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Making the Business Case for Open Access

How the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery adopted an Open Access Strategy for digital collections and new business models

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About the GLAM-E Lab

The GLAM-E Lab is a joint initiative between the Centre for Science, Culture and the Law at the University of Exeter and the Engelberg Center on Innovation Law & Policy at New York University Law School to work with smaller and less well-resourced UK and US cultural institutions and community organisations to build open access capacity and expertise.

The GLAM-E Lab provides legal counsel to GLAM institutions and cultural organisations as they develop open access programs. The solutions created are then integrated into model internal policies and external terms of service that can be adopted by others. The goal of this approach is to use lessons learned from directly representing individual institutions to create self-serve model policies that work "off the shelf" for as many organisations as possible. We supplement these model policies with additional guides and resources to address common challenges.

About the Royal Albert Memorial Museum

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM) is a museum and art gallery in Exeter, UK, with significant and diverse collections of natural sciences, ethnography, fine and decorative art, costume, social history and local and overseas archaeology. Founded in1868, RAMM now holds a collection of over a million items, of which a small percentage is on permanent public display. Funded by the AHRC, RAMM's partnership with the GLAM-E Lab focuses on how to design and implement a robust open access strategy for its diverse range of collections.

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Executive Summary

This White Paper was written by the GLAM-E Lab and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM) to share their experience of making the business case for open access and organising its implementation.

In January 2023, RAMM began publishing images to Wikimedia Commons using the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication. This enabled the researchers to track engagement data and impact, test workflows and develop a report on the business case for open access for Exeter City Council (ECC). ECC unanimously approved the strategy in November 2023. RAMM officially announced its new Open Access Strategy at the start of 2024.

RAMM's move to open was motivated by many goals. These ranged from aligning RAMM's policies with copyright law and funding obligations, to improving staff efficiency and collections visibility, to joining the growing open GLAM movement (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums). RAMM was particularly interested in exploring the new business models and programming enabled by open licensing. The feeling was that an open access strategy would better serve RAMM's stakeholders, from key national funders of the cultural sector, to locals such as residents, tourists, schools, historical societies, creators and businesses. It could also serve the museum by diversifying income streams to be more sustainable and resilient.

The GLAM-E Lab and RAMM designed a research-led pathway informed by these goals, the museum's capacity and its needs. This involved:

- **Internal research**, including a review of the existing licensing system, its costs, the income produced and request types serviced, as well as RAMM's technical, financial and practical capacities to support an open access programme
- **External research** to identify similarly-situated peers who had successfully implemented open access at their organisations—and how
- **A pilot release** of 63 public domain artworks of historical places in and around Exeter, which were uploaded Wikimedia Commons and used to track public engagement and impact
- **Feedback and revision**, by engaging with RAMM and ECC staff to review the pilot workflows and findings for the final open access strategy and develop the business case submission to Exeter City Council
- **Rollout** of RAMM's Open Access Strategy across collections, as well as updating the website and publicly announcing it

The main findings include:

- **Significant impact can be achieved from even a small set of images.** In one year, RAMM's 63 pilot images received over 6.16 million views. At least 41 were added to 65 Wikipedia articles in 7 different languages. Website referrals from Wikimedia platforms accounted for up to 5% of RAMM's online collections and the South West Collections Explorer. The images appeared on history websites for children, study guides, other educational materials and websites for artists. A local business emailed RAMM with gratitude for releasing the images they used in Exeter tours.

- **Redirecting the investment in licensing to open access programming brings significant net gains.** After a long period of stagnation, RAMM had received just £2,933 in licensing income from 2023-24, with half of that figure coming through Bridgeman Images. Only 1-in-5 direct requests produced income based on fees ranging from £30-£50. These were primarily for research or personal use of digitised public domain artworks from researchers and educators who required images for publications, presentations and career advancement. While RAMM expects to see an initial decline in licensing income, it sees this equity-focused move as a significant gain. RAMM also expects to see a significant increase in educational use, research and attention to the collection, as well as visitors online and at the museum, leading to greater overall income from other revenue sources.
- **Open access delivers on an organisation's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.** RAMM's research revealed 80% of potential licensees abandoned their request or declined to pay after learning the fee amount. Many could not afford it. Because UK law requires public sector bodies to charge non-discriminatory fees based on the licence type, rather than an individual's capacity to pay, this raised a range of equity concerns. RAMM consulted with other open access organisations which also found copyright claims and licensing fees had prevented individuals and communities from using images relevant to their own histories and heritage.
- **Organisations can continue to generate income through images and more diverse revenue sources.** RAMM will continue to rely on Bridgeman Images for high-resolution licensing services. Yet studies show that even when CC0 images are released at high quality, securing exclusivity through copyright or contract law is not necessary to generate income through digital collections. In addition to increased grant funding, public donations, ticketing, and new photography requests, commercialisation can emerge through brand licensing, commercial partnerships, print-on-demand orders, and new products in the gift shop.
- **Open access helps simplify rights management processes in the long run.** Funders are increasingly adopting open licensing requirements. RAMM used UK funders' open licensing requirements to structure the Open Access Strategy for ease of compliance in the future and to advertise to potential partners that RAMM's content and policies already align and support open access goals. A harmonised approach reduces the resources required to manage rights information, respond to requests and update legacy data, collections and datasets with new statements.
- **An open access strategy can cost as little or as much as an organisation can afford.** RAMM used free platforms and tools like Wikimedia Commons, Pattypan and Adobe Bridge to minimise costs, freeing up resources for staff labour, rights clearance and file management. RAMM also started small to pilot the work, model workflows and upskill staff, while focusing on no-risk collections.
- **Open access implementation is at its best when everyone feels involved.** From the initial planning stages to the final announcement, the project involved RAMM and ECC staff at various stages to address practical, legal, technical and ethical concerns. As a result, staff were better able to shape the final Open Access Strategy and have greater awareness of its goals and benefits.

The GLAM-E Lab and RAMM project will collect data on this inaugural strategy as part of the research-led work. Recommendations on future changes will be submitted in 2025 for approval by Exeter City Council.

1. Introduction

At the start of 2024, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM) announced a new Open Access Strategy: RAMM is releasing digital surrogates of public domain artworks using the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

Like any major strategic change, RAMM's move to open access required time, careful planning and collective effort to see it through.[1] This White Paper reflects on that process while sharing the lessons learned from RAMM's journey.

1.1. Why open access?

Over the past decade, the global move towards open access to cultural heritage has led almost 1,700 cultural institutions in 55 countries to release their digitised public domain collections for public use.[2] Referred to as 'open GLAM' (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums), this movement enables the public to reuse cultural heritage in the public domain for any purpose, subject at most to conditions requiring attribution or preserving openness.[3] In the UK, this includes nearly 100 organisations that have released more than 11.5 million digital collections for public reuse. Of those, seven have adopted open access as a matter of policy for digitised public domain collections.[4] RAMM increases that number to eight.

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[1] Thank you to Arta Ebrahimpour, our GLAM-E Lab Student Fellow and law student at the University of Exeter who collaborated on aspects of the strategy. Thanks also to Julien Parsons, Michael Weinberg, Mathilde Pavis, Lucy Hinnie, Oswald Essien, and Douglas McCarthy for their comments.
[2] Douglas McCarthy and Andrea Wallace, 'Survey of GLAM Open Access Policy and Practice (Douglas McCarthy and Dr. Andrea Wallace, 2018 to Present)' http://bit.ly/OpenGLAMsurvey.
[3] For example, Creative Commons licences CC BY and CC BY-SA fall within the meaning of 'open', but others that prohibit commercial use (NC) or modification (ND) do not.
[4] Aberdeen Archives, Art Gallery and Museums; Birmingham Museums Trust; National Library Wales; Portable Antiquities Scheme; Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust, Brighton & Hove; Wellcome Collection; York Museums Trust.

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1.2. Why this project?

