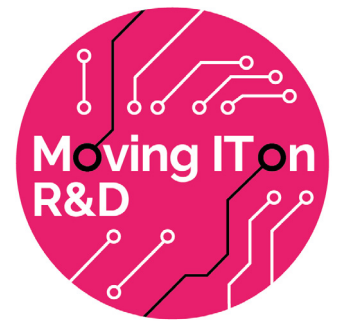




Moving IT On

Case Study



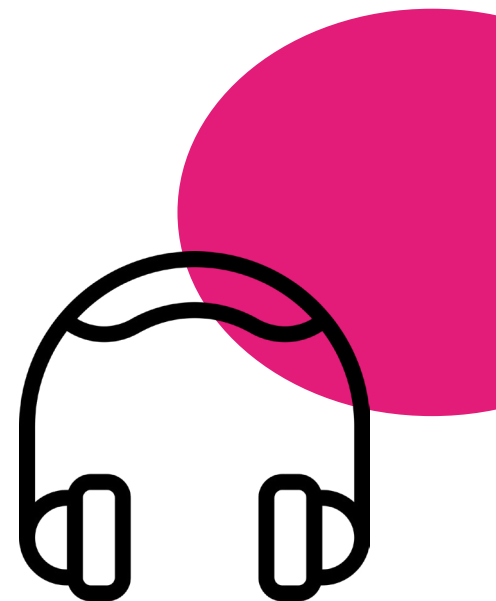
The Sainsbury Centre

About us

The Sainsbury Centre is home to a collection of modern art and objects from across the globe, donated to the UEA in the 1970s. The unconventional display of artefacts in a comfortable, flexible, open-plan gallery promotes exploration. Working with Norman Foster, the Sainsburys' created a space in which our experience of art centres on the aesthetic, which we expand with curiosity, dialogue, and creative response. Most works can be viewed in the round, and making connections between those from different times and places is encouraged. This vision still inspires the Learning Programme today.

R&D objectives - intended outcomes/research

Closing the Centre during the pandemic created an opportunity to reflect on the incredibly popular artist-led programme. We experimented with new ways to enable schools to connect with our collections, and created a virtual reality (VR) gallery which allows online exploration of the displays. For the MiO project, our objective was to work closely with primary schools to test how the VR could be used alongside a school visit, to extend and enhance engagement with the collections, and consider further development of digital resources.



The process - what did you do

We worked with two KS2 teachers at different schools to incorporate the digital resources into pre-designed schemes of work to be delivered across several weeks. Both identified art topics which were a good fit for the Sainsbury Collections, but which also linked to History and Geography subjects, one on West Africa, and the other on pottery from Central and South America. We planned two digital experiences for each school, prior to a visit to the Centre. Both had artist-led virtual tours, one followed this with independent exploration of the resources, and we delivered a practical session in school for the other. We created new interactive digital models and 3D printed objects to enhance the students' experience.

What worked well/what was the impact

The MiO project has enabled us to build a variety of strong working relationships which I hope to sustain. The opportunity to collaborate closely with teachers over an extended period was especially valuable, enabling me to develop my understanding of the current climate in schools, and how the Sainsbury Centre can support them. It was wonderful to see the confidence of the children as they arrived at the Centre, their excitement on entering the galleries, and to hear them express their familiarity with the collections. We created a number of additional digital resources which we believe have potential to enrich our work with schools in the long term.

What didn't

We encountered a number of challenges during the project, from technical issues around accessing Zoom in school and difficulties 3D printing on the right scale, to teacher strikes and staff sickness. I found it frustrating that dialogue with the students was more difficult than I had anticipated in online sessions. The time constraints of the project combined with the busy schedules of most of the contributors also presented problems.

3 tips to share with others

1. Ensure all contributors participate in planning meetings and/or an exchange of emails to share ideas and references. Encourage open and honest discussion to develop and agree project aims and objectives.
2. Create opportunities for all parties to play with and familiarise themselves with new resources, on different devices and in different locations, as even in the context of a collaborative R&D project, it is advantageous to have some prior experience of your tools.
3. Protect time for reflection and evaluation, both individually and collaboratively.

