

Wellcome Collection: Who we are and what we do



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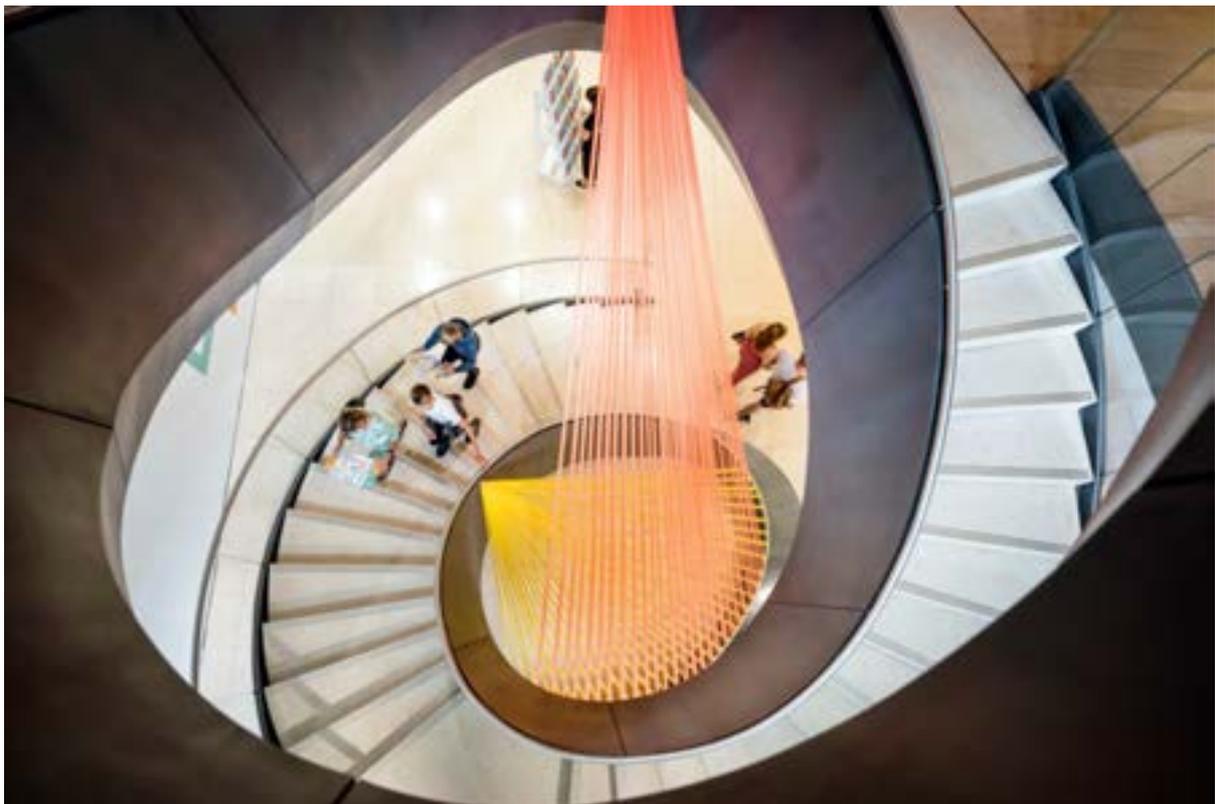
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& Tom Scott

Introduction

June 2017 marked the 10th anniversary of the opening of Wellcome Collection.

The months leading up to this milestone involved a period of reflection, and of internal and external peer review. One major outcome of this has been a structural re-alignment, including combining our Collections, Digital, Public Programmes and Operations departments under the single umbrella of Wellcome Collection: Museum and Library. A new, shared vision and combined goals and objectives have also been created and were approved by Wellcome's Board of Governors in December 2016.

The following set out this combined mission for Wellcome Collection, our main objectives for the next five years, and how we are now organised to achieve them.



The dynamic staircase during Choose Your Own Summer 2017. Image credit: Thomas S.G. Farnetti/Wellcome Collection

Library transformation

We have made enormous progress against the goals set in our Library Transformation Strategy (2008), which focused on targeted collecting, strategic digitisation and expert interpretation. We have huge strengths and our users tell us how much they love the library.

It is also evident, however, that a significant proportion of our collection remains undiscovered, that users struggle to access our digital material and that only a small group visit us in order to engage deeply with our collections.