Funded in 2021 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the GLAM-E Lab and RAMM began investigating how open access strategies can better serve small- to medium-sized cultural organisations and their publics. At base, this included asking: What flexibilities, pressures or barriers impact whether smaller institutions adopt open access? Is image licensing actually profitable once the costs of doing business are accounted for? What new income sources might open up through open licensing? What information do decision makers need to appreciate the potential impact of open access for their organisation? And what new heritage management questions emerge from open access strategies?

Together, RAMM and the GLAM-E Lab set off to look at the mechanics of open access for smaller organisations using an applied research approach. AHRC funding covered the costs, labour and expertise necessary to research and test multiple strategies, including the placement of a full-time research fellow with RAMM to carry out the work. The team also collaborated with the University of Exeter's Digital Humanities Lab on 3D digitisation and involved Exeter law students enrolled in the Cultural Heritage and Digitisation Lab.

In the spirit of open access, all outputs and resources produced by the project are published as CC0 1.0 or CC BY 4.0 on the GLAM-E Lab website, including this White Paper. It is our hope that sharing project outcomes in the spirit of open access will enable more organisations to adopt similar strategies for collections, leading to increased open GLAM participation and greater overall benefits for the public.

1.3. Why this White Paper?

By now, many case studies have documented how cultural institutions have made digital collections available as part of a global movement called 'open GLAM' (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums). Ranging from small community organisations to large national institutions, each open access adoption has had to respond to the organisation's unique needs and pressures.[5] While RAMM's experience has also been unique, it shares a key concern of organisations of any size: how to practically deliver an open access strategy with limited resources and increased expectations to self-generate revenue.

Open access is often seen as a non-monetising activity that drains scarce resources without a return on investment. By contrast, income received through image licensing produces a concrete figure that can be accounted for in a budget, however large or small it may be. Yet numerous studies have reported the majority of institutions are funnelling

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[5] Joris Pekel, 'Democratising the Rijksmuseum' (Europeana 2014); Joris Pekel, 'Making a Big Impact on a Small Budget - How the LSH Museums Shared Their Collection with the World' (Europeana 2015) accessed 13 April 2015; Kristin Kelly, 'Images of Works of Art in Museum Collections: The Experience of Open Access' (The Andrew W Mellon Foundation 2013); Effie Kapsalis, 'The Impact of Open Access on Galleries, Libraries, Museums, & Archives' (Smithsonian Institutes 2016); Antje Schmidt, 'MKG Collection Online: The Potential of Open Museum Collections' (2017) 7 HJK 25.

income back into running the service, which operates at a greater cost than it brings in.[6] The question is how to redirect investments made in image licensing to open access through a strategy which adds value and supports more diverse income streams.

RAMM is a civic museum managed by a local authority, Exeter City Council (ECC); one of 793 local-authority-reliant museums in the UK.[7] It cares for outstanding collections and has a strong commitment to community engagement through listening to diverse voices, nurturing the city's wellbeing, and giving older and younger residents opportunities to be creative and curious.[8] In common with most UK local authorities, ECC has coped with decreasing budgets in recent years and is facing difficult decisions about spending on its museum. Many UK museums have reduced opening hours, curtailed learning and outreach programmes and lost key staff and expertise.[9] It is within the context of a challenging financial outlook that RAMM identified open access as a means to engage and benefit the local population and also to identify alternative revenue streams.

This White Paper gives an overview into the GLAM-E Lab and RAMM's project. Section 2 details the project's goals and research-led approach. Section 3 outlines RAMM's inaugural Open Access Strategy. Section 4 translates RAMM's experience into transferable strategies for any organisation or staff making the business case for open access with tips and workflows. We hope this experience is useful for others considering open access.

Exeter Cathedral after the Blitz, Olive Wharry, 1942, Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, CC0 1.0

[6] Simon Tanner and Marilyn Deegan, *Exploring Charging Models for Digital Cultural Heritage: Digital Image Resource Cost Efficiency and Income Generation Compared with Analog Resources.* (HEDS, University of Hertfordshire 2002) 1; Simon Tanner, 'Reproduction Charging Models & Rights for Policy Digital Images in American Art Museums' (2004) 40; Michelle Light, 'Controlling Goods or Promoting the Public Good: Choices for Special Collections in the Marketplace' (2015) 16 RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage 48; Jean Dryden, 'Copyfraud or Legitimate Concerns? Controlling Further Uses of Online Archival Holdings' (2011) 74 The American Archivist 522.

[7] ONS, Number of museums across Local Authority Districts (LAD) in the United Kingdom, 2024.

[8] RAMM, Annual Review 2022-2023, 2023.

[9] Bethany Rex & Peter Campbell (2022) The impact of austerity measures on local government funding for culture in England, Cultural Trends, 31:1, 23-46.

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2. RAMM's Open Access Journey

Founded in the 1860s, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery is Exeter's largest cultural institution.[10] It holds significant and diverse collections of natural sciences, ethnography, fine and decorative art, costume, social history and local and overseas archaeology. With sixteen permanent galleries and three exhibition spaces, RAMM showcases the natural and cultural history of Exeter, as well as the region's trades, creative industries and the city's global connections. RAMM is able to exhibit around 7,500 objects (0.7%) of its over one million items at a given time. More than 17,500 images are available online to view, with that number growing monthly.

2.1. What was RAMM doing before?

RAMM has a long history of making images available on the website. These images are variable in quality. Most are low-resolution and marked '© Exeter City Council', which was in line with sector standards at the time of production. Given the nature of the collection, the majority of digitised collections include 18th-century drawings, paintings and prints, often of the local area.

Prior to November 2023, RAMM licensed images directly through Exeter City Council staff and Bridgeman Images. RAMM employs no dedicated licensing staff or team. Direct image requests were managed on a case-by-case basis, primarily by an Assistant Curator whose role includes managing RAMM's collections, leading on specified temporary exhibitions and contributing to the interpretation of collections through digital media. Visitors could click 'Licence this image' to be directed to Bridgeman Images, a service for which the RAMM receives half of each licensing sale.

From 2020-2023, RAMM received an average of £2,378 in licensing income. More than half was generated through staff licensing services (~£1,500), with the remainder from Bridgeman Images.

2.2. What prompted RAMM to consider a change?

RAMM's move to open was motivated by many goals. These ranged from aligning RAMM's policies with copyright law and funding obligations on open access, to improving staff efficiency and collections visibility, to joining the growing open GLAM movement.

RAMM was particularly interested in exploring the new business models and programming enabled by open GLAM. The feeling was that an open access strategy would better serve RAMM's stakeholders, from key national funders of the cultural sector, to locals such as residents, tourists, schools, historical societies, creators and businesses. It

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[10] RAMM, Home Page (2024).

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could also serve the museum by diversifying income streams to be more sustainable and resilient.

2.2.1. Goal 1: Comply with copyright law

The initial goal was to ensure that RAMM's practices complied with copyright law. Prior to the harmonisation of EU copyright, the UK recognised copyright in 'original' works which required 'skill, labour and/or judgement'.[11] Following harmonisation in 2006, copyright protection required a work to be original in the sense that it was the 'author's own intellectual creation'.[12] Many cultural institutions felt it was unclear whether a faithful reproduction of a public domain work was sufficiently 'original' to receive new copyright protection. In 2014, the UK Intellectual Property Office published guidance on this uncertainty:

> [A]ccording to the Court of Justice of the European Union which has effect in UK law, copyright can only subsist in subject matter that is original in the sense that it is the author's own 'intellectual creation'. Given this criteria, it seems unlikely that what is merely a retouched, digitised image of an older artwork can be considered as 'original'. This is because there will generally be minimal scope for a creator to exercise free and creative choices if their aim is to simply make a faithful reproduction of an existing work.[13]

In December 2023, the UK Court of Appeal reinforced this conclusion that a work must be the 'author's own intellectual creation' to receive copyright protection.[14]

For artwork reproductions, this means: (1) there must be scope for creative (rather than technical) choices to be made during stages of pre-production, production and post-production; (2) that sufficient creative choices are, in fact, made; and (3) those creative choices result in a new work that is imprinted with the maker's personal stamp and is therefore their own intellectual creation, rather than a faithful reproduction of an existing work.

