




**Museum of Domestic  
Design & Architecture**

# **Implementing resource discovery techniques at the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture, Middlesex University**

## **Social Media and the Balanced Value Impact Model**

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## Background

The Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA) developed from a number of collections acquired by Middlesex University and its predecessor bodies between the late 1960s and the 1990s. The first and most important of these was the Silver Studio, which was given to what was then the Hornsey College of Art in 1966.

The Designated collections of the Silver Studio are a rich compendium of designs, textiles, photographs and archival material. Influential in the formation of Art Nouveau tastes at the turn of the century, the collections hold particular historical resonance for our understanding of the development of domestic design and suburbia, and are an ongoing inspiration for a variety of creative practitioners today.

Further acquisitions were made in subsequent years; the Crown Wallpaper Collection, for example, was acquired in 1989, and the Charles Hasler Collection in 1993. MoDA's Domestic Design Collection includes several thousand books, catalogues and magazines relating to the design and decoration of the home. The museum also holds Sir James Richard's library of books on architecture and town planning.

The museum has an extensive community of users who engage with the collections for research and inspiration in a variety of ways, both online and in person. Our users include everyone from established scholars researching the development of suburbia, to jewellery designers looking to use historic wallpapers as inspiration for new work, or members of the public keen to find out how their home might have looked in the 1930s.

## What is the problem/issues(s) your organisation is trying to solve?

As part of Middlesex University's move to Hendon campus in 2011, the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture moved into a new study centre, conservation and photography study and stores, and changed the way it operates to *Online, On Tour and On Request*.

Consequently our digital offer is extremely important to us, but several factors have had a curtailing effect on MoDA's ability to raise the profile of its online collections and unify resource discovery activities and social media outputs.

A particularly static website and inflexible content management system meant that up-to-date content and discussion around collections was hosted externally on a Blogger site, and refreshed content within the main collections site was largely restricted to an embedded Twitter feed.

Issues with modular overlays for collections records have made it difficult for users to share them – they don't have distinct URLs until they are manually generated by clicking a 'share' button – which in turn meant that there was little traffic drawn directly to the digital collections from social media. Another effect of the lack of distinct URLs for collections records was that Google, and therefore its users, could not easily find them, and little traffic was drawn to the collections from search engines.

Whilst the website provided a good introduction to the collections, our site content was therefore largely static and, with poor search engine optimization, our online collections were largely under-used.

The difficulties of updating content had resulted in a lack of a clear content strategy, and with social media use in effect compensating for a lack of all other digital outputs and resource discovery activities, it had lacked a clarity of purpose.

These were the issues and opportunities that we were seeking to address as we began the training. In particular, as part of the planning for building a new website, we wanted to undertake a user-focussed analysis of our social media output as a first step to building a social media policy, and to look at how we could purposefully extend/link this into a content strategy for the website and unify our collections discovery activities within a wider and coherent digital strategy.

## How did the training components help?

The training gave us space to discuss our issues and ideas and really think about what we were trying to achieve with our digital collections and our discoverability activities.

Within the context of our website rebuild, the discussions on Schema.org (and the practical activity) were useful and timely, and something that we will revisit as we come to plan the metadata for our catalogue record templates.

The training also helped us to challenge what our social media use, purpose and policy was, and reposition our digital collections discovery activities relative to audience need. One particularly useful way of doing this, which was highlighted by the training, was to look at placing our audience(s) on a [visitor>resident](#) continuum ([White & Le Cornu, 2011](#)), and to look at the suitability of our choice of media to help target these groups through the appropriate channels.

This model was a particularly useful development of [Prensky's 2001](#) characterisation of digital natives and digital immigrants as at it took account of individuals at various educational stages – emerging, establishing, embedding, and experiencing – something particularly relevant to us as a university museum with a continuously fluid student body as a key target audience.

