Gardens & Museums IT

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Welcome

Welcome to the 17th, and Spring 2024 Edition of the Gardens & Museums IT Newsletter

I think it's safe to say that Spring sprung, and if not fully sprung, it is springing in the right direction towards longer days, better weather, and the respective positivity that this brings!

As a team, we're very happy to see the end of what has been a pretty tough Winter period. During this time illness has heavily impacted us at points, with Covid providing a harsh reminder that it is still very much with us - and it's quite poignant to be writing this almost 4 years to the day when we went into Lockdown! A massive thank you to all in the team who have worked so hard to keep on top of things and maintain our support standards during this tough Winter period - It's greatly appreciated.

On a more positive note, we've had the privilege of being involved in some very interesting AV projects, and although quite intense at times, they have, and continue to be enjoyable. The AV requests and projects have needed the collective efforts, and varying skills within the team to progress and action. I've delved in to this a little deeper within the newsletter to show the varied challenges we've faced, but also the collective things achieved, and how being involved in such great innovations and projects is something which we greatly enjoy and get a lot out of.

And on the subject of varying skills, we've been finding ourselves approached from various parts of the Gardens & Museums and the University for advice and information on other non-specific IT areas. With colleagues looking to us to offer guidance, and detail our ways of working, and the reasons for our approach and the successes that these have achieved. It's incredibly flattering and brings a lot of pride that our journey and successes have been so widely acknowledged, and that you have such a level of trust in us and in what we do, and how we do it.

And with that please read on for what we've been working on and what's on the horizon.

Carl

What's been going on? And what's coming?

WiFi Project

Phase 1 of the Wi-Fi Improvement project at the Museum of Natural History has now completed, which leaves the Ashmolean as the only outstanding museum in this project. Preparatory work is currently taking place within the Ashmolean Museum, with implementation due to commence towards the end of Spring and early Summer. Once Phase 1 is complete at the Ashmolean, the second phase will commence, which is focussed on those areas which do not currently have but require Wi-Fi service.

Information Security - British Library

Many of you will be aware of the recent Cyber Security Incident which occurred at the British Library. And as is the case with any instance in life where this is a similarity or affinity, the impact feels incredibly real and tangible, and many have approached us with their concerns, which we certainly empathise with.

The British Library have made available a significant document outlining how the incident occurred, the timeline of events, the impact, and what has been done to recover, in view to hopefully helping other entities avoid such a scenario. The document itself is very pertinent, and reading in places is quite difficult, but there is a section which outlines the lessons that the British Library learned from the attack.

Jona and I are currently in the midst of writing a response to the incident to be shared with Directors and Heads of Operations. This document will focus on the British Libraries lessons learned, and the Gardens & Museums current Information Security status against these, and areas that need attention, and our guidance on what this attention may be, in view to establishing a collaborative, collective and joined up approach to Information and Cyber Security. We hope to provide further information on this in the next newsletter.

New Starters & Leavers

There have been a number of new Starters within the Gardens & Museums, and equally a number of leavers. Both scenarios do require significant planning to ensure a smooth transition in to, or away from the Gardens & Museums.

Throughout the last few months, we have seen mixed results with this, but we advise strongly to make yourself familiar with the New Starter and Leavers documents on our website, as they do outline and give information on the various processes and requests that are needed, and in turn can be crucial to a smooth change. The documents are available here: https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/article/documents .

Adobe Creative Cloud Licence Audit

The Adobe Creative Cloud Licence Audit has been going on during January, February and March, and is almost complete. Thank you to those who have responded to this. After Easter I will be sending final reminder emails to those who have yet to respond - please do keep an eye out for these emails and do reply if you would like to retain your Adobe access.

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Sustainable Printing

As mentioned in the Winter Newsletter we began the process of testing an Epson Printer which uses heat-free technology, to test and assess its running costs and environmental impact against an existing Museum Printer.

This trial completed earlier this month and was wholly successful, with the printer using less energy, whilst also being quicker to print. A full report has been issued by the company who supported this mini-project, so if you're looking at your current print arrangements and would like to discuss this option please do reach out.