2.2.2. Goal 2: Improve efficiencies and diversify income streams

RAMM felt complying with copyright law would also improve staff efficiencies and diversify its income streams. Many open GLAM participants have seen their income

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[11] *See, e.g.,* Macmillan v Cooper (1924) 40 TLR 186, 188, at para 17: 'To secure copyright … it is necessary that the labour, skill and capital expended should be sufficient to impart to the product some quality or character which the raw material did not possess, and which differentiates the product from the raw material'.
[12] Directive 2006/116/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on the term of protection of copyright and certain related rights (codified version).
[13] UK Intellectual Property Office, 'Copyright Notice: Digital Images, Photographs and the Internet' (*GOV.UK*).
[14] THJ Systems Limited & Anor v Daniel Sheridan & Anor (2023) EWCA Civ 1354.

increase through the new opportunities which flow from international attention to collections and the commercial licensing of the brand.[15]

RAMM's own licensing income had stagnated for years, reflecting a wider trend across the heritage sector: RAMM had received just £2,933 in the past year.[16] Given the labour required to support licensing, a change would have multiple benefits:

- More efficient use of staff time by redirecting staff to mission-critical work
- A single RAMM-wide rights management strategy, rather than one that requires staff to navigate a policy that makes open access exceptions for materials produced as part of a funded project that is subject to open licensing requirements
- More diverse income streams, including the ability to explore how open access business models could increase overall income capture

Rather than continuing to invest in a loss-producing image licensing service, RAMM opted to redirect that investment to open access and follow its impact on other income streams, such as grant funding, public donations, print-on-demand orders, ticketing from public events and special exhibitions, brand licensing, commercial partnerships, and increased foot traffic and spending in the gift shop. The bigger question was how to model that data collection and track the indirect income that flows from RAMM's open access strategy.

2.2.3. Goal 3: Join the open GLAM movement

RAMM sought to position itself among peers in the open GLAM movement, globally and locally. The GLAM-E Lab partnership was an opportunity to test and pilot strategies for similarly-situated cultural organisations with little-to-no resources for open access.

Larger institutions are seen as typically having more resources available to implement open access during updates to collections management systems or websites, creating the impression that open GLAM is expensive or inaccessible to a large segment of the cultural sector. Smaller organisations have expressed concerns with falling behind in the open GLAM movement or losing online relevance. Yet smaller organisations can often be more agile when it comes to institutional change or policy shifts. Regardless of the institution's size, the question is always: Who pays?

RAMM recognised an opportunity to pilot a more scalable model for low-cost open access implementation and test new business models that could better serve less well-resourced peers. This allowed RAMM to join the open GLAM movement while sharing insight to support other organisations in their move to 'open'.

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[15] Effie Kapsalis, 'The Impact of Open Access on Galleries, Libraries, Museums, & Archives' (Smithsonian Institutes 2016).
[16] Exeter City Council, 'Fees and charges document for 2023-24' (2024).

2.2.4. Goal 4: Explore new programming possibilities

Lastly, RAMM observed how other cultural institutions benefited from open access in ways that demonstrated value to leadership and funders and built support for future programming. This meant engaging with local governance structures at Exeter City Council, which is tasked with supporting Exeter's local economies and requires a business case to approve programmatic changes. RAMM needed to produce a report on the open access strategy that could speak to decision makers' concerns.[17] Moreover, funders are increasingly adopting policies which prohibit new copyright claims in faithful reproductions of public domain works or impose other open access obligations on funded projects.[18]

RAMM saw an opportunity to proactively align with these stakeholders' expectations as a way to attract new opportunities for open access programming. Doing so would signal to funders' that their open licensing requirements would be met, as well as to potential partners that RAMM's policies are already aligned with open access.

2.3. How did RAMM go about it?

The GLAM-E Lab and RAMM designed a research-led pathway informed by these goals, the museum's capacity and needs.

2.3.1. Step 1. Internal research

The first step involved a review of RAMM's licensing system, beginning with the direct-to-Exeter City Council licensing services.

On average, a single licensing request required nine steps and involved multiple staff, totalling 1-2 hours of the Assistant Curator responsible for licensing correspondence, as well as other staff over the course of one month.[19] Not only did the system distract staff from other responsibilities, but only 1-in-5 of those requests produced income. In other words, 80% of potential licensees abandoned their request or declined to pay the licence after learning the fee amount. Many were unable to pay, raising equity concerns. While staff were sympathetic, to selectively waive the fee risked violating the UK's Re-use of the Public Sector Information (RPSI) Regulations 2015, which obligates public sector bodies to charge standard non-discriminatory fees based on the licence type, rather than an individual's capacity to pay.[20] The decision to charge any fee requires public sector bodies

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[17] Public Access to Images of RAMM Collections, Exeter City Council Report, Camilla Hampshire, Julien Parsons, Andrea Wallace, Francesca Farmer, 2023.
[18] For example, the UK's National Lottery Heritage Fund and Higher Education Research Councils have adopted open licensing as a condition of funding. UKRI, UK Research and Innovation open access policy (November 2023); 'Working with Open Licences: A Guide for Projects', Andrea Wallace and Mathilde Pavis (2021), supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, CC BY 4.0.
[19] Informal data collection occurred through conversations with staff on how image licensing requests impacted their day-to-day activities.
[20] The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 cl 15(10).

to enforce a policy that charges the same fee for all similar uses. Where requests did lead to income capture, that fee ranged from £30-£50, and primarily for requests for research or personal use of digitised public domain artworks.

This insight led RAMM to conclude that an open access strategy should focus on eliminating the majority of direct licensing requests, which were largely from members of the public, like researchers, educators, creators and other individuals for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. This meant:

- Identifying a resolution threshold that was adequate for most image uses
- Applying the CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication to digital surrogates of public domain artworks
- Releasing these images on WIkimedia Commons for self-service
- Directing requests for higher resolution images to Bridgeman Images

Reasons for this were technical, financial and practical. At this early stage, RAMM's limited capacity on staffing, hosting, servers, website interface, image size and delivery had to be accounted for in the workflow and strategy rollout. In the longer term, the strategy needed to offset the real costs of digitisation and digital programming, including the ongoing costs of open access.

2.3.2. Step 2. External research

The second step was to identify similarly-situated peers who had successfully implemented open access strategies at their organisations to learn from their respective journeys.

In November 2022, RAMM and the GLAM-E Lab hosted a roundtable with staff from four comparable organisations.[21] Each had developed an open access strategy by gathering internal support, securing formal approval and releasing images as public domain. All had been motivated by the losses of running their licensing service. These losses corresponded to the decline of actual licensing income observed across the UK heritage sector. Indeed, for the majority of organisations, but particularly small and medium-sized

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[21] This included: Chris Streek, Digital Engagement Producer at York Museums Trust, Collections Image Policy; David Hepworth, then Digital Development Manager at Newcastle Libraries (now Digital Transformation Business Partner, Newcastle City Council), Our Photographic Collection; Kevin Bacon, Head of Digital at Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust, Brighton & Hove, Media from Brighton & Hove Museums Collections; Thomas Megaw, then Documentations Officer (now Lead Curator for Collections Management) at Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museum, Open Access Images. We'd also like to thank Linda Spurdle at Birmingham Museums Trust who could not attend but contributed through correspondence and other publicly available podcasts and blogs, including: Linda Spurdle and Douglas McCarthy 'Open up! Open access at Birmingham Museums Trust' (August 2018); Ash Mann and Linda Spurdle 'Digital Works Podcast: Episode 013 - Linda Spurdle (Birmingham Museums Trust) on opening up access to their collection images, and working with Cold War Steve' (September 2020); Linda Spurdle and Douglas McCarthy 'After open access' (November 2020); and Linda Spurdle and Time Deakin 'In conversation with: Linda Spurdle from Birmingham Museums Trust' (June 2021).

ones, data shows that licensing income comes nowhere near the actual costs of providing the service.[22] The data also indicates that licensing income is shrinking globally as more cultural institutions release collections as public domain, and users shift their attention to those collections.[23] The inability to produce reliable licensing income was compounded by the continued investments to update digital access to new formats to compete. Open access was seen to be a better investment model than image licensing services.