The frameworks and templates for social media analysis also helped us to clarify our purposes in relation to our audiences (and to start thinking more strategically) whilst the case studies provided an interesting benchmarking context as well as a source of inspiration in best practice. Looking at aspects of the [Tate's Social Media Policy](#) during a webinar stood out as an interesting example of this.

Perhaps the most useful aspect of the training for us however was the introduction to the [Balanced Value Impact Model, developed by Simon Tanner at King's College London \(2012\)](#).

Before undertaking the training we had a good handle on some of the issues with our digital collections and their discoverability, and we found the model a useful way of articulating these issues succinctly, contextually and with an identification of stakeholders at the heart of the



analysis. This in turn allowed us to use other aspects of the training – such as the social media analysis – to plan discreet projects to improve discoverability.

The refresher on Google analytics provided through one of the workshops was also useful for the Balanced Value Impact Model – particularly the work on adding funnels to goals in setting our key performance indicators – and the use of the model as a planning tool, as well as a means to draw together our digital activities into a strategy with a demonstrable impact (with scope for learning and reiteration) is something that we were particularly keen to explore.

Finally, the training helped us because, while we felt fairly up-to-date with issues with digital collections through interaction with professional networks, we were looking to undertake quite an ambitious programme of digital transformation. In one sense we didn't know what we didn't know, and it was often as useful to have best practice re-affirmed, as it was to learn new skills and be introduced to new models and ways of working.

### **What did you implement to address the issue(s)**

During one of the training workshops we undertook analysis of Instagram as a potentially useful social media publishing channel that we'd not previously used and which, anecdotally at least, seemed to chime with the student side of our target audience.

Use of the template helped us to focus in on what we are trying to achieve through our discoverability activities; to question the purpose of our use of social media and to analyse whether we were using the most appropriate channels to fulfil our stakeholders' requirements.

As a result of the analysis of Instagram we decided that it was not worth pursuing in the short-term. The app strips out the meta-data from images, which would not be ideal for our purposes as we are keen to make our collections more, rather than less, discoverable, and certainly don't want to add to the volume of orphan images currently floating around cyber-space.

This issue with Instagram is mitigated slightly by the difficulty of sharing content from it – though that represents another problem from our perspective as we are keen to open access to the collections as widely as possible. The only way for users to share content outside of the platform/as embedded content in other platforms is through screen grabbing which could result in the orphan image problem previously identified.

Instagram is also not available as an app on the iPad – our go-to-tool within the study room for recording collections data and photographing day-to-day activities – which logistically would have been far from ideal.

The final problem we identified with using Instagram was that we couldn't link back to our own site from posted content which, whilst it might be fine for some uses (and reduces spam) isn't great for us in raising the profile of the collections by providing the opportunity to explore similar items in our online catalogues.

Following on from the workshop, we undertook three more social media analyses – for Periscope, Storify and Vimeo – and looked at how we could link them to our institutional aims, stakeholders and audiences and also the [Culture 24 'What's the Story?'](#) collaborative research project we are taking part in – and through which we are investigating using social media to co-produce content around online collections records.

To begin planning this, we started to draw up a Balanced Value Impact Model as a means of strategizing our social media outputs and digital resource discovery activities with a stakeholder/audience focus and within an organisational context.

As well as providing a basis for one off social media campaigns (such as the one we will run through the Culture 24 project), we hoped that this would begin to inform a social media policy which will (once our website is redeveloped) help to inform our website content strategy and eventually an overall digital strategy.

### **What was the outcome?**

#### **Social Media Analyses**

We decided that we wanted to use the social media analysis as a means to interrogate the appropriateness of media for our experimentation with co-production around collections records.

From these analyses, we decided that we wanted to pursue the use of Periscope, Vimeo, and Storify but that we would not use Instagram (at this stage) for this purpose. A brief explanation of the reasoning is contained below.

