

**Mike Saunders, VP Business Development and
Strategic Partnerships, Artfinder**
Using mobile technologies to engage new audiences

Mike has been a leading expert in digital media for 15 years – having worked across broadcast, education, culture and commercial sectors. He has recently taken up a new position at Artfinder to lead business development and strategic partnerships. Previously, he spent five years as Director of Digital Media at Kew Gardens, where he wrote and implemented their digital strategy and delivered a suite of products to promote, connect and sell Kew's Work. Mike is also a member of international charity ActionAid's Digital Advisory Board, a member of the Speaker's Advisory Council on Public Engagement at Parliament, and visiting lecturer at Middlesex University.

This seminar looked at why mobile is becoming such a crucial part of the marketing mix and the way that it can be used to reach new and existing audiences.

Finding art

It's been inspiring to be in the talks and discussion so far today. Some things that particularly resonated included listening to audiences, meaningful engagement, Andy's comment about going from an institution centric to art centric approach and Erica's points about the difficulties of encouraging people to take a risk. These things will come into this talk.

I work for Artfinder, recently having come from Kew Gardens. So I've moved from working inside an institution to a supplier that works with art institutions.

If you'd like to download the apps as we talk you can find them at www.artfinder.com/app which has apps for an iPhone.

Before talking about mobile, it's important to consider how it fits into wider engagement strategies.

Artfinder is focused on visual arts. The things we are talking about today are relevant across the cultural sector but Artfinder is about visual art. It's about finding art both physically/literally and also in the sense of discovering art metaphorically.

Our observation is that art is a passion that many people have and it's existed for a very long time. It's weirdly popular. The number of people who go to galleries is greater than going to football matches.

But it is sometimes difficult to find art; both finding out where to go and also aesthetically and in terms of discovering your taste. Many people don't know what they really want out to get out of art. They might go to an exhibition every now and again and enjoy it and want more but are not sure where to go next. These are the issues we are trying to address.

Artfinder's vision is a 'radio for art'. If you think of music (Spencer, our CEO used to work for Last FM so this is his analogy), 200 years ago your experience of music would mainly have been singing in the pub or hearing music in church, unless you were the Archbishop of Salzburg and could commission people like Mozart to compose something for your front room.

Technical innovations changed this; radio and recorded music being the two primary ones. It made it easily available and enabled a way of talking about music that we are all familiar with – and music is now so available it's there when we are working, down the pub, in the street - it's like a commodity.

This has never really happened for art. We've not had something that makes everyone feel comfortable on an every day basis, discussing and saying what they like or don't like about it. One of the things we are therefore trying to do is find a 'radio for art.'

The reason we are doing that is because we want to help provide better ways of engaging with art – not necessarily digitally – because most people encounter art through museums and galleries. Therefore everything we do is locked down into the way that people experience art in museums and galleries. It means that our relationship with you is absolutely fundamental. We can't get people into art without them experiencing art in galleries and museums around the country. So, we are interested in genuine partnerships and working with you to find out what those partnerships actually mean.

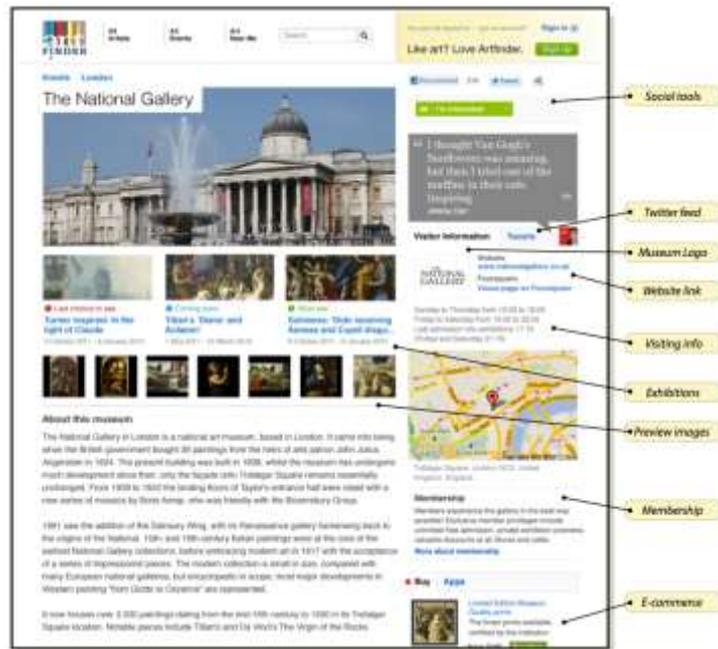
We are about developing new audiences. We're interested in these people who know that they want something but don't know what it is and how we can help move them up this engagement ladder and get them into the 'habit' of art – experiencing, enjoying and sharing art.