Other takeaways included:

- None had the capacity or intention to enforce the rights they claimed in images.
- All published medium-resolution images (as defined by each organisation) to balance their technical capacity with public reuse needs, noting that low-resolution images could easily be upsampled by free software online.
- All recommended using 'quick wins' to develop the workflow process. These had varied from locally-relevant collections, to 2D public domain artworks with rich metadata, to older materials suitable for bulk copyright clearance. This enabled staff to model and integrate updates into the collections management system or automate the rights status (*e.g.*, identifying rights status by creator death date and batch assigning CC0).
- All had published images to Wikimedia Commons or Flickr. These external platforms were seen as providing more exposure than the institutional websites ever could, but also because their own websites could not track the data on user engagement that was necessary to make the business case for open access. One reported that leadership was particularly impressed their images had received more than 1 million views per month on Wikimedia Commons.
- EDI goals supported the move to open for two. One observed that copyright was preventing individuals and communities from using the images relevant to their own histories and heritage. Another wanted to prioritise access to and reuse of underrepresented artists in the collection.
- Peers continued to charge nominal fees reflecting actual costs of new digitisation, the delivery of high resolution images (*e.g.*, £5) or other services.
- All continued to receive income from images.
- All kept relationships with commercial image libraries, although some ended upon the contract's conclusion and were not renewed because they were seen to conflict with open access commitments.
- All reported that commercialisation now comes through brand licensing, rather than image licensing.

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[22] Simon Tanner, 'Reproduction Charging Models & Rights Policy for Digital Images in American Art Museums: A Mellon Foundation Funded Study' (2004); Andrea Wallace, 'A Culture of Copyright: A Scoping Study on Open Access to Digital Cultural Heritage Collections in the UK' (Towards a National Collection 2022).
[23] Wallace (n 17).

2.3.3. Step 3: Pilot

The third step involved designing a pilot workflow based on the research. RAMM identified a small number of already-digitised artworks which shared a common theme for the pilot and contacted Wikimedia UK for support on releasing images and tracking engagement.

In January 2023, RAMM uploaded 63 artworks of historical places in and around Exeter to a Category page on Wikimedia Commons. This enabled RAMM to track public engagement using the Wikitools BaGLAMa and GLAMorgan. By the end-of-year, the data showed the 63 images had received over 6.16 million views. At least 41 had been added to 65 Wikipedia articles in 7 different languages, including Richard III, the English Civil War and the Baedeker Blitz.[24] Website referrals from Wikimedia platforms accounted for up to 5% of monthly visits to RAMM's online collections and the South West Collections Explorer.

Category page for Images from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery

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[24] These include English, French, Cantonese, Spanish, Swedish, Welsh and Russian.

Data on image views from January 2023 to January 2024

RAMM also used reverse image searches to track image use beyond Wikimedia platforms. The images appeared on history websites for children, study guides and other educational materials, and websites devoted to specific artists in the collection. RAMM also received emails expressing gratitude, such as from local tour guides who used the images to show how Exeter looked before certain buildings were destroyed.

The data generated from this relatively small set of images demonstrated the significant potential of open access for RAMM's collection.

2.3.4. Step 4: Feedback and revision

The fourth step involved sharing data with RAMM staff on the pilot, collecting feedback and revising the approach for the official open access strategy.

Using the research and feedback, RAMM identified a resolution baseline at which images would be published under the inaugural strategy: at a size that permitted printing at 300dpi up to A5 in size (*e.g.*, 148 x 210 mm or 5.8 x 8.3. inches). Other aspects of the strategy identified rights statements for: (1) metadata; (2) faithful 3D reproductions of public domain collections; (3) original reproductions of 3D collections; and (4) website text and other RAMM publications. Further testing enabled staff to develop workflows for file and data management, data collection on impact, risk assessment and management, and upskilling on copyright and Wikimedia platforms.

At the end of this period, RAMM submitted a rigorous report to Exeter City Council that detailed the financial, practical and legal aspects of the Open Access Strategy. Valuable insight from ECC's legal team helped develop the document prior to its presentation to the Executive Committee.[25] The research-led approach had enabled data collection and analysis to inform a strategy which could balance leadership concerns with public access and reuse. This made it possible to identify and resolve key concerns as they arose and in ways that produced a compelling argument supported by data for the business case to ECC. The Open Access Strategy was unanimously approved 28 November 2023.

2.3.5. Step 5: Rollout

The final step was to implement the new Open Access Strategy across the collections, update the website and publicly announce it.

As an initial matter, this required identifying a workflow to triage image releases according to capacity, risk and priority. With respect to capacity, one staff member is responsible for image release to Wikimedia Commons: Research Fellow Francesca Farmer cleans the image metadata, prepares images and descriptive data, and releases the images to

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[25] A huge thank you to Simon Copper and Chris Garlick for their input and support leading up to the submission to ECC.

Wikimedia Commons. For these reasons, RAMM is focusing on no-risk collections, meaning 2D artworks and other items in the public domain. GLAM-E Lab Research Assistants Oswald Essein and Tala Rahal assist by clearing copyright through creator-based research. In terms of priority, Farmer schedules themed image releases around local events, RAMM exhibitions and public holidays (*e.g.*, International Women's Day). This helps pace the work while sustaining public interest through regular announcements of image releases.

As part of the Cultural Heritage and Digitisation Lab in Spring 2023, a University of Exeter law student, Arta Ebrahimpour, reviewed RAMM's website to identify policies and other information which required updating. This research also identified features of model open access policies across other institutional websites and made recommendations to RAMM. The GLAM-E Lab and RAMM drafted the new Open Access Strategy, updated the website terms and revised webpages which directed users to the museum's licensing service.

On a practical level, new workflows were developed using Adobe Bridge to batch replace copyright statements in image metadata with CC0, and to prepare image and metadata for release to Wikimedia Commons. Afterwards, the RAMM Collections Officer uses these images to replace the low-resolution images with watermarks in the online collections.

Finally, the GLAM-E Lab and RAMM coordinated on the public announcement. This included drafting and circulating press releases, outreach to GLAM networks and colleagues and the production of a video announcement (which cost £1,050).

2.4. Next steps

The GLAM-E Lab and RAMM designed this strategy to enable significant yet incremental steps toward building a robust open access programme. RAMM will direct requesters to Bridgeman Images for the licensing of high resolution images. The project will collect data on the inaugural strategy as part of the research-led work. Recommendations on future changes will be submitted in 2025 for approval by Exeter City Council.[26]

An important next step includes documenting the outcomes, including any new income generation and open access business models. For example, RAMM expects to see:

- An overall saving from eliminating the licensing services, with similar benefits for image requesters who see efficiency gains because of self-service delivery.[27] At the same time, there may be an increase in requests for CC0 images during the transition period as copyright clearance continues.
- An initial decline in licensing income. However, the majority of this income was received from researchers and educators who required images for their jobs,

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[26] For example, these may relate to applying CC0 to original photographs of 3D collections or increasing the images to high-resolution releases.

[27] Bendor Grosvenor, 'Museum Image Fees (Ctd.)' (*Art History News*, 9 July 2018); Kathryn M Rudy, 'The True Costs of Research and Publishing' *Times Higher Education* (29 August 2019).

publications, presentations and general career advancement. RAMM sees this equity-focused move as a significant gain, rather than a loss.
● A significant increase in educational use, research and attention to collections, as well as visitors online and at the museum.