**Periscope:** We decided to use Periscope in an experimental way as a result of the analysis – user demographics are not yet disclosed as Periscope is in its infancy, though as an emerging app, young, tech savvy users might be expected to be early adopters, and with students a key target audience, it seemed an appropriate choice for an experimental approach.

Where Periscope is slightly problematic for us is that links to videos (e.g. from Twitter) only remain live for 24 hours and there doesn't yet appear to be a way of directly embedding videos from the app into a website. Although content can be saved to a local device, Periscope does not act as a longer term host, as YouTube or Vimeo do.

Periscope will be useful for live events, but not on its own for recording video snippets we want to re-appropriate later within our other publishing channels. As far as we can tell, there is no developers section to their site – which is unusual and a little bit disappointing, though the app is in its infancy.



As with Instagram, the analysis throws up that we need to re-check functionality (and indeed terms of use) as later gestations of the app are released.

**Vimeo:** The licensing options in Vimeo were particularly appealing. The site allows for the embedding of Creative Commons licensing into content – which is ideal for MoDA as we want people to share content widely (in order to send traffic to our content), and know their rights in doing so.

Vimeo has a slightly less commercial and more curated feel than You Tube, and provides a nice selection of analytics – particularly with the ‘plus’ account that we opted for. The lack of advertising is particularly appealing, and makes it a preferable host for video content.

The hosting of content is the real advantage of Vimeo, and it will allow us to easily embed collections based content in our new website as well as into Storify.

**Storify:** Storify has several features that felt ideal for our needs. Primarily, it's a way to quickly show readers what kind of reaction an event or topic is getting on social media, and we can embed Vimeos and Tweets within contextual information to tell the story (co-produce the story?) of a collection through a social media campaign.

Storify also has an API key and is easily compatible with Blogger – meaning that we can use discrete social media (such as Twitter and Vimeo) to create digital content around collections records, and use Storify and Blogger to help us to tell stories around our collections which we can then re-appropriate through our new website at a later date.

### Balanced Value Impact Model

Work on the Balanced Value Impact Model was much more complex and necessarily slower paced. We began by defining our context; defining the ecosystem of the resource, undertaking a stakeholder analysis, considering balancing perspectives and then defining appropriate value drivers for each perspective.

Defining the ecosystem of the resource involved looking at each relevant aspect of the digital collections – how they behave, technological infrastructure, expected users and regulatory factors, for example.

We also undertook a basic SWOT analysis at this stage, looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the resource relative to our current situation. These included:

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly visual collection</li> <li>• Small team</li> <li>• In house skills</li> <li>• Ability to move fast</li> <li>• Willingness to experiment and innovate</li> <li>• Current publishing channels have easy-to-analyse- analytics</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues surrounding current website</li> <li>• Fluidity of benefitting stakeholders (students)</li> <li>• No content or social media strategies</li> <li>• Difficulty of engaging students</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of new media (Storify and Periscope)</li> <li>• Rebuild of the website with a flexible CMS</li> <li>• Events that tie in to digital resources and comms – e.g. Charles Hasler book launch, Katagami crowdfunding campaign</li> <li>• Being keyed in to sector-wide collections and ICT developments (e.g. MCG, Culture 24 project)</li> <li>• HTML5</li> <li>• Core audience are students (tech savvy)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copyright</li> <li>• Business continuity</li> <li>• Intellectual property and some publishing channels</li> <li>• Potential buy-in from key contributors (for certain projects)</li> </ul>

The analysis then turned to our stakeholders: identifying them, grouping them and listing their key attributes. For the purpose of the analysis, stakeholders were defined as ‘a person, group, community, or organization who affects or can be affected by the ecosystem of the digital resource to be assessed’ and split into primary stakeholders (those directly affected by the resource) and secondary stakeholders (those indirectly affected by the resource).