Our audiences [for Artfinder] are fairly flat across all the demographics though we do have a peak in younger audiences. We think this is because people in their 20s and 30s are underserved in that they don't like academic reviews of art, they like something visceral, punchy, immediate. So for example, they might want to know what their Facebook friends have said about an exhibition. They want some 'bite size' tips – like if there is one thing you need to do when you go to an exhibition what is it? They also want to feel that they aren't going to look stupid when they get there.

We therefore do three things

1. To devise a better user's guide to exhibitions. It's a listing service but there are several things that people want from a listings service – primarily they want to see some of the art that they will see. It's only by looking at it that they will decide if it will be a comfortable experience.

So there are thumbnail images which are preview pictures of what you might be able to see. You can see those on the website, collect them, and share them with your friends on Facebook. Also, in the top right hand corner we have a lime green button which says 'I'm interested'. This then flows through into your Facebook timeline and people can follow you within the Artfinder community as well.



The Artfinder community is at the hub of what we are trying to do.

2. Trying to work out what a 'habit of art' might be and help people to be more comfortable about experiencing art – seeing it as less of a risk and more as something exciting and engaging to do. We have some deep dive applications so if you find something that you are really interested in you can get more detail. There are also 'streams of images' which you can browse. There are about 110,000 works on Artfinder and they can be browsed in lots of ways, even what other people have collected. You can also follow other people who've made collections – discovering art in a non-linear way.
3. The opportunity for people to buy something authentic, personal and unique. This is part of the overall user experience. In order to offer people art that is interesting to them we need to develop the community, language, vocabulary and the habit of art so that then people might want to buy something which is personal to them. They are interested in buying authentic art but we also know that it is an intimidating experience if you don't know much about it.

There's an interesting statistic – does anyone know where most people go to buy art or wall décor?

[Delegates answer 'Ikea']

Yes, Ikea or Habitat. And they are willing to spend a reasonable amount of money on something which is mass-produced and framed. And why not you might ask? Well, we believe that there's much more interesting and exciting art available at about the same price point – limited edition prints by quite well

known artists. It then becomes something which is personal to them. It's a talking point – it's part of their personality and the way that they project themselves on the world.

This quotation from The Foundling Museum which we are working with shows how they are 'punching above their weight':

"For a small museum like the Foundling, with limited marketing resources, Artfinder's app and site are invaluable. Artfinder [...] enables the Foundling Museum to have a presence alongside major national museums."

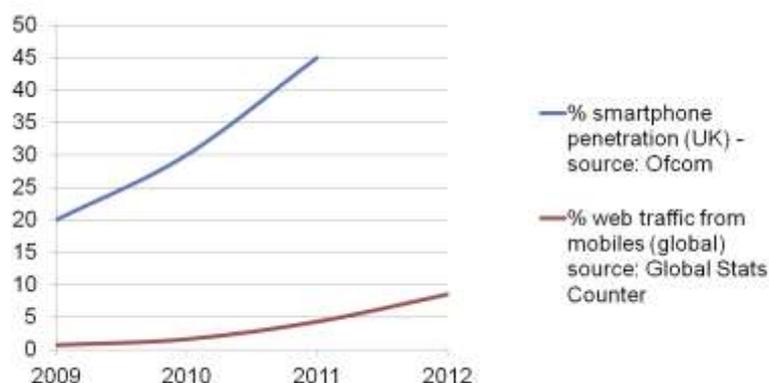
Caro Howell, Director of the Foundling Museum

Mobile

Some statistics about mobile usage in the UK.