RAMM will continue publishing images on Wikimedia Commons. RAMM is also in the process of updating its collections website to allow for self-service delivery of open access images. The update will include the display of rights information, an attribution statement, a short voluntary survey on how the image will be used and a button enabling users to donate to RAMM. This work links to the overhaul of the South West Collections Explorer for the 'Changing Stories: Connecting and collecting with Exeter's communities project.'[28]

3. RAMM's Open Access Strategy

At its heart, RAMM's strategy recognises that public domain collections should remain in the public domain after digitisation. The strategy balances this recognition against the costs of providing digital programming and open access services to the public.

RAMM releases digital surrogates in 'medium resolution' (300 dpi when printed at A5) using the CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication where:

● RAMM has borne the digitisation costs of 2D artworks, rather than a third party or commercial image library
● Grant-funded projects cover the digitisation costs of any collection items, in line with commitments to open access and funders' open licensing requirements (including requirements to release the images at full size)
● Researchers or members of the public have paid for new digitisations

RAMM also applies CC0 1.0 to image metadata. Original materials produced by RAMM, like text written by staff, will be released CC BY-SA 4.0.

Reasonable service fees will be charged for new digitisation requests, which allows RAMM to pass costs on to the requester. RAMM will reserve the highest resolution digital files for commercial exploitation, unless funding obligations require otherwise.

RAMM's new strategy complies with copyright law and balances RAMM's income needs with public access and reuse.

3.1. What does the Open Access Strategy apply to?

RAMM's Open Access Strategy only applies to:

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[28] Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2023.

- public domain materials owned by RAMM for which no copyright or other rights subsist and
- reproduction materials produced in-house by RAMM staff and contractors, through grant funding or through new photography requests

The Open Access Strategy **does not apply** to:

- materials protected by copyright, contractual or other third-party rights and
- collections with colonial contexts

RAMM will not apply the Open Access Strategy to collections with colonial contexts. As part of the project, RAMM and the GLAM-E Lab are collaborating on research pathways for digital and intellectual property restitution. The policies that result from that collaboration will govern all uses of collections with colonial contexts, including digitisation and access.

3.2. Why use CC0 1.0 for images?

RAMM wants its digitised public domain artworks to be freely downloaded, reused, circulated, modified and shared without restrictions and by anyone who finds them.

For this, Creative Commons recommends using the CC0 1.0 Public Domain Dedication.[29] Some countries will recognise copyright, database or related rights in artwork reproductions and data they hold. CC0 1.0 allows RAMM to waive any rights arising in these countries so users can engage with the collections without risking infringement.

3.3. Why use CC BY-SA 4.0 for text?

RAMM wants people to be able to use, to remix, transform, translate and build upon their text materials for any purpose.

CC BY-SA 4.0 enables this so long as users provide credit to RAMM (BY), a link to the licence and indicate if changes were made. Users must also distribute any creations incorporating the text under the same licence (SA).

3.4. Why release 'medium resolution' images?

RAMM will publish CC0 1.0 images at medium resolution to support its financial needs and technical limitations on open access programming. Medium resolution is set at 300 dpi when printed at A5. This default standard allows for a wide range of uses, including commercial use.

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[29]Jane Park, 'For Faithful Digital Reproductions of Public Domain Works Use CC0' (Creative Commons, 23 January 2015).

This approach ensures the proper functioning of the website and enables RAMM to charge for the use of high resolution images. The goal is to test whether this strategy is viable and produces useful income.

3.5. Why use a different licence for images of 3D works?

RAMM will apply CC BY-NC 4.0 to images of 3D public domain works. These works can be shared and adapted for non-commercial purposes, so long as RAMM is attributed. This decision was made for legal, practical and research reasons.

For copyright to subsist, a creator must have made creative decisions during reproduction that result in the image being 'the author's own intellectual creation.' This means it is more likely that a photograph of a sculpture, for example, attracts a new copyright when the photographer makes creative decisions affecting the lighting, the background and angle from which the image is taken. These types of decisions are not sufficiently creative during the faithful reproduction of a 2D artwork, like a painting. This means that RAMM likely possesses a copyright interest in images of 3D public domain works, which gives it the opportunity to use the non-commercial licence when making it available to the public.
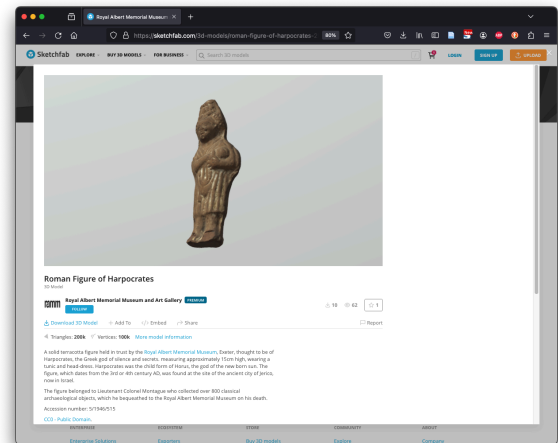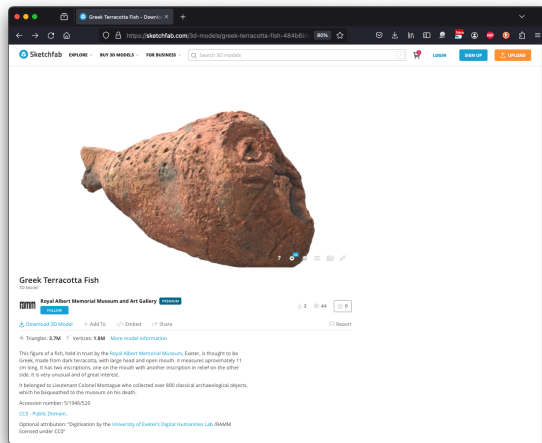

2D and 3D digitisations for comparison

Following this logic, copyright does not arise in faithful reproductions of 3D works made using 3D imaging technologies, like photogrammetry or LiDAR scanning.[30] RAMM complies with copyright law by publishing 3D models to Sketchfab using CC0 1.0.[31]

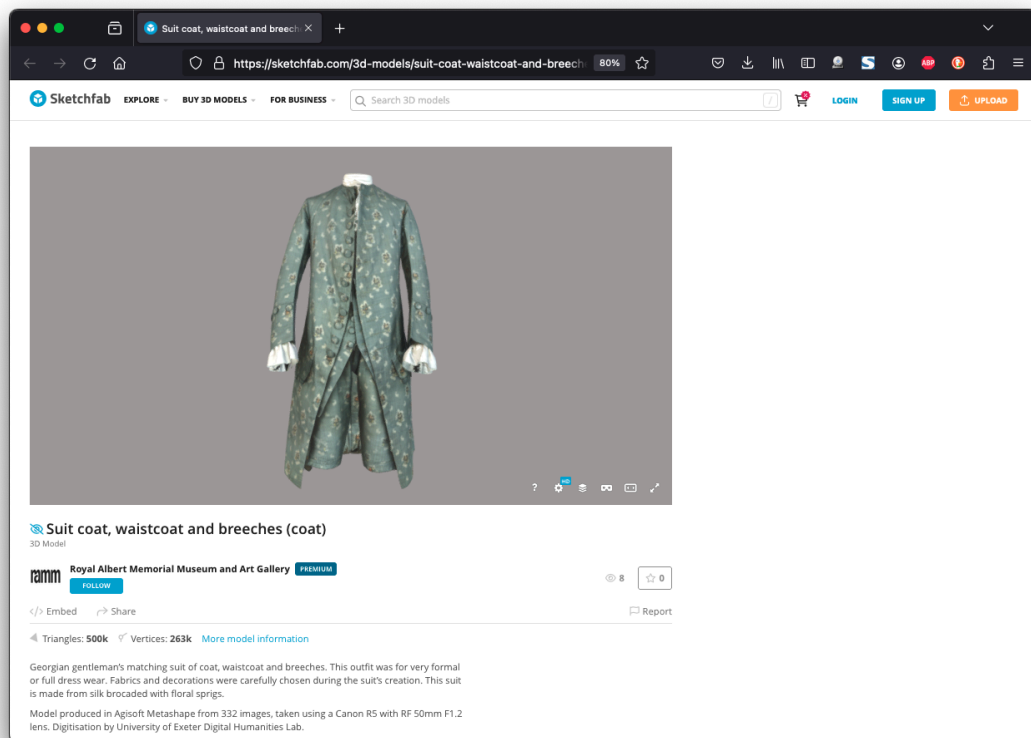[30] Thomas Flynn, Neal Stimler and Michael Weinberg, 'glam3D.org' (2020).
[31] Sketchfab supports a 'Free Standard' licence with the terms that 'Others can use your work worldwide, commercially or not, and in all types of derivative works.' In addition to using this licence, RAMM includes the text and link to CC0 1.0 in the image description.