IT Services Managed Desktop (CONNECT) Replacement Cycle Project

Discussions continue with IT Services regards the process and timeline for the replacement of the older CONNECT computers (laptops and desktops) across the Gardens & Museums. One element which is causing a delay in progress is the number of CONNECT devices which are currently in use surpassing expected and agreed numbers. To assist with this, we are asking all departments to check and let us know if you have any CONNECT computers which are no longer in use or required, so that we can organise their return and reduce our total numbers. If you are aware of any such machines, please do reach out to discuss.

Apple & Windows Standard Computing Options

Throughout the year we receive various requests for advice on the purchase of computer equipment and associated peripherals. To aid this process we have created documents, which will be regularly updated, outlining the various options available. There is a Windows document and an Apple document which are available to view here: https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/article/documents .

So, if looking to get a new computer please do look at these options as a first step, and pricing information can be easily given once a machine is selected, and specification adjustments can be made if required.

Friendly WiFi Certification

With thanks to Rachel Johns at the Ashmolean we've recently been discussing obtaining Friendly WiFi Certfication for the Public WiFi Service in use across GLAM. We're quite early in the process, but as Friendly Wifi are a partner of our Public WiFi service provider WiFiSpark, signs are looking good towards being able to apply this to the existing service.

This is very exciting, and as both a Parent and a School Govenor, the appeal of this potential certification and the assurances that it offers are incredible. If you would like to know more about Friendly WiFi please take a look here: https://www.friendlywifi.com/ . And we will update on our progress in the next newsletter.

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Collections Teaching and Research Centre (CTRC)

As most of you are aware the Collections Teaching and Research Centre (CTRC) has been formally handed over, and as part of this we are finalising the use of the space through the provision of Network, WiFi and AV. Jona has been working tirelessly with the AV suppliers, IT Services and other contractors to make this possible, so a massive thanks to his continued endeavour and calmness in handling this.

Galaxy CONNECT

The Commercial Systems Team (Helen, Freya and Stuart) have been incredibly busy over the last few months, with particular highlights being the annual Galaxy Upgrade, which went incredibly smoothly as a result of the hours and hours of preparation into this once-a-year process. And excitingly after much work behind the scenes, the team have recently introduced a new service improvement called Galaxy CONNECT (not to be confused with IT Services CONNECT) which has allowed the Ashmolean "Bruegel to Rubens" exhibition tickets to be available on GetYourGuide.

Galaxy CONNECT allows GLAM to work with third parties such as GetYourGuide, Expedia and Tripadvisor to sell event tickets through third-party websites. This development opens up new avenues for marketing, and for different segments of visitors to explore our exhibitions, events and tours. Over the next few months this will be expanded this across GLAM, from Bodleian's walking tours to Botanic Garden admission tickets.

IT Services Service Desk shadowing

Recently we were joined for the day by two members (Andrew and Ben) of the IT Services Service Desk Team, in view to gaining an insight to what we do, how we work and what it is like to be in our locations supporting our colleagues in person and facing the onsite challenges of being "local IT".

It was an entertaining day, that started with a meeting to discuss some of the more strategic aspects of what we do, and sharing our approach, followed by a tour of some of the areas where projects are currently being carried out - this saw us face a broken Gallery Interactive and issues with the Public WiFi service. Finally, they joined us to great success at the Open Session we were holding that afternoon.

Due to the success of the day, and the mutual gains, we're looking to repeat this again to further enhance our relationships and offer IT Services further opportunities to understand what we do and why, whilst also giving them the chance to offer help in a manner where opportunities do not currently exist for them.

Artifax

There is an ongoing project to investigate Artifax, which is used for space booking and space planning activities at the Ashmolean, and its potential use across the Gardens & Museums. As part of this we are involved in discussions as to how oversite and ownership of the service can be suitably applied across the Gardens & Museums and the service model that this will take. Please watch out for updates on this as the project progresses.

AV, AV, AV...