- 91% of adults have a mobile phone (Ofcom, 2011)
- 45% of UK has a smart phone (Google / Ipsos Jan 2012). (This has probably edged over 50% now – so we can say that the majority of adults have a smart phone).
- 84% of smart phone owners use it to access internet (eDigital Research, 2012). The mobile web is very important now.
- 10% approximate tablet ownership (Ofcom) – this is growing rapidly but still quite small.
- 65% increase in mCommerce over the last year (Marketing Week). This is one of the areas that people have been talking about as a growth area but this needs to be treated with caution because it's mainly high street retail at the moment.

The most interesting line here is the one at the bottom which shows the proportion of web traffic coming from mobile phones. Whilst it's around 10% at the moment it is predicted that it will be more like 35% by 2016. Within a few years a significant proportion of web traffic will come from peoples' mobile phones.



According to Ofcom, there is a higher proportion of teenage audiences using smart phones than other age groups. Also, amongst teenagers, females are more likely to use smart phones than males, whereas in other age groups it is the other way round.

There are some interesting changes. I have an 11 year old son and he has a Blackberry and everyone in his class has a smart phone which they BBM on. It really is something, like it or not, we have to live with. These are the age groups which are going to be moving up into the next demographic.

There is a disparate device and operating system market. They all have slightly different technologies, sizes of handsets and functionality on the handsets – which makes making mobile stuff a minefield. Google Android applications are increasingly moving away from the rest, even Apple, though Apple leads the field in terms of sales.

Content, audiences, platforms

The Rosetta Stone is a nice analogy because it was the key to the Greek hieroglyphics. Wouldn't it be nice if we had a way of being able to translate our wonderful content into lots of different platforms?

I thought I would talk about developing a project using mobile.

Firstly, we need to be really clear about who we are doing this for. What technology do they have access to and are prepared to use?

Secondly, why are you doing it? It's easy to fudge this. The clearer you can be at the beginning about why you are doing it, the better the eventual outcome will be. A model I use to base my objects around has

- Reach – increasing the numbers of people we are attracting
- Revenue – making or saving money
- Reputation – community engagement and the ripple out effect

Most projects can address two of these areas. If you are addressing all three areas you're probably doing too much. You are most likely to be successful if you concentrate on one.

Content is a real headache. But whatever you do, consider what the content is and how it is going to be used across different platforms. You don't want to be doing is creating a service which requires manipulation of content in lots of different ways in different places. There are ways of dealing with this – some of the work we did at Kew involved creating a central repository in the website and then taking feeds out of that into the other channels.

The most important point is probably the hardest to do. That is, to start small – which may be a long way from where you want to be – we call it the 'minimum viable' – what can you put out in the market place that people can respond to?

One of the beauties of digital technology is that it can be altered fairly easily. If you can do something simple and relatively cheap then you can afford to fail. You could try several things and see what works. It may only be the fourth or fifth thing that's successful. It's difficult in the arts and wider public sector sometimes, because of the way that projects are procured. You can do it if you build this in to your project plan.

Linked to this, you need to find a supplier that is flexible and agile. Many suppliers are not very comfortable with this because it's a risk. It's more of a partnership model.

Here are a few considerations around different mobile options.

	iBook / eBook	Native phone App	HTML 5 / wrapper app	Mobile site
Cost	£1 – 20k depending on complexity.	£5-50k per platform	£5 – 50k for first platform. Then approx 20% per additional platform	£1 - £50k depending on complexity. Although in principle works cross platform, in practice allow 10% to optimise per platform.
User experience	Good for simple navigation	Very good – especially for complex functions	Can be slow – esp. with animations	Good for simple information
Market	iBook: everyone with iPad or iPhone eBook: Kindle, tablets etc	Almost half of us have smartphones which can load apps	Almost half of us have smartphones...	Works on all smartphones – and some feature phones too. Web traffic from mobiles predicted 50% by 2016,
Other pros	iBook works out of the box on iPad & iPhone.	iTunes platform is international – and can result in large downloads if promoted	Some companies offer wrappers that they keep updated for all platforms	Simple to update / maintain
Other cons	iBook restricted to Apple. Format can be restrictive	Can be difficult to maintain.	Problems if you need to access low level functions (e.g. camera)	

