration.

“Open culture gives joy through enabling exposure to cultural artifacts. It encourages people to gain or deepen their knowledge and has a part to play in **ensuring the further creation of culture**. Everyone stands on the shoulders of those who've gone before and enabling reuse of cultural artifacts enables the creation of culture.”

— *Siobhan Leachman, New Zealand*

“Making collections freely available for reuse not only helps to spread and **multiply knowledge, but it also helps to foster new cultural production**.” — *Antje Schmidt, Germany*

“We are able to access copyright protected materials and works in a way that is exceptionally beneficial for **those of us who are creative who use and are inspired by works that have been created** by others to create anew.” — *Rina Pantalony, USA*

“If you put it out there in a meaningful and structured way, giving people some kind of prompt or framework within which they can use the artworks, **it will get a good response and people will be encouraged by it**. [...] Make it easy for people to use it, give them the tools, structures, or frameworks of how they can use it, there will be a benefit.”

— *Sumona Chakravarti, India*

“One benefit is the power and benefit of reuse in remixing culture. In the past, the way that people would discover materials might have been through a library or institutional catalog, or they would have had to buy a book. Now, people can see great works of **art at their fingertips**. It's really important and really incredible that [...] anything that you want to discover is discoverable.” — *Jennie Rose Halperin, USA*

“Objects in the collections can be **used to create new things**.” — *Jill Cousins, Ireland*

“OC creates opportunities for new knowledge creation, adaptation and creativity. New **content thrives on reuse and remixing and regeneration** of old content, which has significantly increased when you have an open approach to existing content.”

— *Fred Saunderson, Scotland (UK)*



## 2. DEMOCRATIZED ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL CREATIVITY

When collections and related data are shared openly, potentially anyone in society can:

- participate in creative engagements and interactions **without barriers and on more equitable terms.**

*“I see open collections as a huge enabler for creativity. From **school students to professional artists, technology enthusiasts**, open collections can help anybody create anything and express their ideas in the most creative ways.” — [Medhavi Gandhi, India](#)*

*“Every artist, every art student, every amateur is **nourished by certain takes on reality** but also by representations of those produced during the course of time. [Openness] motivates and enriches research and creation by everyone and without any barrier other than access to digital tools.” — [Stéphane Chantalat, France](#)*

*“When access to culture is unequal and **when culture is closed** in and access is prevented, then the **creativity of all creators is also limited**. In this way, open culture is the best way to have a creative society.” — [Eric Luth, Sweden](#)*

*“OC enables increased access to cultural heritage for the public. It makes it possible for people around the world to **access and learn from heritage collections**, regardless of location or socioeconomic status.” — [Ellen Euler, Germany](#)*

*“OC brings culture into the world, and it gives a much broader part of the population **an opportunity to engage with and learn from and build upon that culture**. It brings it out of institutions and out to people. When you push this information and shared culture out into the world, it creates many more opportunities for people to engage with it in unexpected ways. And this culture and **cultural objects were created among a diverse community of people**. There’s no reason to prevent the same broad, diverse community of people from using that existing culture to build new things.” — [Michael Weinberg, USA](#)*

*“[Open culture underlines the] importance of democratic access, of **making sure that everyone has that possibility to be involved**. OC can help us combat the idea that culture is elitist, narrow, or limited only to a select group of people. You have the time, you have the instinct to have the practice of going to participate in culture. It’s always a problem when cultural institutions are looking to make the case for support, for laws, in order to be able to fulfill their missions, that they’re not always seen as being about something for everyone, they’re not seen as being a wider, broad-based policy issue. **OC breaks down that idea that culture is just something for the few**, not for the many. OC makes clear that culture is not something that we want to keep for ourselves.”*

— [Stephen Wyber, Netherlands](#)

*“OC is an opportunity to share collections beyond the walls of the institution, which means that people who may not necessarily go inside a gallery or a museum can still **find out what’s there but on their own terms**, [for example], through a Facebook link, in a WhatsApp group or on Pinterest. There are many ways in which people find this material, but the beauty is that people can **engage with collections and make relationships** with them on their own terms.” — [Temi Odumosu, USA](#)*

*“Opening cultural heritage and making it reusable and shareable is a way to **democratize our common culture**, making it more accessible and inclusive.” — [Mariana Ziku, Greece](#)*

*“It’s always been **tied to a democratization of our cultural heritage** to open it up.” — [Merete Sanderhoff, Denmark](#)*

### 3. INCREASED (COMMERCIAL) COLLABORATION AND EXPERIMENTATION

When collections and related data are shared openly, creative entrepreneurs can:

- (co-)develop **commercial projects** and new creative products and nurture pop culture, generating fair economic benefits.
- trigger a **renewed interest and fresh take** on a collection.