As mentioned on the front page throughout the Winter period, and now into Spring, we've been incredibly busy with a variety of exciting and challenging (in equal-parts) Audio-Visual related activities.

Now this isn't a complete account of these activities, but does provide information on some of the higher-level or more impactful instances or events which have recently taken place, or are currently progressing across the Gardens & Museums, and our parts in this.

Something we're seeing quite regularly, and not just with AV, is the variety of skills (both technical and non-technical) which are needed to service the demands of AV and deliver against the various and often nuanced requirements.

Lewis Evans Display - History of Science Museum

The Lewis Evans Exhibition at the History of Science Museum, is the the most involved we've been in any exhibition, and the requirements truly highlighted the differences in resources that are available across the locations we work.

From the initial advising and quoting on equipment for the interactive aspects; to helping establish back-up plans if the delivery of donated touch-screens displays didn't come to fruition; to the development of the interactive computers; to setting up the touchscreen displays (including the breaking them out of the wooden crates that they were delivered in!) and finally the installation itself, whilst overcoming some interesting electrical challenges.

The results are incredible (massive congratulations to all involved), and Calum and I are really thankful to Andrea and Sumner for involving us in such an amazing project - we truly enjoyed every part of it!

Lecture Theatre & Seminar Room Improvements - Pitt Rivers Museum

We are currently working with Kathy at the Pitt Rivers Museum and AV partner Reflex on a technical review of the Audio-Visual systems that are in place in both the Pitt Rivers Museum Seminar Room and Lecture Theatre.

The aim of this activity is to identify areas for improvement, including enhanced equipment and performance, simplified connectivity and an improved user experience.

We are currently awaiting the proposed costs from the recent inspection and will update as this project progresses.

AV, AV, AV...

Fairwater & Megalosaurus Exhibitions - Museum of Natural History

Calum has recently spent some time at the Museum of Natural History assisting with both the Fairwater and Megalosaurus Exhibitions.

In respect to Fairwater Calum actively assisted in the connection between the water pump and the gallery interactive. And having seen the queues gathering around this on the weekends it's obvious how much of a popular attraction that this is!

Regards the Megalosaurus Exhibition, Calum's role wasn't so much in provisioning the new exhibit, but in removing the Tree of Life Interactive, which to reassure is safe and will be returned to service once the Megalosaurus Exhibition finishes.
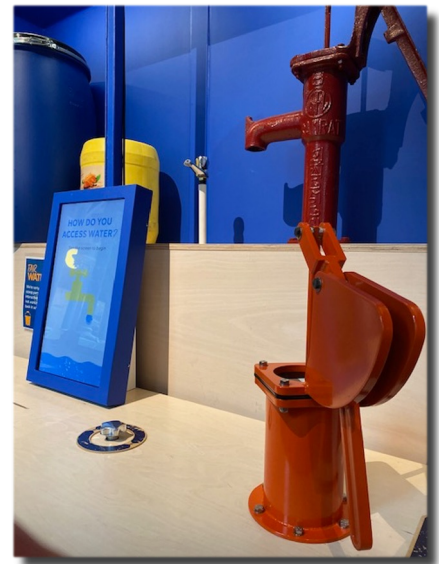
Rome Gallery - Ashmolean Museum

Rome and Italy are quite important places to me - I got engaged to my wife in Rome, and enjoyed my Honeymoon (luna de miel) in Venice, Florence and Sorrento. So, the opportunity to be involved in the Rome Gallery Project at the Ashmolean was one I jumped at! Equally during my time at the Ashmolean I've had a number of wonderful conversations with Paul Roberts about Rome and Pompei, so I'm delighted to be part of something which will hopefully capture his spirit, personality and love of Rome.