Optimising your site and other key considerations for the mobile project

- Know the context: what people are doing, where, how they're doing it and who they are doing it with. Location specific needs work well. Mobile devices are personal – unlike pc use.
- Keep it very, very, very simple – this is particularly true if you are producing a mobile website.
- Minimise images. Don't be afraid of white space!
- Brand consistency through colour, type & logos
- Avoid Flash and Java to maximise compatibility
- Allow people to visit full site – provide a link at the bottom as they may want further functionality
- Use 'm.' URL
- Design for multiple devices and test (e.g. GoMo – a Google tool which shows what a site will look like on a mobile)

It's useful to look at mobile projects that have been going for a long time as they have ironed out many of the initial problems. EBay and MOMA are worth looking at. Flickr has won awards for its mobile work because it focuses on its essence – the content - which is the photographs.

[Mike then asked people to discuss in groups, some of the issues which were important to them – for about 10 minutes – afterwards they were invited to share some of the points from the discussions and ask further questions].

Sara Harrison, Cryptic: *We have an app already – you can download it for free from iTunes. It's not really doing what we want. It's more like a website. It's only available on iPhone. I was interested in what you said about the HTML 5 wrapper wrap. Can we develop this from what we have already or do we have to start from scratch?*

MS: Technically yes you do because you can't really 'reverse engineer' it but you might be able to go to a developer with what you have and quite a lot of the work will already have been done – like how the user experience works etc.

SH: *The mobile site – if we are re-structuring the website – can I easily optimize the site for mobile or do I need a developer to do this?*

MS: It depends a little on what you are trying to do. In theory, you could do a mobile version of your website using some of the principles we've talked about like minimizing the images and simplifying what you are doing in the interface. Unless you are technically minded though it might be a good idea to get a developer to do this as it's not completely straightforward.

Cheri Strudwick, Assembly Hall Theatre: *Are there any benchmarks around arts venues and use of mobile? We've created two mobile enabled sites for our theatre site and we also manage an ice rink each year. We had 18% overall traffic coming from the mobile site, which we thought was quite good, but how does it compare?*

MS: Across the whole population it's about 10%. I don't know if anyone else here knows specifically about arts stats. It might be worth looking at what Culture 24 has.

Delegate: *do you think that accessing the internet via a pc or mac will eventually be phased out?*

MS: I think it will take a very long time, but there will be a gradual trend towards using mobile devices, including the tablet.

Michael Leonard, BPS Ltd: *Interesting talk but you didn't touch on adaptive media – using Html5 scalable css 3 – the way that a venue can have one site that will scale down to smart phone or tablet. They don't have to have an m site they could just have their standard site picking up using java. We're working on integrating a ticketing format into that so it can work across three versions – pc, tablet and smart phone. One site working across all three platforms seems to be the way that people want to take it.*

MS: If you can do that in terms of your user experience, scaling it down using css as you say, then it is worth considering. Technically it can be more tricky to get it up and running so you need in house expertise or a good supplier.

ML: *We're developers and looking to work with venues. Another quick point, do you recommend that the developer/supplier has the footprint to the app or should the organisation register with Google or Apple and they hold the domain holder of their own material.*

MS: I think it depends on whether the institution has in house expertise. And if it is part of a series of publications or apps – if you're going to be producing a few over a number of years then it would make sense for the institution to register. On the other hand if you don't have the in house expertise or have a good supplier – it would make sense for them to hold this.

[Partly inaudible question about ticketing and mobiles]

MS: Some of the suppliers are going towards scan-able barcodes on your mobile but of course you have to have the infrastructure at the gates for that to work. Until that infrastructure is in place, it's a lot more difficult to deal with the logistics of printing it out and bringing the ticket and so-on.

Case studies

These are three case studies from my own experience. The first is the Artfinder iPhone app. One of the things I wanted to share about this is that we have an in house development team at Artfinder so we have been able to do this iterative approach. So we are on the fourth version of the app.