To be more effective and impactful, relevant to future users and able to reach the widest and most diverse audiences, we need to build an organisation where we can innovate more easily, respond more effectively to rapid changes in the environment, and align ourselves more closely with Wellcome's overall strategic framework.

We have stopped doing some things and in other areas we are reducing duplication, focusing our efforts and modernising our working practices. For example, we are no longer resourcing multiple websites or subsidising a commercial image library. We have consolidated our acquisitions, cataloguing, collection development and digitisation activities. New skills are being brought in to help us to deliver an excellent digital experience.

Museum review

Growing visit numbers prompted a physical expansion of Wellcome Collection in 2013. On the back of critically-acclaimed and successful exhibitions and events, visit numbers have subsequently increased still further, to over 700,000 p.a.

The recent review process highlighted the success of our original, adult-oriented curatorial approach to exploring health and medicine, our innovative youth programme, and our strong and growing reputation in the cultural sector in the UK and internationally. It also drew our attention to some areas for future development.

We need to be clearer in an articulation of our target audiences. Better prioritisation is required to sustain levels of in-venue programming, as is a more strategic approach to our programmes beyond the building (e.g. touring, publishing, digital). There is a pressing need to update certain galleries, such as *Medicine Now*, which addresses contemporary biomedicine but is more than ten years old.

In addition, we are committed to making the venue as inclusive as possible and to taking a more explicit leadership role in the cultural sector. Increasing our connection to Wellcome's wider work is likewise a clear priority.

A combined museum and library

As we worked through this process of reflection and review it became increasingly apparent that we could best achieve our objectives by formally bringing the library and museum teams together into a single organisational structure with a shared mission and a common set of over-arching priorities.

For Wellcome Collection as a museum and library to reach its full potential we must reach and engage new audiences, support a more diverse research community, collect more of what is unique or distinctive, and design and build a digital offer that supports our users' evolving needs and those of the wider community. That is how we will contribute to improving health for everyone by enabling great ideas to thrive.

We have an exciting future ahead. As a team we are now collaborating more closely than ever before and we look forward to working with colleagues across Wellcome and beyond who continue to support, challenge and inspire us.



A visitor admires some of the 6000 paintings and drawings from the Adamson Collection, created by artists living at Netherne Hospital from 1940s-1980s. Image credit: Ben Gilbert/Wellcome Collection

Our vision

Our vision is to be a place that challenges the ways people think and feel about health by connecting science, medicine, life and art

Wellcome Collection is a free museum and library exploring health and humanity. Inspired by the collections assembled by Henry Wellcome, we encourage new ways of thinking about health by connecting science, medicine, life and art.

We are part of Wellcome, a global charitable foundation that exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive.

Our goals

- Seeking out and preserving different perspectives through our collections and research.
- Creating opportunities for people to think deeply about the connections between science, medicine, life and art.
- Making thought-provoking content that encourages everyone to reflect on what it means to be healthy and human

In doing these things we want to be recognised as a world- leading museum and library that is a cultural ambassador for Wellcome and its values – diverse, experimental, bold and surprising.

Our objectives

Over the next 5 years (2017/18 to 2021/22) we will:

- Develop innovative spaces and experiences which encourage new ways of thinking about health.
- Strengthen connections across Wellcome, especially with the Science and Innovations teams.
- Encourage diversity by including a wider range of voices in our collections and programmes.
- Foster a creative community that spans the arts, sciences, technology and innovation.
- Improve accessibility to our programmes, content and collections.

- Create outstanding user-centric experiences which increase use of our content and services.
- Extend our impact and reach through digital, broadcast, publishing, lending and touring.
- Be a great place to work — a creative, diverse, collaborative environment where strong leadership equips people to experiment, take risks, get stuff done, and develop their careers.

Annual delivery plans outline what we are doing to meet these objectives, along with success measures and key performance indicators. These plans are developed and approved annually.

How we are organised

Governance and leadership

The Director of Wellcome Collection is Simon Chaplin, Director of Wellcome's Culture & Society division.

The Culture & Society Directorate, led by Philomena Gibbons, provides strategic support, challenge, oversight and leadership across C&S and Wellcome Collection, and is also responsible for running the interdisciplinary research Hub based on the 5th floor of Wellcome Collection (detailed in section 5 below).