The project itself is in the planning stage, but has some innovative ideas for how technology can be used to bring the space to life - please keep your eyes and ears out for news on this exciting development.
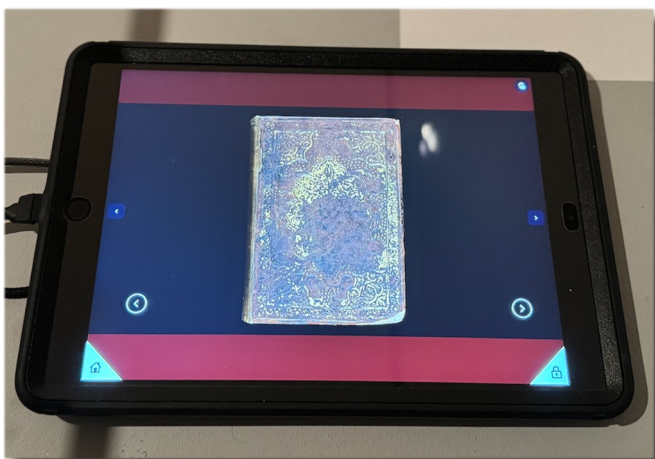
Bruegels to Reuben Exhibition - Ashmolean Museum

When we were initially approached by Anne and Tegan regards the Bruegels to Reuben Exhibition in December, and subsequently met to discuss in January, I remember thinking how far away March seemed. But actually, the time has gone very quickly, and the event certainly crept up on us. I'm very happy to say that thanks to some tremendous work and collaboration between Tegan and Amanda the iPad Gallery Interactives were working and installed ready for opening.

Upcoming University Changes

On occasion there are changes or removal of services, and even the retirement of applications of systems which are outside the control of our team, and also the University, and these can come about for a variety of reasons.

Such instances aren't a regular occurrence, but sadly we've seen 3 recent developments which will affect us, and one of which is particularly impactful to many within the University.

Authentication Application: Twilo Authy - Zoho OneAuth

The Twilo Authy Authentication Application recently reached the end of its life and was removed from service, causing disruption to those who utilised this as their Multi-Factor Authentication Method.

Fortunately, an alternative application has been established - with all the relevant security checks having taken place centrally - which is Zoho OneAuth.

For those who wish to know more about Zoho OneAuth, information is available here: https://www.zoho.com/accounts/oneauth/ .

And setup instructions can be found here: https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/how-to-use-mfa#tab-4717116 .

And if looking to review or change your current MFA authentication method, all the available options are detailed here: https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/how-to-use-mfa#tab-3738376 .

LinkedIn Learning

One change which has perhaps gone under the radar is that he University's subscription to LinkedIn Learning will sadly be coming to an end in August 2024.

https://skills.it.ox.ac.uk/linkedin-learning

This is a resource that I'll personally be sad to see leave us, and one which I, and the Gardens & Museums IT Team have greatly benefited from over the last few years. So, please do take a look at LinkedIn Learning whilst it is available to you and make use of this training resource in the remaining months.

As a note CoSy will continue to be available and will be providing other training courses to you past August 2024: https://skills.it.ox.ac.uk/cosy .

Upcoming University Changes

OneDrive for Business Storage Quota Reduction

Perhaps the most impactful change that has recently occurred is the news that the allowance that we each have in our Microsoft 365 accounts (OneDrive for Business) is being reduced from 5TB to 100GB.

This isn't something that will affect us all, and those impacted have been directly contacted, but for our colleagues in research positions, or who handle large data sets this is of particular concern, and this concern is felt throughout the University. As such regular conversations are taking place to identify alternative options for data storage and in establishing a collective University wide response to this wide-reaching change.

After the most recent meeting a number of proposed options were established and are detailed below. We would advise investigating the options to see if they are suitable for you, and perhaps a better solution than OneDrive. And if not, and as this is a changing situation with time for further changes to take place, to please remain calm whilst further investigations and conversations take place. And please be reassured we will update you with any developments as and when we know more.

1. Oxford University Research File Service (RFS)

The Research File Service, otherwise known as RFS is a University of Oxford approved and provided storage solution for active research data, allowing between 100GB and 20TB of storage allocation per research project.

The service was set up in March 2023, with its use growing steadily alongside the implementation of service improvements.

Further information on RFS, including how to request storage and configure access, can be found on the IT Services Research File Service webpages: https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/rfs .

