



FACTVM  
FOVNDATION  
FOR DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY  
IN CONSERVATION

## Opening minds

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*Nothing opens mind and heart like free discussion of gifted maturing individuals, coming together with their own national traditions and differing attitudes and approaches.* Bernard Berenson



Over the last 250 years we have seen a dramatic advance not just in the industrialisation of our world but in the attitudes that that process has encouraged. We have developed a platform of truly amazing technology - we have created ways to communicate and mediate where nothing existed before - it has made us a better, more transparent and open world but it has also caused attitudes to change and to shift so that we see the world less as something of wonder but more as something that we can manage and something that we need to alter, to adapt to our tastes and needs. We now see nature as something we can tame, we see science as a tool not as a mystery and so when we look at our cultural heritage we want to manage and control that as well.

Along with this change has been an alteration in our attitude to the past. Because we can see the past and future perhaps more clearly - or because we feel we understand it better - we have begun also to think more about where we came from and what we are. We want to communicate with this past and understand what they understood and see what they saw and feel what they felt. The idea of a continuum becomes more powerful. Millions of people search their ancestry daily, fictional and factional history with lurid descriptions of what life was like, is the most popular section in High Street and online bookshops - costume dramas are reaching new levels of popularity. We feel confident in our science but is it making us less confident about who we are? The past will tell us the answer and it is the past, our heritage, that we are increasingly involved with in finding ourselves.

It is the Foundation's view that this change can be a positive one and technology can help us. Certainly we should use all our technical skills in review and conservation and importantly, we should use them to record - before we do anything else. We depend on Gilgamesh, Herodotus and Pepys. We rely on the purity of cuneiform record and the content of tombs. Now we have a duty to make a precise digital record of what was passed to us, exactly as we received it; we know that it will change or be changed, we can't stop that - even if humans don't intervene directly in its life. This is the vision of the Foundation - to create a living archive of a growing collection of all the wonders that we have inherited so that future generations - whose attitudes may, of course, be very different - and who will certainly develop technologies well in advance of ours, will have a resource that we bequeath to them - raw, clean un-manipulated data.