

## Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub transcript

Dr Richard Clay, Dr Henry Chapman and Professor Vince Gaffney discuss their work into the Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub initiative within the College of Arts and Law at the University of Birmingham.

Title: **Heritage and Learning Hub** ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQBBf\\_NtoJc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQBBf_NtoJc))

Duration: 2.57 mins

NB: 'S' refers to the speaker order

**S1:** My research [is] in art history but my colleagues, Henry and Vincent, are actually both archaeologists and especially work in visualisation; so individually our research is really, really different but together we're working on the project, which is the Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub, with academics from other disciplines as well. And on that project, our research is really focused around some really innovative new technology, which is called 'multi-touch technology'. So imagine an iPhone the size of a table and then you've got a multi-touch table. Image it the size of a wall and you've got a multi-touch wall – but also you end up with text which is at different levels of meaning because a child approaching a touch table doesn't want to know the same things as say a professor approaching a touch table.

**S2:** What's going to happen, I think, in the future is through increased digitalisation: both two-dimensional scanning of text, that kind of thing, but also three-dimensional models of objects, museum objects for example, by actually having these archives; then if you visit the museum, you see the actual physical item, the authentic item – but then you can compare it yourself to all sorts of other items from around the world, potentially.

**S3:** 90% or more of our cultural resource is inaccessible. It's in store rooms, it's in archives, which very few people can get access to. My principle work is actually in the area of looking at the vast prehistoric landscapes, which underlie the North Sea. It used to be dry land at one point in time and we've been looking at that, using cutting-edge technologies, which can see beneath the water, beneath the sediments, over huge areas. Now that has something to tell us about, for instance, climate change. This was 8,000–10,000 years ago; the last time that humans were impacted. Society needs to know something now about how our current climate is changing and how it might have affected us in the past – and how it will affect us in the future.

**S4:** The actual interfaces we're going to be creating through the Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub are going to be providing the avenue whereby people can access these large volumes of data in interactive ways, in collaborative ways; so many researchers can work together or many school children can work together. I think the use for single resource, a single digital resource, to actually satisfy all those different users, is just really exciting.

**S5:** The City's foundations are so sound for this kind of cross-sector work that all of the partners in the region who are speaking to each other about the Hub, all think that together we can do projects initially that make Birmingham a shop window for the world.

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