*“It’s not only about access because reuse is important so whenever we talk about open we need to mention the reuse element. There’s great value in content from GLAMs not only being used for education or research purposes, which is perhaps the expected use case, or even beyond publishing in its classical model, but also with the content for GLAM, we need to be looking at more **creative and commercial projects such as fashion industry the arts or even graphic design.**”*

— *Alwaleed Alkhaja, Qatar*

*“We can collaborate with creative parties to reconstruct cultural heritage. It can be in the form of **merchandising, redesign, making books, games, video, film and others.**”* — *Laksimi Sugiri, Indonesia*

*“It changes the ways that we tell stories. Opening up collections in GLAMs makes it possible for people to use collections in ways that we might have never imagined. If you think of museum exhibitions, they could be expensive and difficult to change and often it’s the same small pool of professional curators that are able to tell these stories. By opening up collections that lets **anyone become a curator, which can lead to new methodologies and research and new forms of expression.** We’re already seeing GLAM files used in AI XR spaces data analysis, but we’re also seeing them make their way into independent film, songwriting, video games, and even tattoos.”* — *Nicole Kang Ferraiolo, USA*



Tropical Flowers by Raoul Dufy, Cooper Hewitt Museum, Public Domain

## 4. MORE JUST, DEMOCRATIC, DIVERSE, FREE, AND EQUITABLE SOCIETIES

OC contributes to reinforcing the social fabric and can lead to greater social cohesion and [wellbeing](#). It can help build fairer and more equitable relations and empower new voices; it is a powerful tool for social justice. It can help solidify our democratic foundation by inspiring civic engagement. It also contributes to increasing access to reliable and trustworthy information; by the same token it contributes to fighting dis- and misinformation.

### What is **impossible** today because culture is not open?

- People cannot meaningfully and intentionally connect with each other around heritage.
- Access to heritage is not equitable, leading to social injustices.
- Misinformation cannot be mitigated because so much knowledge remains locked up.

### Who benefits? **Members of the public and society as a whole.**

#### Key benefits:

- fostered intercultural connections and dialog
- promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion and stronger social justice
- enhanced access to more reliable information

## 1. FOSTERED INTERCULTURAL CONNECTIONS AND DIALOG

When collections and related data are shared openly:

- **relationships develop between people**, cultures, communities, and societies, through shared experiences.
- **conversations are triggered** that go to the heart of who we are.
- intercultural dialogue and **mutual understanding** are fostered.

*“It allows you to **create networks and interpersonal relationships.**”*  
— *Charles Riondet, France*

*“Open Culture ensures inclusion, representation and inspires creativity and innovation, which in turn enforces connections and creates growth. When people are connected, learning is encouraged and growth is assured... **Open culture is fundamental to how human beings are growing today** and how we are communicating and interacting among each other.”* — *Felix Nartey, Ghana*

*“**Exchanges lead to the appreciation of differences** and are the prerequisite for any personal and collective enrichment. George Bataille once wrote: “The museum is the colossal mirror in which man finally contemplates himself from all sides” [our translation]. Having access to the images even before one day being able to experience the emotion of **contemplating the works themselves is already sharpening one’s curiosity**, discovering previously unknown paths, singular points of view, meeting the others, their different cultures. To offer them in good quality and to give permission to use and manipulate them may give rise to new vocations, promote creation and interpretation in all forms, in many fields.”* — *Stéphane Chantalat, France*

*“**OC creates conditions for us to know ourselves, but above all, to know others.**”* — *Jessemusse Cacinda, Mozambique*

*“**Open Culture is a key building block for positive interaction and social inclusion.** When the study is open, which is about different people, it helps that there is continuous access for the life of different people. Because you know about other people, you know how to live, you have more information about them. When learning culture is involved in the important aspects of society, it helps in developing new learning. It makes learning new, and it helps create different resources for the development of the community.”* — *Nkem Osuigwe, Ghana*

“OC gives us a chance to recognize the shared humanity in ourselves and others. **It brings people together, and it crosses political and sociocultural boundaries** to help us all learn from one another and work together towards a better future.” — [Shanna Hollich, USA](#)