Activities are managed within five departments:

1. **Collections & Research**, led by Jenny Haynes
2. **Digital Engagement**, led by Tom Scott
3. **Public Programmes**, led by James Peto/Rosie Stanbury (from October 2017)
4. **Wellcome Collection Operations**, led by Donne Robertson
5. **The Hub**, led by Philomena Gibbons

The above group of six forms the Leadership Team for Wellcome Collection.

The Leadership Team is there to support everyone in realising our principles, and to set and communicate clear goals and inspire their teams to achieve them. They ensure that operational practices and working environments enable staff to achieve our objectives.

A strategic advisory board will be established in 2018. The **Wellcome Collection Advisory Board** will include representation from the Board of Governors as well as from Wellcome's Executive Leadership Team, and will include four representatives from beyond Wellcome. It will meet twice a year in an advisory rather than a decision-making capacity.

What follows is a high-level outline of the main roles and responsibilities of the departments and teams charged with the future development and running of Wellcome Collection.

1. Collections & Research

The name of this department has been changed from *Special Collections & Research* to indicate that it now brings together collection development, cataloguing and research activity across all our collections, regardless of format or medium.



Library Assistant, Leila Sellers, returns rare materials to our environmentally controlled stores in the basement of Wellcome Collection. Image credit: Thomas S.G. Farnetti/Wellcome Collection

In order to adopt a consistent approach to making decisions and delivering activity across the entire collection, the department consists of flexible, multidisciplinary teams. This enables us to maximise individual expertise and knowledge without creating siloed pockets of activity around particular parts of the collection or specific projects.

The Collections & Research department is structured into three teams:

1. Collections Development
2. Collections Information
3. Research Development

Collections Development

This team takes a holistic view of our collections, adopting a consistent approach to making decisions about development and acquisitions. It is charged with responsibility for developing all of our collections, regardless of format or medium,

and for making development decisions based on knowledge and understanding of the whole.

Collections Information

Adopting a flexible and adaptable approach, this team ensures that we are able to provide clear, up to date and relevant collections information regardless of medium and format. It maximises access to our collections as far as possible, whilst ensuring that we behave lawfully, ethically and responsibly. Based on better understanding of our users, the team leads cataloguing as a process of continuous improvement and makes a key contribution to our acquisitions processes.

Research Development

This team develops and manages a portfolio of activity that places us at the centre of an experimental and vibrant research culture, blending different research perspectives and practices, and demonstrating diverse ways of exploiting our collections, both analogue and digital, to inspire and support new ideas. The team draws upon internal and external expertise to revisit our collections, building and sharing new understandings of their meaning and significance.



Visitors take part in a Reading Room discussion exploring art, health and ethics. Image credit: Ben Gilbert/Wellcome Collection

2. Digital Engagement

The Digital Engagement department aims to provide the world's most user-centric digital collection platform, designed and built as a free and unrestricted digital space that helps cultivate the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience in support of an inclusive and diverse community.

Core to our new digital strategy is to bring together wellcomecollection.org, wellcomelibrary.org and wellcomeimages.org into a single website under the banner of Wellcome Collection.

To achieve this we have embarked on designing and developing a modern, robust and open platform that provides the foundation for ongoing innovation in search and discovery of our collections and editorial content across the museum and library; backed up by a functional image production system to manage the digitisation and photography workflows.

In 2016 we brought together content, design, technical and digitisation teams. We introduced a new Product Management approach, created new roles for software engineering, user research and design, and began the process of establishing a transparent and lean development process.

Rather than designing and relaunching the entire site in one giant step—a strategy that is both expensive and high-risk—we are instead making small incremental changes, learning from what people say and do along the way. Working this way means that we're able to have more confidence that our ideas, designs and approach are valuable and useful, and we are able to deliver improvements faster, but it also means that the old websites and the new will exist side-by-side for a while.

The department delivers this through the work of the following teams:

1. Digital Editorial Content
2. Digital Experience
3. Digital Platform
4. Digital Production
5. Photography

Digital Editorial Content

This team creates provocative, bold, interdisciplinary and imaginative content that engages, supports and inspires our users. This content, which is targeted at public

and professional audiences, is inspired by our collections, the public programme and our aim to explore life, health and our place in the world.

The team works across wellcomecollection.org, social media and in-venue digital content.

Digital Experience

This team creates a coherent digital user experience that helps cultivate the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience in support of an inclusive and diverse community.

