

## Editorial

Heather Hughes (Professor of Cultural Heritage Studies, University of Lincoln)  
Sukhy Johal (Director, Centre for Culture and Creativity)  
Anna Scott (Assistant Director, Transported; Heritage Dot Co-ordinator)

### Heritage Dot 2.0 Edition

Heritage Dot 2.0, the University of Lincoln's digital cultural heritage conference, took place online in March 2023. We were delighted that the National Lottery Heritage Fund partnered us once again, as they had done for Heritage Dot 1.0 in 2019.

Hosted by the Centre for Culture and Creativity at Lincoln, the 2023 conference theme was 'Partnerships, participation and platforms'; it attracted wide interest from both memory and academic institutions. Practitioners and researchers based in several countries treated attendees to an enormous range of case studies, from well-known radio programmes to untold stories celebrated on trails. In fact, the range of digital applications was extraordinary and reminds us that the term 'digital cultural heritage' covers a vast ecosystem of platforms and tools to engage visitors, manage collections, mine data, understand land use, protect against climate change – and more. The full programme can be accessed at <https://heritagedot.org/2023-programme/>.

The papers included in this special edition of IMPact are testimony to the richness of the subject matter discussed at the conference. The contribution by Geoffrey Belknap, Samantha Blickhan and Alex Fitzpatrick reminds us of the critical role that volunteers now play in most heritage organisations and programmes and how they can be supported in a digital environment (of course with the additional consideration that their project was affected by Covid). They were interested in recruiting local groups for a 'citizen science' project and were especially keen to involve volunteers from under-represented sections of the community. The steps they put in place to support volunteers are surely an example of good practice – and as they point out, are hopeful that the lessons learnt can inform crowdsourcing projects more widely.

Isilda Almeida's paper is also concerned with underrepresented groups – but in a very different context. She reports on an initiative to use drone technology to assist heritage organisations to map perceived barriers to participation, in this case in UK national parks. She notes that this is not a widely-used application of drone technology and importantly, raises the host of ethical issues associated with this technology. The jury is out, as they say.

Lara Band's paper recounts her experiences of designing and implementing a new audio trail, the Unseen Heard, for a women's festival in Kent, UK. (Her work also reminds us of the immensely hard work involved in researching heritage trails – especially those that aim to tell stories about which archives are generally silent.) She usefully reflects on some of the challenges of using digital apps that seem perfect at the time but become unavailable later, surely an issue that affects so many organisations.

And then, to underline the great variety of papers presented at the conference, something completely different. (It was also wonderful to see so many collaborators on this project, from undergraduate students to established senior professors.) Rana Nur Karataş and colleagues set out to test the usefulness of aerial imaging to trace changes in the rural landscape of Nikea (Iznik), Turkey between 1985 and 2022. They conclude that the resulting accuracy is sufficiently robust to create a database, which will help assess both continuity and change in this important heritage landscape.