2. CONNECT File Share

If you are an IT Services Managed Windows CONNECT user, you can request additional storage within the provision. Though the amount of space available is not the same level as RFS, this could be a simple and straightforward means of storing your data in an existing solution. Please do reach out via it@museums.ox.ac.uk to discuss.

3. Increase Storage Quota for OneDrive for Business Service Request

For a short period of time whilst investigations take place, one can request an extension for increased OneDrive for Business Storage Quota. For those who have been contacted we advise completing this Service Request in order to afford the University full visibility of those impacted, and suitable time to make changes if needed. The Service Request is available from this page: https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/onedrive-for-business-faq#collapse2520841 .

GMIT Open Sessions – Spring 2024

The Gardens & Museums IT Open Sessions go from strength to strength, with the news of the success and benefits of such spreading within the Gardens & Museums, and now into the wider University.

Those of you who attended the last Open Session (March 6th at the Ashmolean), would have experienced one of the benefits of the news spreading and interest in this, with Andrew and Ben from the Central IT Services Service Desk joining us, in order to experience the open session, and to be part of this. From my perspective it was great to have extra hands available to assist with the wide-ranging queries that we received. And both Andrew and Ben expressed an appreciation and gratitude at being involved, and for having the opportunity to be able to meet colleagues and offer support on a face-to-face basis.

And with this in mind, I'm excited to say that I'm currently working with the Service Desk to establish a means that this can become a regular occurrence, and we hope to have continued Service Desk presence at ongoing Open Sessions.

The details for the IT Open Sessions for April, May and June can be found below. Please do make a note of the dates, times and locations (though I will send regular email reminders) and we look forward to seeing those who can attend there.

Date	Location	Time
Wednesday 10th April	Annexe – Room 3 Museum of Natural History	3.00PM – 4.30PM
Wednesday 8th May	Headley Lecture Theatre Ashmolean Museum	9.00AM – 10.30AM
Wednesday 5th June	Seminar Room History of Science Museum	1.00PM – 2.30PM

The sessions will offer an opportunity….

- To meet us face-to-face in an open forum to discuss any matter.
- To discuss or get advice on any IT issues or problems which you may have, whether big or small.
- To discuss any upcoming projects or innovations within your respective departments and location.
- For new members of staff to meet with us and receive an overview of IT within the University and the Gardens & Museums.
- To talk through any general IT matter.

Frameless - Team Away Day

Once a year we endeavour to go on a team away day as a means to escape the daily grind and to reconnect as a team, whilst discussing our strategy and future plans. The only condition to this is going somewhere that is linked to providing IT services within heritage and culture.

Over the years we've had the opportunity to visit Bletchley Park and the Natural History Museum in London. Now, a certain pandemic impacted the regularity of these trips, but in January this year, and after much organisation and to much excitement, we returned to London to visit Frameless - London's Immersive Art Gallery!

Frameless is quite unique in its appeal and has received significant notoriety of late due to how it presents famous pieces of art and allows the visitor to engage with them in a particularly special manner. Not only does it bring the art to life, but it also allows you to truly be part of it, which is an experience which I can't really describe and suggest if you have an interest in Art, and particularly how it can be translated in our digital world, then please do visit.

Frameless - Team Away Day

We were fortunate to be able to be personally shown around by Simon Kentish, the Chief Technical Officer, and to receive an inside view on the Frameless journey, their innovative approach to the presentation of art and crucially their drive to continually improve what they do and how they do it. Seeing what they have achieved, and in such an incredibly short period of time is phenomenal, and truly inspirational.

I've shared some photos of the day, but they really don't do justice to the Gallery, so if you are at all interested, please do have a look at the Frameless Website (https://frameless.com/) or feel free to reach out and I'll happily talk to you more about our day and the experience we had - or even better if you get the opportunity do go and see for yourself!

Service & Support Statistics –
# 1st November 2023 to 31st January 2024

Quarter 2 of the 2023 to 2024 Academic Year was mixed when it came to support load and the number of requests we received, with both November being busy, but December being somewhat quieter. And as a collective period, the 1016 requests was the lowest number that we have received in some time. An influencing factor, and likely cause for the reduced numbers is the recent implementation of many preventative measures, which have identified issues and allowed a fix before they become impactful.