RAMM's CC0 3D digitisations on [Sketchfab](https://sketchfab.com)

For practical reasons, RAMM used faithful reproductions of public domain artworks to model its inaugural Open Access Strategy (*e.g.*, faithful 2D photographs of 2D works and 3D digitisations of 3D works). This allows RAMM to ensure the new strategy and workflows are designed to reduce any risk and labour involved during rollout.

For research reasons, GLAM-E Lab and RAMM want to see whether this distinction leads to any measurable impact or outcomes, positive or negative. The project will collect data over 2024 and review this decision at the year's end.
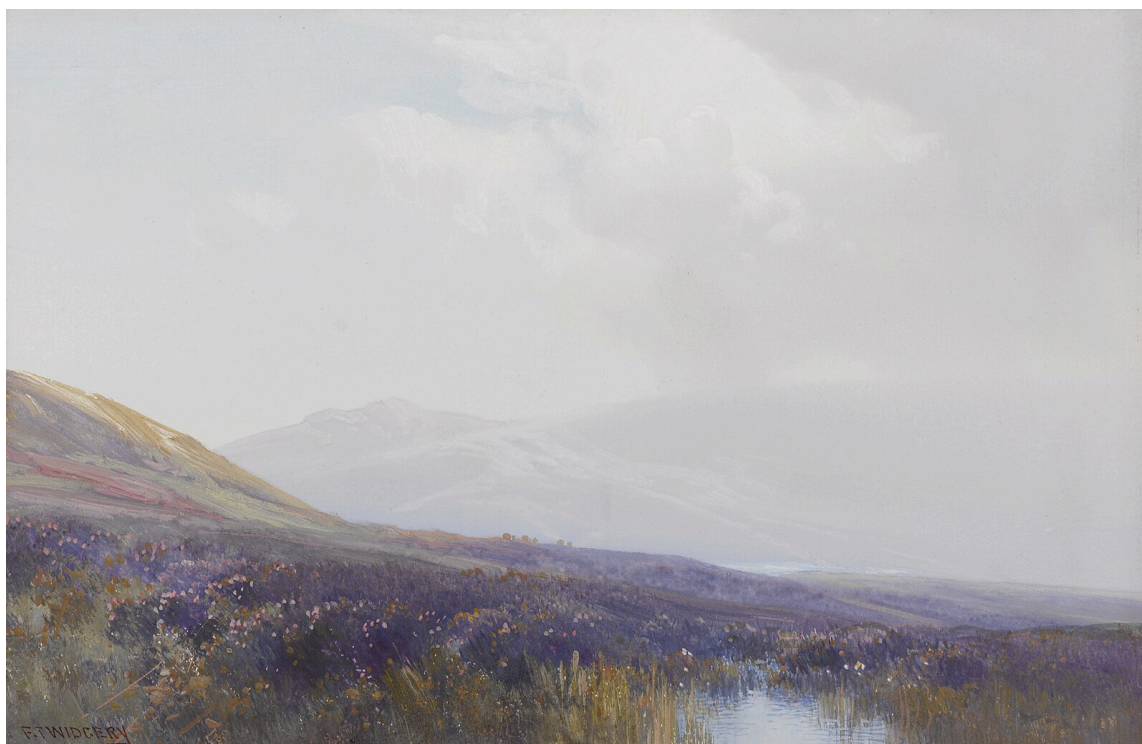

Suit, waistcoat and breeches, CC0 on [Sketchfab](https://sketchfab.com)

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4. Making the Business Case: Lessons Learned

This final section translates the lessons learned into key takeaways for other organisations across three themes of activities:

- **Changing Minds**
- **Getting Organised**
- **Generating Impact**

Taw Marsh Dartmoor, Frederick John Widgery, 1931, Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, CC0 1.0

4.1. Changing minds

Getting everyone on board may be easy or hard depending on your organisation's structure. Open GLAM case studies show that change can come from the top down, such as when senior management leads the change, but it more often comes from the ground up when staff organise and convince others. This section identifies the relevant concerns shared by staff and the strategies RAMM found most useful to resolving them.

4.1.1. Harmonising policies

Funding obligations. Funders are increasingly adopting open access and open licensing requirements. Using these to structure your open access strategy can make it easier to comply with those obligations. This helps simplify rights management practices across

the collection as a whole, rather than requiring staff to manage multiple policies for internally- versus externally-funded work, and according to each funder's requirements. Examples include:

- The National Lottery Heritage Fund requires CC0 for certain materials and CC BY for other original materials with prohibitions on image commercialisation
- Wellcome Trust requires CC BY for original research (or CC BY-ND by exception) with prohibitions on using open access funds to pay image fees
- Wikimedia Foundation requires CC0, CC BY, CC BY-SA, or an equivalent Free Licence
- European Commission requires open access to research articles and data
- UKRI requires CC BY (or CC BY-ND by exception) for original works and the Open Government Licence for original government works

RAMM concluded that aligning with funders' policies put the organisation in a good position to show its projects can meet the open requirements and maximise public value to society. It also advertises to potential partners that RAMM's content and policies already align with funding requirements and support open access goals.

Technical standards. Open licensing is compatible with well-known technical standards for rights management in collections. Many UK organisations use the Collections Trust Spectrum Rights Management Standard, which sets out how to record and manage rights statements. The Spectrum Standard provides guidance on rights in intellectual property and personal data associated with objects, reproductions and information. While no specific framework is provided on open licensing for faithful reproductions, it supports machine readable rights statements like CC0 and other Creative Commons licences. RAMM implemented its Open Access Strategy within the Spectrum Standard.

Lessons Learned

A harmonised policy approach reduces the resources required to manage rights information, and update legacy data, collections and datasets with new statements, particularly if an organisation plans to adopt a more permissive or collections-wide policy at a future date. In other words, harmonised policies are more sustainable for rights management and operational efficiencies in the long term, as well as for opening up sources of new income through funded projects.

4.1.2. Reaching senior leadership

Management and leadership structures will be different for each organisation, as will their appetite for change. For example, independent organisations or trusts may enjoy greater freedoms than council-run organisations, which may enjoy greater freedoms than cultural institutions subject to national legislation. How to frame the strategic case for open access will depend on the organisational structure and individual members of a leadership team. Some may be persuaded by a good philosophical case alone. For others, the more

compelling approach may be the economic case for reducing costs and attracting new revenue streams through open licensing.

As a local authority-run museum, RAMM needed to develop a business case which formed the basis of a report. Much of the document summarised information in this White Paper, including the legal debate, the proposed strategy and results of the pilot research. The report was reviewed by Exeter City Council's financial and legal departments prior to submission in early November 2023 to the Strategic Management Board. Exeter City Council unanimously approved the Open Access Strategy on 28 November 2023.[32]

Lessons Learned

No matter the leadership structure or philosophy, developing a business case can help staff anticipate needs and prepare for concerns that management might have. It also supports public transparency and accountability.

4.1.3. Financial concerns

Costs are always a concern, particularly for smaller organisations. A key concern is what might happen to staff who are responsible for managing the licensing service. While open access is not cost or labour neutral, neither is operating a licensing service. When developing an economic case, frame the work as redirecting the organisation's investment and staff time to enable new projects, funding applications and other revenue streams that bring more income to the organisation than the image licensing service ever will.