“Having access to our heritage is one of the most important ways to learn about our history and to **contextualize the current needs of our society** and our current debates and struggles in public debate. OC allows us to celebrate the creation of our ancestors and build upon their works to find novel ways to express ourselves and to further our own dialogues.” — [Maarten Zeinstra, Netherlands](#)

“OC is a very interesting space to **promote civic engagement.**” — [Mariana Ziku, Greece](#)

“OC contributes to democratic values and civic participation by giving people **everything they need to participate in a culture-wide conversation** about history, culture and the future. There’s so much information that’s coming at us on a daily basis, it’s very hard to process. But when we engage with well-curated cultural works in a museum-type environment, we are moved. Leveraging the cultural works of the world gives people the opportunity to have their hearts and minds change, which, in this sometimes very myopic and bubble-focused world where people get into their own cycles of understanding, is important for us to be able to break through those cycles with things that challenge us to greater cultural understanding.” — [Christian Dawson, USA](#)

“**Institutions can be actors in and for society**, help make it better, more resilient, more creative, better connected and informed, and open for dialog. — [Julia Pagel, Germany](#)

“**Open Culture is about building trust and connecting people.** It is about inclusivity and inspiring people and involving them more deeply in stories about digital cultural heritage. — [Killian Downing, Ireland](#)

## 2. GREATER DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION & SOCIAL JUSTICE

When collections and related data are shared openly:

- societies can become **more resilient, more equitable, more inclusive, and more diverse.**
- **marginalized and underrepresented people** are offered a voice and are enabled to tell their stories from their own perspectives and **create their own narratives**, empowering them to have a greater say over ownership and **custodianship of cultural heritage.**

“Diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion can be supported by **providing data and digital assets to users who can better access them through assistive technologies** and by communities reinterpreting, remixing, and resituating the context of GLAM data and digital assets with analytics and metrics infrastructure and tools such as online dashboards.” — [Neal Stimler, USA](#)

“Access is really important as **it allows a whole variety of people to contribute or to get access to materials online.** The main benefit of [open culture] is actually about social aspects. There’s ideas of social justice in there and making sure that a wide variety of people can get access to information about society and information about culture and people. When we just frame it as access it’s too narrow, in lots of ways, there’s a political element to this and it’s about equality, diversity. By making the main collections that we have available digitally we’re opening up access and that’s a matter of social justice.” — [Melissa Terras, Scotland \(UK\)](#)

“When done right, the greatest advantage for open cultural heritage is digital equity. Removing paywalls means that more people can afford to access these materials. **We live in a wildly inequitable world, and access to our culture should not contribute to this.** Removing permission requirements makes things more accessible. For instance, if you’re on a deadline, you may not have 24 to 48 hours to sit around and wait for an archivist to approve your access request. Openness further increases equity by diminishing gatekeeping. It improves accessibility and it enables people to access files from the safety of their own homes without risk of harassment or exposure to illness.” — [Nicole Kang Ferraiolo, USA](#)

“Regarding the ability to repatriate objects in the context of restitution, a Benin mask, probably looted in the British massacre of 1897, arrived in our museum by the Augustus Pitt Rivers collection, some of which was sold at Sotheby’s in 1974. **This mask has been 3D digitized, it is in the public domain, and is available on Digital Benin**, and that is part of what is likely to be a full restitution back to Benin.” — *Jill Cousins, Ireland*

“Africa as a continent is underrepresented in global digital knowledge networks — this includes African people, cultures, and languages, in online spaces. **It’s important that African voices are heard to be able to reflect the rich and valuable history, languages, people and communities on this continent.** African narratives are also written by people outside of Africa, and this enforces biases on the content which Africans engage with, and how that’s represented. Being aware of how opening up cultural and linguistic artifacts from African organizations, especially in making them findable online, might change how we’re represented in online spaces.” — *Kirsty von Gogh, South Africa*

“[Cultural heritage] can really become something embedded in our daily lives. OC can **foster participation, civic engagement, and pave the road for a more inclusive and conscious society.**” — *Marco Rendina, Italy*

“[Open culture enables us to] create an **inclusive society** of the future.” — *Kristina Petrasova, Netherlands*

### 3. ENHANCED ACCESS TO MORE RELIABLE INFORMATION

When collections and related data are shared openly:

- people are **empowered to access information** and knowledge.
- people can rely on a greater and more diverse pool of trustworthy information to **counter dis/misinformation.**

“We provide the public with access to relevant and appropriate information from reliable sources, because **cultural heritage is actually a right** for the general public to know.” — *Laksimi Sugiri, Indonesia*