For MoDA this included:



## Primary stakeholders

1	Stakeholder	Group	Attributes							
2			Users	Influencers	Paymasters	Funders	Champions	Vocal Opponents	Internal	External
3	Copyright holders & licensees	Consumers								
4	University teaching staff	Partners and collaborators								
5	University students	One stop consumers								
6	MoDA staff	Producers and creatives								
7	University management	Paymasters								
8	Personal and professional researchers (writers authors and artists)	Consumers, one stop consumers, producers and creatives								
9	General public/interest	Consumers, leavers								
10	System Simulation	Partners and collaborators								
11	Thirty 8 Digital	Partners and collaborators								
12	JISC	Commentators								
13	University library	Partners and collaborators								
14	University archives & special collections	Partners and collaborators								

## Secondary stakeholders

1	Stakeholder	Group	Attributes				
2			Potential users	Context setting bodies	Opinion leaders	Potential supporters	Potential opponents
3	Other museums and museum professionals	Competitors, partners and collaborators, champions, commentators					
4	Museum Association	Commentators, non-users					
5	Arts Council	Commentators, non-users					
6	Local community (define?)	Consumers, leavers					
7	Chinese/international audiences	Marginalised, non-users					
8	Artists relatives	Commentators, consumers, champions					
9	Writers, authors and artists	Commentators, consumers, champions, partners and collaborators					

Within the model, four balancing perspectives are then identified:

**Social:** the audience, the beneficial stakeholders and wider society have been affected and changed in a beneficial fashion,

**Economic:** the activity is demonstrating economic benefits to the organisation or to society,

**Innovation:** the digital resource is enabling innovation which is supporting the social and economic benefits accrued

**Internal:** the organisation creating or delivering the digital resources has been benefitted within its internal processes by the innovation demonstrated.

These balancing perspectives then have value drivers assigned to them which, once mapped to stakeholders, help to complete the contextual analysis. These value drivers are:

**Education:** people are aware that digital resources contribute to their own or to other people's sense of culture, education, knowledge and heritage and therefore value them,

**Community:** people benefit from the experience of being part of a community that is afforded by the digital resource,

**Utility:** the audience value the utility afforded through use of the digital resources now or sometime in the future,

**Existence/prestige:** people derive value and benefit from knowing that a digital resource is cherished by persons living inside and outside their community. This value exists whether the resource is personally used or not,

**Inheritance/bequest value:** People derive benefit from the inheritance passed down to them and satisfaction from the fact that their descendants and other members of the community will in the future be able to enjoy a digital resource, if they so choose.

Once we had mapped our stakeholders to our balanced perspectives and value drivers, our analysis started to take shape, and were able to start plotting discrete projects with a stakeholder focus and demonstrable outputs (see following page).

Whilst it is early on in our analysis, and more stakeholder consultation is necessary, a truncated and simplified example of our use of this model identifies us as a university with a visually strong design collection. From a social perspective and with a utility driver, a non-user stakeholder group with creative characteristics might be assumed to be likely to engage with our collections if their visibility was higher through relevant external content aggregators.

With this in mind, an objective for MoDA might be to measure whether placing collections items on content aggregators (such as VADS and COPAC) helps to create new audiences for MoDA collections. Indicators for this might include the number of referrals from content aggregators – tracking conversions through Google analytics (destination goals: conversions to set of pages) – as well as the number of unique visits to items on external catalogues themselves. Further iterations of this might involve analysing bounce rate as a result of tailoring content on these external sites, for example.

Undertaking the Balanced Value Impact Model as a means of planning such activities has already proved useful, though a lot more work is needed at this stage. We'll be revisiting this case study once that work is underway!



