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# AN ANALYSIS OF THE VALUES, IMPACT AND BENEFITS OF DIGITISATION FOR BUILDING NATIONAL IDENTITY

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KING'S College LONDON

Digital Humanities

# An analysis of the values, impact and benefits of digitisation for building national identity

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# Culture is the wealth of nations

## “Knowledge is power... knowledge is also wealth”

**Dr Joseph Phaahla, Deputy Minister**

**South African Ministry of Arts & Culture**

- **Culture is essential to develop information into personalised knowledge**
- **Culture is an essential underpinning for national identity**
- **Memory institutions are essential actors in national cultural identity and digitisation is re-emphasising this role**
- **Cultural values are an important element in economic advancement**

# Culture: Edward Said's View

- **Two distinct meanings:**
  - Cultural practice – *the manifestation of ideas that come into being in aesthetic forms, whose main reason for being is to provide pleasure for those who consume them – e.g. novels, art, music…*
  - Conceptual container – *culture is seen as an abstract tool for refining and elevating a society – it is the container for all that can be defined as the greatest offerings in terms of knowledge, creativity and thought that society can offer.*

*In this mode, culture will become associated with a nation or a state and is a source of identity for the group that identifies with it.*

*Said, E.W. (1994) Culture and Imperialism. 4th Ed. Vintage*

# National Identity – contested space?

- **Anderson posits: national identity is preceded by and grows out of cultural resources and institutions. History, maps, museums, censuses, literature, etc., all contribute to the collective imagining of something called a nation.**

  ***Benedict Anderson (2006) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism***

- **Pickover: "cyberspace is not an uncontested domain. The digital medium contains an ideological base – it is a site of struggle. So, the real challenges are not technological or technical but social and political." Librarians/archivists are thus "agents of social change"**

  ***Pickover, M. (2005) Negotiations, contestations and fabrications: the politics of archives in South Africa ten years after democracy. (from ukzn.ac.za) INNOVATION-PIETERMARITZBURG***

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# A digital library vision for the future

*What the Bodleian Library is doing now, in digitising large portions of our vast collections, is like the human genome project. Thousands of people can evaluate and use creatively the digital resources to discover new ideas and make innovations.*

*Many hands make light work and those many hands will profoundly touch Britain's future capacity for learning, research and innovation.*

**Dr Sarah Thomas, Bodleian Library, Oxford University**

**Much has been achieved, but there are opportunities for much more impact and benefit if we continue to invest in the knowledge economy by digitising the wealth of information resources.**

www.kdcs.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/inspiring.html




Inspiring Research, Inspiring Scholarship

# New areas of research enabled

"Old Bailey Online reaches out to communities, such as family historians, who are keen to find a personal history, reflected in a national story, and in the process re-enforces the workings of a civil society. Digital resources both create a new audience, and reconfigure our analysis to favour the individual."

Professor Tim Hitchcock, University of Hertfordshire

"Digitised resources allow me to discover the hidden lives of disabled people, who have not traditionally left records of their lives. I have found disability was discussed by many writers in the Eighteenth Century and that disabled men and women played an important role in the social life of the time."

Dr David Turner, Swansea University

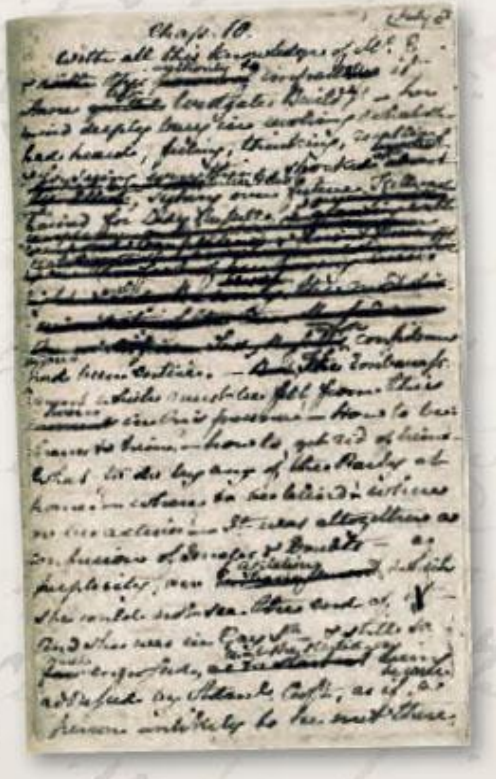
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# Effective, efficient and world leading

*The **Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts Digital Edition** offers unprecedented opportunities for new scholarship, particularly in exploring the creative laboratory of her novels, so far an underexamined area of Austen studies. It also makes the manuscript sources freely available to the wider public.*

**Professor Kathryn Sutherland, Oxford University**



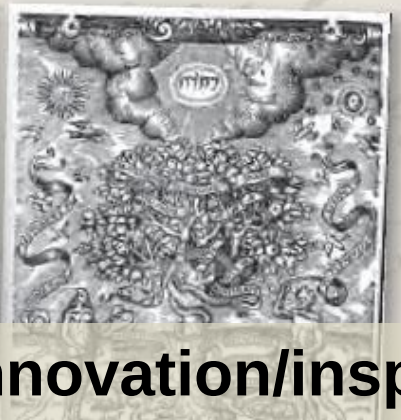


*__Early English Books Online__ itself has transformed research into early English literature. It has democratised the research process by extending this facility to individuals and institutions without easy access to specialist libraries.*

**Dr Sarah Carpenter, University of Edinburgh**







**www.kdcs.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/inspiring.html**

# Bestowing economic & community benefits

**Glasgow Museum's Collection is the city's biggest single fiscal asset valued at £1.4 billion. It contains around 1.2 million objects. On average only 2% of the collection is exhibited to the public at any one time. Digital access is opening up further access to these collections.**

**A major impact sought is to increase self-confidence in the populace – to feel less marginalised, less insignificant, less unheard. Increased feelings of self-worth through interaction with the Museums will spill over into every aspect of their lives.**






***Digitised content & JISC Collections negotiations save the sector ~£43 million per year***

**www.kdcs.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/inspiring.html**

# Digitising Britain for our Digital Futures

**We are sitting on a goldmine of content which should be within a coherent UK national digital strategy. To support Digital Britain we need to deliver a critical mass of digital content.**

**Access... ought to be the right of every citizen, every household, every child, every school and public library, universities and business. That's a vision worth delivering on.**

**Dame Lynne Brindley, The British Library**

# The role of public repositories: My View

- **My view:**

  ***A place where a community nourishes its memory and its imagination – where it connects with the past and invents its future.***



- **Purpose of digitisation:**

  **To educate, enlighten and entertain:**

  **to promote and disseminate and to preserve culture**

# 5 modes of cultural value

## Option Value

- People value the possibility of enjoying the digitised resources and the resultant research outputs created through the endeavours of academics and HE now or sometime in the future.

## Prestige Value

- People derive utility from knowing that a digitised resource, HE institution or its research, is cherished by persons living inside and outside their community.

## Education Value

- People are aware that digitised resources contribute to their own or to other people's sense of culture, education, knowledge and heritage and therefore value it.

## Existence Value

- People benefit from knowing that a digital resource exists but do not personally use it.

## Bequest Value

- People derive satisfaction from the fact that their descendents and other members of the community will in the future be able to enjoy a digitised resource if they choose to.

# Is value in the wine, the glass or the drinking?