“The main benefit of open culture is universal access to **trustworthy information**, to global knowledge.” — *Kristina Petrasova, Netherlands*

“OC can ensure equity in access to information and knowledge. OC enables us to equally share knowledge between the north and the south in a digital space and ensure free flow of knowledge **across geopolitical locations and across power structures.**”

— *Buhle Mbambo-Thata, Lesotho*

“In recent years, we have seen a lot of problems with misinformation and fake news on the internet. There’s a new, important benefit to open culture, because as we say popularly, **if it’s not on the internet, it doesn’t exist.** This holds true for a lot of people in the world. That is where they go to look for information, and if they don’t find it there, they won’t necessarily know how to look in physical archives or libraries, etc. So we have an obligation to open up, fact check knowledge in our knowledge and heritage institutions, and remove the barriers between that content and the diversity of users out there. [Open culture] in that sense is a great benefit to our democracy.” — *Merete Sanderhoff, Denmark*

“Opening access can enable **knowledge distribution to be freer.** The general public can access the institutions’ content and collection more easily.” — *Biyanto Rebin, Indonesia*

“[Open culture] helps to provide **evidence against disinformation** by making it easy for anyone to access GLAM materials and archival materials. More people have the **ability to fact check** and conduct primary source research when they hear a claim.” — *Nicole Kang Ferraiolo, USA*

“The main benefits are open knowledge for everyone, everywhere, in every possible form, including data, text, images, and sound. There’s a lot of fake information to be found online, and it’s found very easily. **But good research and images from cultural institutions are for a greater part hidden behind paywalls.** Or they’re not fully searchable, or they can only be used by people who pay for it or work at organizations that pay for it. So. **Open culture, please.**” — *Marieke van Roon, Netherlands*

## CONCLUSION – THE SIMPLEST MANIFESTATION OF HERITAGE’S VALUE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

As mentioned in the introduction, this report does not aim to be exhaustive, but summarizes the key insights shared by experts in [CC’s OCV series](#). It shows how many people can benefit from open culture in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. A common thread speaks to the power of openness in connecting people with, about, or through cultural heritage. One of the greatest beneficiaries might be culture itself: when openly transmitted in the digital realm, cultural heritage can live on and evolve over time and space.

Many more benefits could be explored in greater depth. For example, further research could examine how OC could support access for journalists, diaspora communities, activists, people with disabilities, young people, and women, as well as other marginalized and underrepresented groups. There is also room to further probe into the value of OC to strengthen fundamental human rights, help attain the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and support access and enjoyment of culture as a global public good, as enshrined in the [UNESCO 2022 Mondiacult Declaration](#). Open culture also holds tremendous potential to unlock possibilities of uses not yet imagined, with positive spillovers in areas not yet chartered. In brief, open culture is not only well-aligned with globally-agreed goals and shared ideals, it can also expand our shared horizons. As stated in the [CC strategy](#), “open sharing is inherently an act of social solidarity, reflecting a belief that we all have a stake in our collective body of creative and intellectual wealth.”

*“OC helps put cultural heritage into the hands of users, and that’s a powerful way to **remove the distance between people and heritage**. Often when you come into a museum, you have to keep a distance to respect safety and not damage the works and that can really make a lot of people feel not so interested in heritage. But when we digitize and open up these digital reproductions, and all the data, **people can feel close to it** and can do what they want, fulfill their dreams and their purposes.” — [Merete Sanderhoff, Denmark](#)*

*“The main benefits are to do with **the simplicity that an open approach provides** and with the kind of aligning of the ethic and logic of the GLAM sector.” — [Fred Saunderson, Scotland \(UK\)](#)*

*“The responsibility of cultural heritage institutions to be there to empower society is of high importance. What better way to do it than by **opening up your organization, becoming inclusive, becoming an ethical entity supporting empowering society, local communities, and the bigger circle**? This is the value, the biggest benefit. It is also the responsibility of CHIs: making sure that that we use the past, the collections that we have to support the contemporary, to support different stakeholders, to educate, to entertain, but also to shape mindsets. For this you need to open up for dialogue, to support the development of technology to use data from the heritage sector, to help the technology grow and improve in an ethical sense to fight disinformation to support growth of the society.”*

— [Maja Drabczyk, Poland](#)

*“Making [collections] **a vital part of our lives**: that’s where open access is a really interesting discussion. Access to collections is what we’re all here for. The conversation we need to be having now is about reuse about what people can do with these collections that we take care of for them. The question of open access for museums and archives is a complicated one.” — [Katie Eagleton, Scotland \(UK\)](#)*