## References:

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## Appendix A. Draft MoDA Balanced Value Impact Model

Perspective	Value Drivers	Rational/definition	Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Defining characteristics	Objective	Assumptions	Indicators	Methods	Data Collection	ACTION PLAN		
											Timeframe	Budget	Roles
Social: the audience, the beneficial stakeholders and wider society have been affected and changed in a beneficial fashion	Education	People are aware that digital resources contribute to their own or to other people's sense of culture, education, knowledge and heritage and therefore value them	Consumers	Students, university teaching staff	Users, influencers	To determine whether adding citations buttons to collections & mapping collections to courses will increase the number of digital resources used within university teaching or referenced in/ by student work	Students are aware/ have access to the website/ moodle (other sources?) and/ or students would cite MoDA collections more if it was made easier	Actual use of citation buttons (numerical) & increase in referrals from webpages containing linked resource information	Add citation button to collections records in catalogue, map collections to courses and make available to students and staff (our website, moodle, i-pad catalogue in study room?)	Tracking conversions through Google analytics (destination goals: conversions to set of pages, and event goals: downloads of information - pdfs?) hits on citation button from collections records	October 2015 - January 2016 (set-up) January 2015 - October 2016 (analysis)	10 days of staff time (map resources, set-up analytics and track)	Citation button: CM. Mapping: C & CM in conjunction with new CA?
	Community	People benefit from the experience of being part of a community that is afforded by the digital resource	Partners and Collaborators	Personal and professional researchers (writers, authors, artists, students)	Users, influencers	To measure of a positive change in the community of interest around MoDA's social media channels and any correlation to sharing of MoDA's digital resources through those channels	Access to and use of social media, particularly Twitter	Increase number of friends and followers, retweets and shares or direct links to the collections	Social media campaign around Hasler collection prior to book launch to be reiterated with other collections if successful	See Culture 24 Lets Get Real project plan	August - September 2015 (set-up and analysis) October - December 2015 (second iteration)	C.£3,000 project fee, C. 10 days staff time	See Culture 24 Lets Get Real project plan
	Utility	The audience value the utility afforded through use of the digital resources now or sometime in the future	Producers and creatives	Personal and professional researchers (writers, authors and artists)	Non-users, influencers	To measure whether placing collections items on content aggregators (such as VADS and COPAC) helps to create new audiences for MoDA collections	That this potential audience of non-users will be interested in MoDA's collections and use content aggregators (VADS)	Increased number of referrals from well managed content aggregators	Audit and tidy up existing external catalogue info (e.g. Archives Hub) and add content to VADS and COPAC.	Initially, number of unique visits to items on external catalogues (can eventually analyse bounce rate as a result of tailored content etc...) & tracking conversions through Google analytics (destination goals: conversions to set of pages)	August - December 2015 (set-up) January - October 2016 (analysis)	£1,368 plus 5 days staff time (selection, export, copy writing)	Initial selection planning: HC, C & CM, copy writing C, export and mapping CM, additional digitizing and cataloguing CM, CA & P)
Economic: the activity is demonstrating economic benefits to the organisation or to society	Utility	The audience value the utility afforded through use of the digital resources now or sometime in the future	Consumers	Copyright holders & licensees	Users, funders	To measure whether adding licensing options/ links to collections records increases requests from licensees	Licensees use the website to determine interest in the first instance (visibility issues?)	Increase in overall licensing requests/ number of referrals from website	Add licensing buttons/ links to collections records	Tracking conversions through Google analytics (destination goals: conversions to set of pages, and event goals: downloads of information - pdfs of costs?)	August - October 2015 (set up) October 2015 - October 2016 (analysis)	C. 2 days staff time during web build	CM: catalogue and analytics set-up, BM: data monitoring