It's changed quite radically since the first version. It's focused on listings because this is what seems to have resonated.



It helps you to locate exhibitions near to me – so at the time I was nearest to The Barbican so it shows the Bauhaus exhibition at The Barbican – if you tap on the exhibition it takes you through to preview images. You can scroll horizontally across those. If you like any of those you can then zoom them up to full screen. If you are a member of Artfinder you can collect that as part of your collection. The green button 'I'm interested' then integrates with the main Artfinder platform. It's a concentrated version of the website.

Also in the app, we have the permanent collections of some of the galleries and museums if we have it on the platform. As well as seeing particular exhibitions you can also get a taste of what is available all the time.

There's a simple map that covers all the institutions we work with. There is a little plus icon which enables you to add an exhibition to the map – it's a way of crowd-sourcing material.

We have institutions throughout the UK, in the USA and now in Paris too. The map is simple, based on Google maps. Anything that goes away from the Google maps experience you do at your own peril because people are used to dealing with them.

There is also a clever piece of technology which allows you to point the phone at a piece of work you might like (if you're allowed to in that institution). It doesn't actually take a picture of it – it just recognises the image and if it is on our platform it favourites it and then when you go back to the Artfinder site you'd have it in your collection.

You have your own personal bit of the app. Everything you've favourited is available within the app for you to see. It's linked to Facebook too so it will appear on your timeline in Facebook. That ripple out effect through social media is very important.

We decided to do this as an app rather than a mobile site because we thought it would work well on the iPhone platform in terms of user experience. Also some of the lower level stuff like image recognition was easier using an app.

The second example comes from my time at Kew. This was a different experience. We wanted to help people to navigate around the big outdoor area at Kew. We knew that people had problems with this and our hypothesis was that a mobile app would help.

We commissioned research from Morris Hargreaves McIntyre. This aimed to find out how people arrived at the gardens, what they were expecting when they arrived,

what they were doing as they moved around the gardens and what they felt about their experience when they left.

We had anticipated that they would want an itinerary and that they would come with an expectation of a learning experience.

However, over 66% didn't do any planning. They came along and wandered round. In addition, the majority also weren't interested in learning as such. It was more to do with things like being at one with nature.

With MHM we built up segments based on motivation. The different segments had motivations which varied from social reasons, escaping, emotional release, be at one with nature. There were some who were interested in learning but a relatively small number.

So, the app was based on three segments: leisure families, social spacers and the learning families. We came up with the idea of being 'delightfully lost'. The principles behind it therefore weren't prescriptive – we didn't want to tell people where to go. Also, whilst learning wasn't the primary aim, we wanted people to discover interesting things. 10-15% more people said they had had a learning experience having used the app than before.



We wanted to use the app to encourage serendipity – surprising things that you might not discover without the app.

The way it worked was quite simple. There was a section on what was looking great on the day – visually based and also linked to a map. It's possible to customize the map so you only see what you want to.

We added QR codes to some of the plant labels. In this situation, working with an information label, it works quite well. So you can scan the code and it will give you lots of extra detail.

Finally, we dabbled with augmented reality. This combines the phone's camera with the location and direction – so you point the camera on the phone at something and it gives you extra information layered on top. We made an augmented reality viewer for the trees at Kew. People enjoyed it but it wasn't accurate enough to be able to identify all the trees. But we used a plug and play piece of software to do it, so we didn't have to do it all from scratch.

The third case study is for one of the Artfinder iBooks. This is part of the idea of what a radio for art might be. It's not quite there yet but it shows some of the potential.

iBooks are native to both iPads and iPhones. We think that this is an interesting way of doing a deep dive into an artist, exhibition, genre. It's very simple. There's a linear navigation. Where it becomes interesting is in some of the pinch and zoom aspects, and audio-visual content.

[Mike then played a short piece of video from the iBook]

In this particular instance – Francis Bacon – we worked with the Francis Bacon estate to offer some works for sale. Going to the back of the book you can click on the images and it will take you through to the Artfinder store. As an overall publication it does many things but quite simply and we think that's an interesting use of this platform.

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