*“[Open culture] fosters a different mindset around our collection both for us as an institution and for our audience. The collections that we hold are there to be used. The collections **become alive when they are used** by other people than just the institution themselves.”*

— [Karin Glasemann, Sweden](#)

*“By opening up our data, we can find it more easily, i.e., by putting it in the hands of other platforms such as Wikipedia. This wider dissemination relies heavily on the appropriation of this content that we open and make accessible. This appropriation makes users want to reappropriate them and work on them differently, whether by using them in research, playfully diverting them through GIFs, or using them commercially, as we have done with prints for fashion brands. **The important thing is that these public goods are used in some way.**” — [Philippe Rivière, France](#)*

# ANNEX

## LIST OF OPEN CULTURE VOICES GUEST EXPERTS' RECORDINGS

- [Medhavi Gandhi](#)
- [Jonathan Hernandez](#)
- [Temi Odumosu](#)
- [Douglas McCarthy](#)
- [Merete Sanderhoff](#)
- [Biyanto Rebin](#)
- [Larissa Borck](#)
- [Giovanna Fontenelle](#)
- [Stéphane Chantalat](#)
- [Jill Cousins](#)
- [Alwaleed Alkhaja](#)
- [Maja Drabczyk](#)
- [Melissa Terras](#)
- [Karin Glasemann](#)
- [Rebecca Giblin](#)
- [Neal Stimler](#)
- [Patricia Diaz Rubio](#)
- [Dafydd Tudur](#)
- [Stacy-Allison Cassin](#)
- [Marco Rendina](#)
- [Céline Chanas](#)
- [Antje Schmidt](#)
- [Katie Eagleton](#)
- [George Oates](#)
- [Iolanda Pensa](#)
- [Susanna Ånäs](#)
- [Simon Tanner](#)
- [Marianna Ziku](#)
- [Julia Pagel](#)
- [Philippe Rivière](#)
- [Buhle Mbambo-Thata](#)
- [Martine Denoyelle](#)
- [Ariadna Matas](#)
- [Kristina Petrasova](#)
- [Josée Plamondon](#)
- [Nicole Ferraiolo](#)
- [Hala Essalmawi](#)
- [Felix Nartey](#)
- [Charles Riondet](#)
- [Angie Cervellera](#)
- [Siobhan Leachman](#)
- [Christian Dawson](#)
- [Eric Luth](#)
- [Nkem Osuigwe](#)
- [Sandra Soster](#)
- [Killian Downing](#)
- [Jessemussa Cacinda](#)
- [Shanna Hollich](#)
- [Laksmi Sugiri](#)
- [Michal Cudrnak](#)
- [Ivan Martinez](#)
- [Kirsty von Gogh](#)
- [Ellen Euler](#)
- [Mauricio Genta](#)
- [Stephen Wyber](#)
- [Sumona Chakravarty](#)
- [Rina Pantalony](#)
- [Hardiansyah](#)
- [Fred Saunderson](#)
- [Jennie Rose Halperin](#)
- [Christy Henshaw](#)
- [Deborah De Angelis](#)
- [Michael Weinberg](#)
- [Pierre El Khoury](#)
- [Marike van Roon](#)
- [Maarten Zeinstra](#)
- [Kyle K. Courtney](#)
- [Dave Hansen](#)

## FURTHER READING

- [Creative Commons Open Culture Certificate course materials \(Unit 5\)](#)
- [Benefits to Open GLAM \(OpenGLAM Initiative\)](#)

## IMAGE CREDITS

All cropped

- [Duria Antiquior](#) by Henry De al Beche, National Museum Cardiff, Public Domain
- [Primula Japonica](#) by John Saul, Biodiversity Heritage Library, [Public Domain Mark](#)
- [Bäume im Ateliergarten](#) by Ferdinand Hodler, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Public Domain
- [Öied](#) by Paul Horma, Underi ja Tuglase Kirjanduskeskus, [CC0](#)
- [Tropical Flowers](#) by Raoul Dufy, Cooper Hewitt Museum, Public Domain

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has been prepared by Brigitte Vézina, Director of Policy and Open Culture, Creative Commons. Design by Connor Benedict, Open Culture Coordinator, Creative Commons. It has benefited from useful feedback from members of the Open Culture Platform as well other Creative Commons community members, and Creative Commons staff, to whom the author is immensely grateful.

