

EMBARGOED FOR THURSDAY 10TH DECEMBER 10:00

Tours of museums, galleries and heritage sites to be given virtual upgrade with new digital platform 'Curatours'



- Visitors to connect live to tours from expert curators and guides from anywhere in the world
- Several major venues and organisations including the Anne Frank House and National Trust Scotland already working as early partners
- Latest development by Cooperative Innovations, part-funded by Innovate UK, to launch early 2021
- Demo video and images can be found [here](#)

Curatours - A Social Platform For Virtual Tours. For Anyone, Anywhere.

LONDON, 10 DECEMBER 2020: [Cooperative Innovations](#), developers of multi-user online experiences, announces new digital platform 'Curatours' to open the virtual doors of popular cultural institutions, museums and galleries. Part-funded by the UK Government's innovation fund Innovate UK, the 'Curatours' app will offer an immersive experience where visitors can skip queues and get closer to artefacts, precious objects and put questions to the experts on live tours. This latest advancement to the visitor's experience is to launch in early 2021.

Visitors will access the 'Curatours' app via a smartphone, tablet, PC, web browser or a VR headset with the ability to choose tailored tours, join friends, family, classmates and other visitors online, and experience cultural and heritage sites that before now they were unable to visit. The off-site digital tour platform unlocks new opportunities for institutions to display their collections, galleries and exhibitions to a global and more diverse audience. With the ongoing impact to the travel and tourism industries, this comes at a time when institutions have seen a dramatic drop in visitor numbers and the digital experience they offer has become more important than ever.

Experts in multiplayer gameplay and narrative storytelling, Cooperative Innovations is a team of BAFTA award winning designers and programmers. Based in West Yorkshire, the team are building the ambitious digitally driven social and accessible experience with art, culture and heritage fans in mind.

Emma Cooper, Project Lead at Cooperative Innovations, said: “Going to a museum or gallery has always been a shared and sociable experience. As a result of COVID-19, we have seen the rapid adoption of technology to help us stay connected. Digital experiences have become crucial for cultural institutions to stay open, engage their audiences and attract new visitors.

To date, virtual tours can feel like a solitary one-way experience. Curatours is our solution to this, making the experience a social one that can be shared with anyone, anywhere in the world. At Cooperative Innovations bringing people together virtually is our aim and after four years of R&D coupled with the Innovate UK grant we are developing the technology to achieve this.”

There are two parts to the ‘Curatours’ platform, the end user app and a maker, which together help cultural institutions to create, experience and host social offsite tours.

Curatours App

The Curatours app offers an accessible and enhanced way for visitors to experience museums and galleries, safely at their own pace or together with friends, classmates and family without having to travel anywhere. Whilst on a tour, visitors can:

- Look in detail at 3D captures of artefacts and environments;
- Take part in Live Tours and ask questions to the guide;
- Interact with their friends, family, classmates and other visitors;
- Read text, view images and watch videos;
- Watch pre-recorded 3D performances;
- Listen to audio recordings.

Curatours Maker

Curatours Maker enables creatives, gallery designers and heritage site experts to deliver offsite tours for digital visitors to enjoy. By repurposing existing content and creating new material, curators and public engagement teams will have an adaptable way of interpreting, configuring and tailoring tours for different visitors’ needs. Benefits include:

- Easily integrate artefact and environment scans;
- Upload and re-use existing text, image, audio and video content;
- Create rich interactions and repurpose existing interpretations;
- Setup & schedule free or paid Live Tours for specific times;
- Pre-record a tour for visitors to enjoy at their own leisure;
- View artefact and space interaction and usage analytics;
- Link to their online shop;
- Set donation and visitor fee details.

Set to launch in early 2021, ‘Curatours’ is in the development stage with early partners including the Anne Frank House and National Trust Scotland already involved. ‘Curatours’ is actively looking for additional partners for the platform launch.

Further information can be found by heading to the website <https://cura.tours>

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Press Kit Link:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sz8hk0yez03gitn/AAA_3qkO2tJsltBpcQd9dSBsa?dl=0

About Cooperative Innovations:

Driven by a nerdy excitement and passion for cooperative social experiences, Cooperative Innovations is an immersive technology studio that makes experiences that bring people together. Cooperative Innovations is a multidisciplinary BAFTA award winning team with experience in gaming, storytelling and e-learning. <https://www.coopinnovations.co.uk>

Cooperative Innovations received funding in March 2020 from Innovate UK to develop a prototype of Curatours. The underlying technology the company is working on comes from the previous four years of R&D and decades of developing multiplayer and social experiences.

About the National Trust for Scotland

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. Every day, the hundreds of thousands of members, donors, volunteers and staff at the charity help to protect Scotland's natural and national treasures for us all to enjoy. From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, we do what we do... for the love of Scotland. Join us at www.nts.org.uk/love