Some organisations may wish to take a more incremental approach to open access implementation. Keep in mind that a more conservative strategy can lead to legacy issues with data, metadata and technology infrastructures, costing your organisation more in the long run.

Fortunately, an open access strategy can cost as much or little as you can afford. There are various cost-effective ways to reduce the financial resources required for open access.

Lessons Learned

Reduce costs by using:

● A small number of images to pilot staff's capacity, the workflows and strategy. Use the pilot to test and refine plans, including what is needed to scale-up the work.
● Free platforms and tools, such as Wikimedia Commons, Pattypan and Adobe Bridge.
● Free communication channels like press releases, professional contacts, social media and local audiences to advertise your open access strategy and collections.

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[32] Public Access to Images of RAMM Collections, Exeter City Council Report, Camilla Hampshire, Julien Parsons, Andrea Wallace, Francesca Farmer, 2023.

- External funding to support the costs of the pilot, such as labour and digitisation. An open licensing requirement can help produce the first CC0 collection that leads to organisation policy change.

4.1.4. Commercialising materials

'Free and fee'. Many organisations publish high resolution images and metadata of public domain collections for free reuse. Others have adopted a 'free and fee' policy that releases images at a medium resolution for free reuse while reserving high resolution images for commercialisation. However, when images are published at too low a resolution for meaningful use, staff must continue to support requests for reuse. Fees can also be charged for service costs and new photography. Such fees are not based on a copyright fee model, which relates to a copyright licence based on a specific use type and is often cost-prohibitive for most users.

Funder restrictions. Whether you can commercialise project materials may depend on the funder's conditions of funding. For example, the National Lottery Heritage Fund does not permit commercialising funded outputs, including images.

Lessons Learned

Securing exclusivity through copyright or contract law is not necessary to generate income through digital collections and open access strategies, even where CC0 images are released at a high quality. By contrast, open access creates possibilities for new revenue sources. In addition to grant funding, public donations, new photography requests, and ticketing, commercialisation can emerge through brand licensing, commercial partnerships, print-on-demand orders and new products in the gift shop.

4.2. Planning for open access

How you start, who is involved, and with what resources will depend on your organisation. For example, one low-resource option involves a single staff member who dedicates a portion of their time to preparing images and metadata for batch uploads to Wikimedia Commons. Given that RAMM and the GLAM-E Lab received AHRC funding, the project took a more resource intensive approach to test and model how the research and its findings, like those in this White Paper, could be used by others.

Section 2 discussed RAMM's Open Access Journey. This section outlines its underlying mechanics in more detail and with respect to RAMM's specific needs. The majority of the work was undertaken by Francesca Farmer and Andrea Wallace, with support from Julien Parsons, other RAMM staff, the Digital Humanities Lab and Wikimedia UK.

4.2.1. Where to start

We first reviewed RAMM's goals for open access against the advantages and drawbacks reported by peer organisations. We wanted to plan accordingly, specifically to think creatively about how to take advantage of upsides or avoid downsides if possible, but also to follow and track evidence of impact. The tables below show the findings observed by peer organisations alongside evidence documented by RAMM.

In terms of the upsides, these included:

Observed by peer organisations	RAMM's evidence (63 CC0 images on WMC)
Increased goodwill and positive attention from local, national, and international publics	• Local Red Coat tour guides use RAMM images in their tours of the city • RAMM saw increased public engagement with social media after the announcement • GLAM-E Lab researchers and RAMM staff were invited on local BBC radio to discuss the new strategy
Enabling and contributing to the creation of new knowledge, creative works, and cultural goods	Images have been placed on 65 different Wikipedia pages in 7 different languages, inspired Wikipedia Edit-a-thons on Exeter history, and have been used on history websites, study guides and artist websites
Improved ability to attract new research funding and project partners, including funding for digitisation	Successful follow-on funding with the GLAM-E Lab and new partner Wikimedia UK to support localised open access campaigns and toolkits for low cost open GLAM
Significant increases in web visitors ranging from 20-250%, with many museums reporting increases of at least 100%[33]	Up to 5% monthly web visitors referred from Wikimedia pages linked to the 63 images
Eliminating the administrative burden on staff for licensing, while diverting staff time to mission-critical work	*Data forthcoming*
Increased brand value and public profile, with greater visitor numbers and spending in enterprises on site	*Data forthcoming*
Significant increases in brand licensing opportunities, especially when coupled with strong marketing opportunities	*Data forthcoming*, as RAMM has a year of activities planned around monthly releases for the open access programming

In terms of downsides, peers reported that the gains made from open access far outweighed any losses. Downsides that RAMM was most concerned about included:

Observed by peer organisations	RAMM's approach

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[33] Kristin Kelly. '[Images of Works of Art in Museum Collections: The Experience of Open Access](#)' 2013.

Financial drawbacks, including loss of revenue from image licensing or temporary increases in staff time required to respond to open access requests	RAMM expects to see an overall saving from eliminating image licensing services; clearing copyright and publishing CC0 images on a case-by-case basis may lead to more requests for CC0 images in the interim
Impacts to staffing due to the elimination of image licensing services, including loss of staff	RAMM has redirected staffing to mission-critical activities
Increased demand on technical infrastructure, including new infrastructures needed to support self-service delivery on the website	RAMM will publish all images on Wikimedia Commons to ensure self-service delivery as the website is updated and new DAMS designed
Legal risks related to errors in copyright assessments	RAMM has created copyright risk assessment workflows and robust take down policies in partnership with GLAM-E Lab
Legal risks related to contract law, privacy, data protection, AI, or other legal and ethical frameworks, such as cultural sensitivities and collections with colonial contexts	RAMM is focusing on no-risk collections, with plans to design additional pathways or tools for key concerns, starting with digital and intellectual property restitution for collections with colonial contexts
Resources required to upskill staff, including legal support staff	The RAMM and GLAM-E Lab partnership invested resources for knowledge exchange and upskilling through working groups and training on law and technology topics

Lessons Learned

While a given strategy may need to accommodate organisational needs, these need not be prohibitive or obstructive to open access goals. Business cases should move staff members responsible for image licensing to other mission-critical responsibilities or new roles to create opportunities for open access revenue generation. While the best approach is to pilot the work using no-risk collections, even these should be reviewed to ensure items are suitable for CC0 release.

4.2.2. Who to involve

To support the project's research-led approach, RAMM's process involved more resources than were necessary to develop and implement the strategy. We began by establishing a working group to meet every six weeks. The group was led by Farmer and joined by the Digital Media Officer, staff dealing with image licensing requests and senior members of the collections team, with further support by Wallace as part of the project. The table below outlines the staff and their roles in the strategy's development and roll out.

Support staff member	Role and approach
A full-time Research Fellow, with 30% supporting the RAMM strategy and 70% supporting the project's development for GLAM-E Lab deliverables	Works closely with Digital Media Officer and led staff working group, and in collaboration with the GLAM-E Lab

Digital Media Officer, 2 hours per week*	Assists in replacing images on RAMM's Collections site; web updates; data collection and provided feedback on feasibility of strategy.
Collections Officer, 3 hours per week*	Works on replacing existing photography; resizing images and other tasks related to RAMM's online collections
Assistant Curator dealing with image licensing requests, 1 hour per week*	Monitors image licensing data and provides feedback on feasibility of strategy
Content Management Lead, 3 hours per week*	Manages Research Fellow and working group and liaises with senior management at RAMM
Exeter City Council's Legal Team, 5 hours total*	Review and feedback on ECC Report and Open Access Strategy
Exeter City Council's Strategic Management Board, 2 hours total*	Strategic Management Board meeting to review and approve changes to strategy
Wikimedian-in-Residence, joining in February for 1 day per week	Supports on rollout across Wikimedia platforms and to grow a local Wikipedia editors group as part of Wikimedia UK's Connected Heritage project, funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Digital Skills for Heritage Initiative
External legal expertise, GLAM-E Lab	Works closely with Research Fellow, RAMM staff and others to support the funded project

* Indicates in-kind time provided by RAMM or other staff

Lessons Learned

Staff should understand what they want to achieve from an open access strategy to support a tailored approach. These conversations help establish common ground for staff and lead to knowledge exchanges on the practical, legal, technical and ethical aspects of the open access strategy. Ensure that every staff member has an understanding of what open access means and how it will impact operations and workflows:

- Create a working group to share ideas and problem shoot solutions.
- Position digital or online collections staff to lead and delegate tasks to others.
- Consult marketing during the planning and execution phases.
- Clearly communicate plans at key stages to all staff to support feedback loops, improvements and implementation.
- Consider if user-testing can improve your strategy's workflows and outcomes.
- Update key leadership at appropriate stages depending on your organisation's leadership structure (*e.g.*, internal leadership, legal services, external management).