	Existence or prestige	People derive value and benefit from knowing that a digital resource is cherished by persons living inside and outside their community. This value exists whether the resource is personally used or not	Consumers, Paymasters	Students, university management	Users, funders	To measure whether crowdfunding fosters a sense of pride with/ enjoyment of the collections	That students would be interested in collections related gifts for themselves or friends or family	Number of subscribers/ purchasers from student body	Set up Katagami colouring book through kickstarter and market publication with discount to students	Number of purchasers from website using student id/ discount code	August 2015 (campaign planning), September 2015 (book production), October 2015 - June 2016 (general sale) October 2015 - 2016 (analysis)	5 days staff time (planning and scoping), 10 days of staff time (photography), 3-4 days staff time (design), print costs (tbc, but funded by campaign)	CM & P: scoping and set up, CM, C & P: copywriting & research, CM & P: design, tbc: printing
Innovation: the digital resource is enabling innovation which is supporting the social and economic benefits accrued	Utility	The audience value the utility afforded through use of the digital resources now or sometime in the future	Consumers	Copyright holders & licensees	Users, funders	To measure whether adding licensing options/links to collections records increases requests from licensees	Licensees use the website to determine interest in the first instance (visibility)	Increase in overall licensing requests/ number of referrals from website	Add licensing buttons/ links to collections records	Tracking conversions through Google analytics (destination goals: conversions to set of pages, and event goals: downloads of information - pdfs of costs?)	August - October 2015 (set up) October 2015 - October 2016 (analysis)	C. 2 days staff time	CM: catalogue and analytics set-up, BM: data monitoring
	Education	People are aware that digital resources contribute to their own or to other people's sense of culture, education, knowledge and heritage and therefore value them	Commentators	Peers (other museums and museum staff), funding bodies	Opinion leaders	Something about the API key...							
Internal: the organisation creating or delivering the digital resources has been benefitted within its internal processes by the innovation demonstrated.	Education	People are aware that digital resources contribute to their own or to other people's sense of culture, education, knowledge and heritage and therefore value them	Consumers	Students, university teaching staff	Users, influencers	Increase the number of digital resources used within university teaching or referenced in student work	Students are aware/ have access to the website	Increase in referrals from webpages containing linked resource information	Map collections to courses and make available to students and staff (our website, moodle, i-pad catalogue in study room?)	Tracking conversions through Google analytics (destination goals: conversions to set of pages, and event goals: downloads of information)	October 2015 - January 2016	10 days of staff time (map resources, set-up analytics and track)	C and CM in conjunction with new CA?
	Utility	The audience value the utility afforded through use of the digital resources now or sometime in the future	Producers and creatives	MoDA staff	Users, champions	Determine what the potential ROI is of clearing items from the collection	That changes to copyright law will not supersede work done	Number of new collections items put into the public domain or determined as MoDA copyright	Write copyright policy and procedural manual for design collections, and use to bulk up-date collections records	Statistical/ ROI calculation?	November - December 2015	5 days staff time, 2 days consultant time (£1,380)	CM plus CC
	Existence or prestige	People derive value and benefit from knowing that a digital resource is cherished by persons living inside and outside their community. This value exists whether the resource is personally used or not	Paymasters	University management	Non-users, funders	Raise the profile of the collections (and use in teaching and learning)	Prospective (and currency) students are reasonably tech savvy and likely to use mobile and tablet devices and social media	Increased traffic to the website and blog	Rebuild the website with integrated blog and projects pages, with responsive design for mobile and tablet access	Comparative google analytics (old website and blog stats vs. new website and integrated blog stats)	Website build, blog & catalogue migration & copy writing August-October 2015, data analysis October 2015-October 2016	C. 20 days staff time	Copywriting all, website build, blog migration and analytics CM
	Inheritance or bequest value	People derive benefit from the inheritance passed down to them and satisfaction from the fact that their descendants and other members of the community will in the future be able to enjoy a digital resource, if they so choose	Consumers, Paymasters	Students, university management	Users, funders	To determine the increase in use of a properly catalogued and accessible design archive	Visibility and ease of access is currently a hindrance to visibility of the Charles Hasler archive	Citations, hits, bounce rate	Migrate Charles Hasler catalogue to Archive Index + database, and link through API key to new website	Destination goals and target bounce rate in Google analytics?	September - November 2015	£5,000 software purchase cost, £? Ongoing support adjustment cost plus 5 days staff time	SSL: software set-up, CM & CA: data migration and cataloguing