We aim to lead the library sector in digital interface design by ensuring that our user experience supports our users' goals and by researching and testing our design ideas before applying them consistently.

Digital Platform

This team is responsible for developing an innovative open platform that supports our user experience aspirations and allows third-party developers to build upon the platform or access content programmatically.

This means providing programmatic access to our digital assets, metadata and web content by developing a simple, unified and coherent set of APIs. We will also take ownership of and design a domain model that reflects the material nature of our collections, our content and our users' goals and objectives.

Digital Production

This team provides digital access to our collections, improving visibility and increasing use, making it easier for users around the world to access and discover our content.

This means digitising analogue content and ingesting both it and born-digital content (including moving image and sound, digital images and text-based digital objects) into our systems.

Photography

This team delivers technical and creative photographic services to Wellcome and our users, while also being a centre of excellence and expertise for external and internal communities.

This means taking responsibility for high-quality digitisation of our collections and for providing Wellcome with creative and engaging editorial photography, to best reflect and promote Wellcome's diverse work.



Composite image of Steve Pocock, photographer, preparing and shooting large items for digitisation in Wellcome Collection's photographic studio. Image credit: Thomas S G Farnetti/Wellcome Collection

3. Public Programmes

The Public Programmes department is responsible for driving the content development and delivery of temporary and permanent exhibitions, the Reading Room, events, youth programme, publishing, touring exhibitions and the loan of collection objects to external venues.

These responsibilities are divided among three teams:

1. Exhibitions
2. Live Programme
3. Publishing

Exhibitions

The Exhibitions team develops and delivers a variety of innovative exhibitions and projects for a wide range of audiences. This work focuses on delivering multi-layered, experimental and diverse displays that encourage our audiences to think and feel differently about health, life and our place in the world.

These projects are developed internally or with external partners, researchers, curators, artists and producers. Often these exhibitions act as platforms to develop co-produced content which integrates diverse perspectives, in collaboration with Live Programmes, Digital and Publications. Work also includes commissioning new research through the process of artist's enquiry and curatorial investigation.

Areas of work include temporary and permanent exhibitions within Wellcome Collection, national and international touring, loans to other venues as well as maximising links with Henry's Wellcome's collection held at the Science Museum.



A visitor looking at a miniature Iguanodon (Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins, Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London) and dinosaur model (Grant Museum of Zoology, UCL), part of the exhibition *Making Nature*. Image credit: Thomas S.G. Farnetti/Wellcome Collection

Live Programme

The Live Programme team provides expertise in producing a variety of innovative live activities for a range of audiences in Wellcome Collection. Their work focuses on

producing surprising, stimulating content to encourage our audiences to think and feel differently about health.

Projects are often developed with external partners, producers, broadcasters, educators and our audiences. Content is developed to accompany temporary exhibitions, publications, the Reading Room, library collections and digital projects as well as stand-alone projects.

Specific strands of activity include informal engagement with young people, a schools programme, pop-up activities in the Reading Room and promoted events for adult audiences. Work with underrepresented groups identified through the audience development strategy will be embedded across all strands of work.

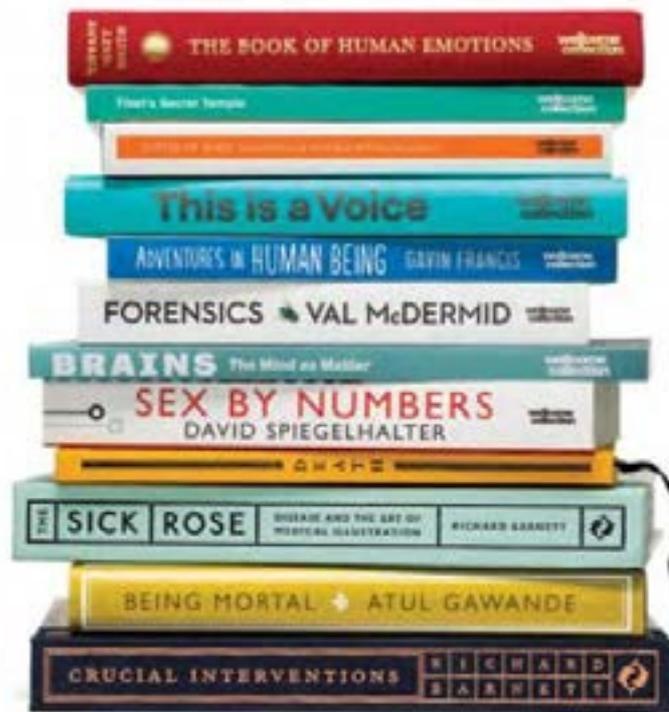


Visitors turn an emotional moment into an instantly shareable moving image, or gif during Friday late: *Feeling Emotional*. Image credit: Thomas S G Farnetti/Wellcome Collection