4.2.3. How to begin

Identify your resources. The move to open takes time. How much time will depend on the leadership structure, the budget available and staff involved. Your costs can be as high or low as your budget allows, but much of the work can be done with little to no budget. All of

this should be considered early on in the planning stage. There are many resources aimed at small- to medium-sized organisations for digitisation and open access projects.[34]

Rely on peer networks. Staff at open organisations regularly share experiences and lend others support. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Review other organisations' strategies and experiences to understand how they made the move to open. Select the parts that work for you and get your working group to discuss them. Together you can assess whether they are suitable or need adapting for your organisation. Also take advantage of opportunities to join listservs, network and create informal groups where you can ask questions and exchange support.

Build expertise internally. Staff must understand what they want to achieve from an open access strategy before they can tailor an approach for the organisation. Developing a mandate requires thinking about topics from how the public should access or download images, to which collections to start with and why. These conversations should establish common ground for staff assessments and knowledge exchanges on the practical, legal, technical and ethical aspects of the open access strategy.

Start small and pilot the work. Identify a small collection that you can use to model workflow processes, upskill staff and generate data on impact. This will help you split the work into manageable chunks as you test and update workflows to be more efficient and effective. Keep records of collections and creators for which copyrights have expired, as you can regularly return to them for new open access releases.

4.2.4. Where to publish

Where you publish may depend on your organisation's ability to accommodate self-service delivery on the website. You may also want to use external platforms to track how images are being used or attract new visitors to boost website KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). External platforms can help reduce costs and provide many of these services:

- [Wikimedia Commons](#) (free), for [CC0](#), [CC BY](#), and [CC BY-SA](#) images, with [BaGLAMa2](#) and [GLAMorgan](#) for tracking engagement across Wikipedia articles where images are used across Wikipedia supported languages.
- [Sketchfab](#) (free), for in-copyright and public domain 3D models, which tracks views and downloads
- [Flickr Pro](#) (£65.88 per year), for in-copyright and public domain images, which has internal tracking dashboards that analyse user trends, identifies content with the most engagement and the source of engagement.
- [Unsplash](#) (free), for freely usable images under the [Unsplash Licence](#) that allows for commercial and non-commercial purposes without permission (though attribution is encouraged), but does not allow for images to be sold without significant modification or compiled to create a similar service, and which tracks downloads, views and likes.

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[34] *See* https://www.glamelab.org/.

- [GitHub](#) (free), a developer platform that allows developers to create, store, manage and share large datasets, which also allows account holders to view user traffic on their data repository.
- [ArtUK](#) (annual membership fees range from [£50 to £5,000](#)), which facilitates print-on-demand with limits on image resolution downloads at a maximum of 1,200 pixels on the longest side

Lessons Learned

Popular external platforms like Wikimedia Commons and Flickr can provide more exposure to collections than your own website and provide analytics services to track engagement with your materials. Evidence shows that cross-publishing on external platforms leads to spikes in KPIs, including referrals to your own website.

4.3. Generating impact

Impact can mean different things to different stakeholders, ranging from KPI targets set internally, to measurable national impact or local benefits for your community. Have a discussion early on about what impact means for your organisation.[35] This can help you identify which materials to release, as well as what data needs to be tracked, and how.

4.3.1. Making a plan

When resources are limited, planning is important to maximise impact. Have a think about what it is you want to release and how it can be linked to other programming and events. For example, you might create a publication schedule to release collections which correspond with events or programming, such as upcoming holidays or exhibitions, to drive more attention to the image releases and to the events. Planning should account for how you will publicise activities. In addition to social media, use your professional networks to spread the good news and keep up the momentum.

To illustrate, RAMM is releasing images in batches alongside international, national and local events according to a publication schedule. This gives staff time to prepare each batch and provides structure to what would otherwise be an 'as and when' approach. For the launch, RAMM and the GLAM-E Lab made [a video announcement](#), updated the website and coordinated [a press release](#) to share the news (which we licensed CC BY, so others could use it as a basis for their own). We also used social media and contacted professional networks by email with links to the announcement on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to make it easier for others to share widely.

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[35] Simon Tanner, '[Measuring the Impact of Digital Resources: The Balanced Value Impact Model](#)' (King's College London and Arcadia 2012).

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4.3.2. Tracking engagement

There is no single or best way to track impact. For example, even if images are published on your website, they will circulate and appear on external platforms like Wikimedia Commons. Anticipating this can help you build tracking strategies into your workplan and test them. We recommend a combination of approaches.

Approach	RAMM
Identify what impact looks like for your organisation	RAMM tracks image views and usage on Wikipedia; it monitors website analytics, image licensing revenue, print on demand income and usage on social media; RAMM also records qualitative impact such as phone calls, emails and events related to the open access work
Make staff aware of what impact looks like and how to document it	RAMM staff will save emails, examples of reuse, press and media attention, social media engagement, etc
Monitor income following the strategy's adoption to track changes, including the image licensing services	RAMM will follow income reporting to identify any changes
Publish materials on free and low-cost platforms that track in-platform user activity	The pilot tested workflows for uploading and tracking impact through Wikimedia Commons
Use reverse image search engines to find use of images online, while planning for the manual labour required	RAMM will use TinEye and Google Images strategically to track specific uses, high-activity images identified through external platform tracking, or well-known parts of the collection
Create a data collection routine to check external platforms and website activity	On a monthly basis, RAMM will collect web activity numbers, solicit data from staff, etc
Tell users you want to hear from them, and how, in your public-facing strategy, website terms and conditions, and other points of access	RAMM encourages users to share their reuses on social media or through the RAMM website contact form
Ask users to credit your organisation as the source of the materials so others can find them; these citations will also help you find the materials online	RAMM's open access webpage encourages users to attribute RAMM when using the images, with examples, and links to Europeana's Public Domain Usage Guidelines
Make it easy for users to provide attribution by including credits for works that can be copied and pasted	As part of RAMM's website update, RAMM is planning to include attribution statements with each image at the point of download.

Lastly, RAMM is working locally to bring impact to the Exeter and Devon South West community. For RAMM this has meant:

- Working with the GLAM-E Lab and the Digital Humanities Lab at the University of Exeter to increase the potential of RAMM's collections.
- Ensuring online policies and rights statements clearly convey the public domain status of collections that can be used.

glam-e lab

- Working with the audience development and marketing staff to create a communications plan that includes social media and website posts.
- Collaborating with Wikimedia UK to develop a local volunteer group to engage with RAMM's new public domain collections.
- Holding semi-regular Wikipedia Edit-a-thons, both in-person and hybrid, based on a theme relating to image sets or local history.
- Contacting local history groups, Facebook groups and historians to let them know about the image releases and encouraging them to use the images.
- Keeping local media informed of programming and new releases.
- Approaching local businesses to explore opportunities to collaborate on new cultural goods and reuses.

Lessons Learned

Data about the impact of an open access strategy will be of interest to locals, staff, senior leadership, other cultural institutions, current and future partners, including commercial partners, funders and other stakeholders.

Thank you!

If you found this resource helpful, please let us know by emailing us at info@glamelab.org. And happy open GLAMing!