Requests Received	Requests Resolved	Avg. Days to Respond	Avg. Days to Resolve
1016	**1007**	**0.2**	**3.0**
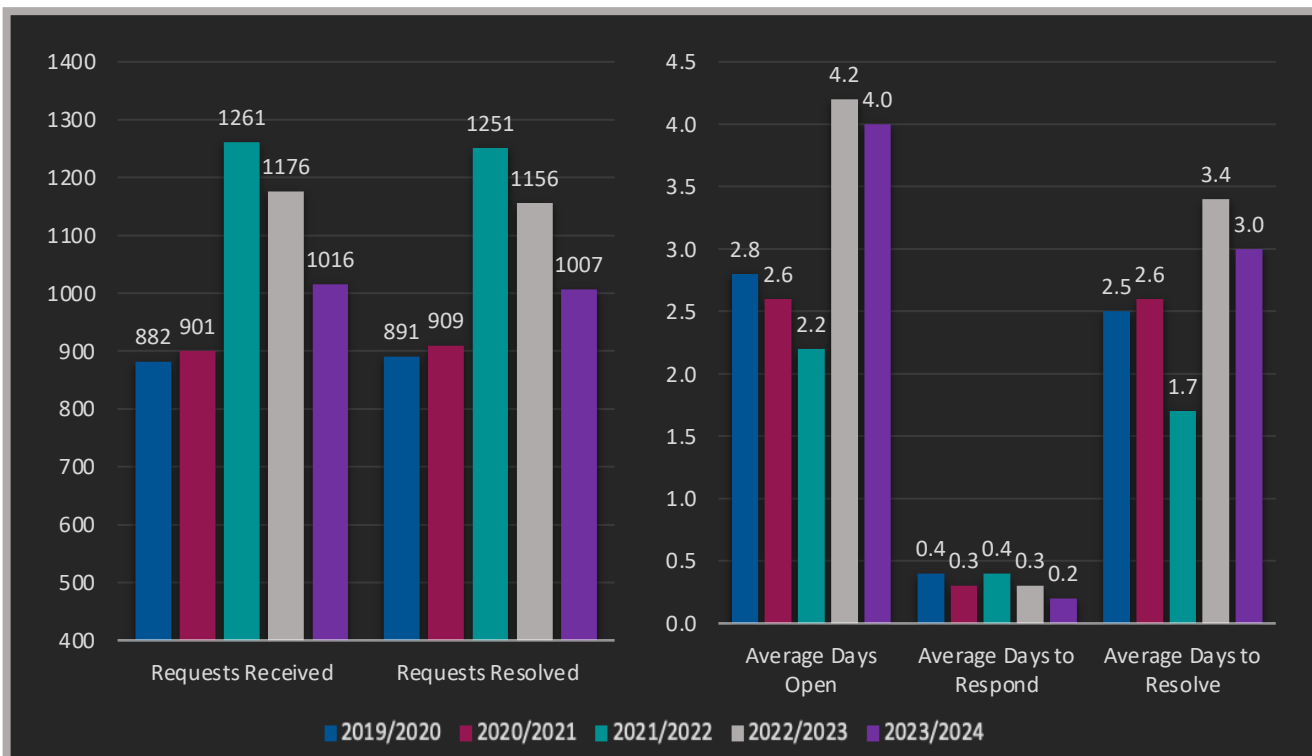
Location	Requests	Percentage
Ashmolean Museum	**373**	**37%**
Museum of Natural History	**118**	**12%**
Pitt Rivers Museum	**125**	**12%**
History of Science Museum	**65**	**6%**
Botanic Gardens & Arboretum	**48**	**5%**
GLAM Divisional Office	**61**	**6%**
Bodleian Libraries	**19**	**2%**
All sites - requests and activities which benefit or impact all locations	**207**	**20%**

2023/2024 Gardens & Museums IT Roadmap