Publishing

The Publishing team is responsible for publishing printed (and digital) books that relate to Wellcome Collection exhibitions, collections and areas of interest. Working mostly via established partnerships, the team commissions and produces books that respond creatively to content from the wider Wellcome Collection programme and collections, as well as standalone projects.

The team also delivers the annual Wellcome Book Prize in collaboration with Communications.



A selection of books published by Wellcome Collection. Image credit: Thomas S.G. Farnetti/Wellcome Collection

4. Wellcome Collection Operations

Within Wellcome Collection Operations, there are five teams providing a number of critical integrated services and expertise for the smooth and efficient running of Wellcome Collection and the care and preservation of our unique and distinctive collections. These are:

1. Commercial Development
2. Communications & Marketing
3. Conservation and Collection Care
4. Library Experience and Engagement
5. Visitor Experience

Commercial Development

Commercial activities reflect the Wellcome Collection brand. The approach is underpinned by the understanding that profit is the priority but not at the expense of the brand fit and overall visitor experience.

The Commercial Development team is structured by trading strands:

- Event Spaces
- Wellcome Collection merchandise
- Wellcome Shop and e-commerce (in partnership with Blackwell's)
- Wellcome Café and Wellcome Kitchen (in partnership with Benugo).

Communications and Marketing

Our communications are handled by the Marketing and Media teams, which take a strategic approach to maximising awareness of and engagement with our broad offer – onsite, offsite and online. They work together to create innovative and effective cross-media campaigns ensuring a positive visitor experience and managing our reputation with visitors, influencers and peers.

Conservation and Collections Care

This Conservation and Collections Care team provides high-quality professional care for all our collections, supporting the strategic aims of long-term stewardship, accessibility and public engagement. It provides expertise, frameworks and policies and works with other teams to implement them. Collection care is the responsibility of everyone in Wellcome Collection.



Library Assistant, Jim Williamson, who joined Wellcome in 1992, holds one of the American early printed books. Image credit: Thomas S.G. Farnetti/Wellcome Collection

Library Experience and Engagement

The Library Experience and Engagement team is responsible for delivering an outstanding environment that enables research to thrive, providing a unique and unrivalled visitor experience. With an emphasis on providing access to information, the team creates a responsive offer which not only meets the needs of current users but evolves and improves continuously to meet the needs of new and developing audiences. It also supports great ideas and inspired thinking by taking a bold and imaginative approach to increasing and enhancing engagement with our collections.



Visitor Experience Assistant, Nick Dent, engaging with visitors during a busk on phrenology. Image credit: Thomas S.G. Farnetti/Wellcome Collection

Visitor Experience

The Visitor Experience team is key to ensuring visitors engage with everything Wellcome Collection has to offer through a high-quality, interactive and multi-layered experience. This includes every stage of their contact, spanning pre-visit information and planning, in venue interaction and engagement, and post-visit communication and feedback.

Team members inspire curiosity, catalyse conversations and stimulate ideas in order to open up dialogue and debate with the widest audience. They make the venue visitor-centric, actively listening to visitors and adapting to their needs, crafting the experience to deliver unique, personal and authentic engagement.

5. The Hub

Located at the top of Wellcome Collection, The Hub is a dynamic interdisciplinary research space where people from a range of backgrounds and expertise collaborate on projects exploring topics related to medicine, life and art. The central residents are the recipients of the Hub Award, a grant of £1m over two years which brings together a team to progress a cross-disciplinary area of work around a theme linked to the vision of Wellcome.

The Hub is also the focal point of research into interdisciplinary practice, exploring how new knowledge is formed and how different perspectives can resonate with each other to produce new insights into what it is to be human. This is achieved through convening practitioners, holding workshops, developing collaborative projects and engaging with people early in their careers through an annual week-long summer school.



Participants holding a workshop discussion in the Hub. Image credit: TBC