

CASE STUDY

Museum of Making at Derby Silk Museum

Exterior of the Museum of Making at Derby Silk Mill. © Pictoria Pictures/Derby Museums. Courtesy of Derby Museums.

BUILDING AN IN-PERSON VISITOR EXPERIENCE WITH EMUSEUM

Inside the **Museum of Making at Derby Silk Mill**, visitors are treated to a look into the industrial past. Situated on the historic site of Lombe's Mill, an early modern factory, the Museum of Making showcases local manufacturing history and its role in ongoing innovations.

Its collection, "**a treasure trove of objects**," encompass over 30,000 items on public display, ranging from raw materials to a seven-ton Rolls-Royce Trent 1000 engine suspended in the atrium.

The Museum of Making is part of **Derby Museums**, an independent charitable trust in Derby, UK, which also oversees the **Derby Museum and Art Gallery** and **Pickford's House**. Formerly known as the Derby Industrial Museum, it closed temporarily in 2011 for a redevelopment phase and building work, resulting in a long-awaited reopening as the Museum of Making.

OBJECTIVES

Prior to the 2021 reopening, Gallery Systems was brought into the folds. Derby Museums upgraded its collections management system to **TMS** in 2016 for its three museums.

Pleased with the outcome, the Museum of Making team approached Gallery Systems for a software solution to create an in-person visitor experience.

"On the second floor of the Museum of Making, we have a gallery called **The Assemblage**," explains Spencer Bailey, Collections Manager. For visitors, the Assemblage resembles an open museum storehouse.

OVERVIEW

Collection of over 30,000 objects, showcasing the history of industrial making in Derby and beyond

Products

- **eMuseum**
- **TMS** (The Museum System)
- **Managed Hosting**

Return on Investment

- A unique, in-person experience for visitors to explore the Museum's collection
- Virtual guide around a gallery, accessible through on-site terminals or visitors' cellphones using a QR code
- Ability to create future eMuseum projects, including online collections

"All these materials that would have been boxed up in storage is on display. But there are no labels, no formal interpretation. The objects are arranged by materials—so, there are sections for metal, wood, glass, stone, ceramic, organic material, synthetics, and textiles."

The Museum wanted a navigational platform for this unconventional gallery. To deliver on this objective, their team and Gallery Systems were going to need to get creative.

SOLUTION

Already a **TMS** client, the Museum of Making opted to implement **eMuseum**, the online collections software by Gallery Systems.

eMuseum is often leveraged to publish collections to a museum's public-facing website. But the Museum of Making had a different goal in mind: an interactive navigational system for The Assemblage.

"Because the gallery has no labels, we decided to use eMuseum for people to navigate around the gallery and its thousands of objects. Whereas a lot of museums have their collections online, our eMuseum only relates to that specific gallery."

Spencer Bailey
Collections Manager



Bringing this vision to life relied on TMS to provide the backend data. The Assemblage and its objects are arranged on a grid system. This grid is communicated to TMS by using locations in the Objects module, and the TMS data gets pulled into eMuseum to generate a mappable gallery.

Keywords from the attributes field in TMS are used to make the objects searchable in eMuseum.

Undeterred despite pandemic circumstances, eMuseum was implemented remotely with guidance offered by Gallery Systems over Zoom and phone calls. The Museum of Making also partnered with a local company to help bring the in-person experience to life.



OUTCOMES

The final result is **Trailmaker**, an interactive, eMuseum-powered guide to The Assemblage. Trailmaker is accessible through in-gallery terminals, preferred by younger visitors, or using a cellphone to scan a QR code that launches the virtual portal.

As its name suggests, Trailmaker generates trails through the gallery. Guests can choose from a pre-curated selection of trails or make their own adventure

"eMuseum gives people a new way of exploring our gallery space. It's quite special."

Spencer Bailey
Collections Manager



—and these trails are even printable from the Museum's kiosks.

OUTCOMES (CONT.)

Encounter an interesting item in the Assemblage? eMuseum can offer its backstory. “If a visitor sees something on a shelf, they can search for its shelf number and find out what that object is,” he explains.

Overall, the Museum of Making feels pleased with its unique eMuseum implementation. “Everyone is onboard with it and updating the data is easy,” says Spencer. “If we run into an issue, someone [from Gallery Systems] gets back to us fairly quick.”



The Assemblage at the Museum of Making. © Speller Metcalfe/Derby Museums. Courtesy of Derby Museums.



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FUTURE

With Trailmaker up and running, the Museum of Making has its sights on a new undertaking. “We have another eMuseum project started,” says Spencer. “It’s at its embryonic stage so quite early days yet.”

This time, the team is working on a more traditional adaptation: an online collection of **Joseph Wright’s** works.

Derby Museums stewards the largest collection of works by Wright in public ownership. Wright, himself born in Derby, was an accomplished 18th-century painter of English landscapes and candlelit portraits. Painting amid the Age of Enlightenment, Wright is perhaps best known for depicting the origins of modern science as the Industrial Revolution took hold in Great Britain.

Publishing its star collection will allow Derby Museums to reach new audiences—while also leveraging the knowledge the team gathered from their first eMuseum project.

“We learned a lot during data mapping from TMS to eMuseum for Trailmaker,” Spencer summarizes, “And we’re looking forward to embarking on a new eMuseum project.”