

Art & artists

Digital audience research report: Understanding visitors' motivations and usage of the online collection

The screenshot shows the Tate website's 'Art and artists' page. At the top, the 'TATE' logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Tate Britain', 'Tate Modern', 'Tate Liverpool', and 'Tate St Ives' are on the right. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the logo, a horizontal menu includes 'Home', 'Art & artists' (which is highlighted), 'Visit', 'What's on', 'Blogs & channel', 'Join & support', 'Learn', 'Research', 'About', and 'Shop'. The main content area features a large abstract painting by John Piper, titled 'Abstract I', dated 1935. Below the painting, there is a 'Show me another' button. To the left of the painting, there is a text box with the following content: 'Discover art from the Tate collection and beyond', 'We hold the national collection of British art from 1500 to the present day and international modern and contemporary art. Our collection includes nearly 70,000 artworks by over 3,000 artists and grows every year.', and 'You can also access nearly 2,500 artworks by Joseph Mallord William Turner from other collections. Together with Tate's own holdings, these form the most comprehensive online catalogue of Turner's work.' To the right of the painting, there is a search bar for 'Find art and artists' and a 'Browse artworks' section with a dropdown menu containing 'Artist', 'Category', 'Style or '-ism'', 'Subject', 'Gallery', and 'Context'.

www.tate.org.uk/art

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Research summary

Art & artists (the online collection) is the most visited area of the website with approximately 40% of users visiting these pages during their visit. This section gets around 500-600K visits per month. We are carrying out a piece of audience research on the Tate website to understand better who our users are and what their motivations are for visiting the site. The final output of this research will be the creation of a segmentation of our online visitors. As part of this work we conducted a short study on Art & artists before the online survey for the whole website in order to define some of the questions regarding motivation and usage behaviours. Understanding our audiences and evaluating the impact and value of their digital experiences is a vital element of Tate's [digital transformation](#).

Research objectives

The main objectives of this piece of research are:

1. To understand why people visit the online collection
2. To understand what are the main activities that people do
3. To get feedback from users for future improvements

Methodology

The method used to collect this data was a short survey that consisted of 3 questions: motivation to visit the online collection, usage and improvements (see appendix). The tool used to collect the data was Qualaroo and the responses were linked to Google Analytics. The survey was added to all the pages under www.tate.org.uk/art which includes the collection and some research publications (the J.M.W. Turner: sketchbooks, drawings and watercolours catalogue; *The Sublime*; the *Camden Town Group in context*; *In Focus*). The survey was live for one week between 14 - 20 January 2014. The number of responses were: Q1 (motivation, open question) - 780; Q2 (usage) - 673; Q3 (what to improve, open question) - 289 comments.

The responses were coded in different motivational categories. However, there are some limitations regarding the detail of the information provided in the open question to categorise all the responses. Besides this limitation, some key motivations and usages were identified. The results of this research have been added to the overall website survey as questions or response options so we will be able to do further analysis and cross-reference the responses using different variables and metrics.

Key findings & recommendations

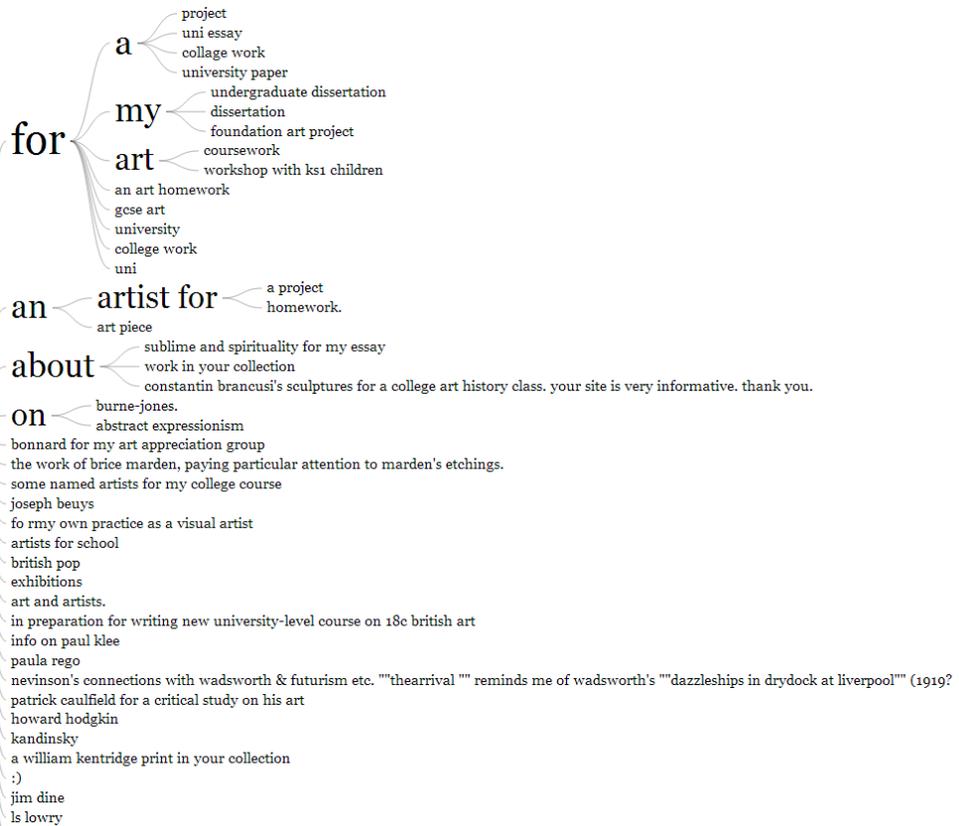
- Art & artists is a valuable and trustworthy resource about art for our users. There are a wide range of reasons why visits are made to the online collection, and visitors have different levels of art knowledge. In consequence, the information required and content needs vary. Users with a high art knowledge and expertise require very detailed information about art while other users with a more general knowledge, require more guidance to find things they may be interested in and want information that is easy for them to read.
- The visit mode to the collection varies from intellectual, where there is a learning or research objective, to a more visual and aesthetic experience where users are looking for inspiration or images to browse. For the first category, users are normally in a more targeted visit mode and the main functionalities used are the search or browse by subjects or categories, so improvements and an extension of the terms listed will have a very positive impact on the experience of these users. For the second category, new innovative ways to explore the collection could be added to the site for a more inspirational experience and to improve engagement with the site.
- Users want more information about the art and links to related content such as videos, downloads and teaching resources. As some of this content is available in other sections of the website, adding a 'See also' section on the pages will enhance the experience, create more in-depth visits and increase the awareness of content in other sections.
- Users come to the online collection to plan a visit to the gallery - 17% of the respondents were looking for information about which artworks were on display in order to plan a visit or find more information or to remember artworks seen during their visit. One key improvement would be to have an interactive map with the artworks on display, as existed on the old website. There are opportunities to use technology to enhance the link with the collection and the experience before, during and after the gallery visit.
- J.M.W. Turner is a popular subject searched by users. The creation of a hub page for this artist, linked from the Art & artists landing page, would facilitate users to access and discover the huge amount of content available.
- The main improvements suggested by users relate to images. Users want more images of the artworks and per artwork, with higher quality and zoom options to see the details.
- Users are disappointed when images or text are not available for the artworks and artists' pages. A way to filter search results listings to only show items with images or text would improve the experience of these users.
- The traffic to this section comes mainly from search engines and this brings higher percentage of new visitors than other sections of the website. Improvements on SEO for

this section could boost the number of visits from people searching for art.

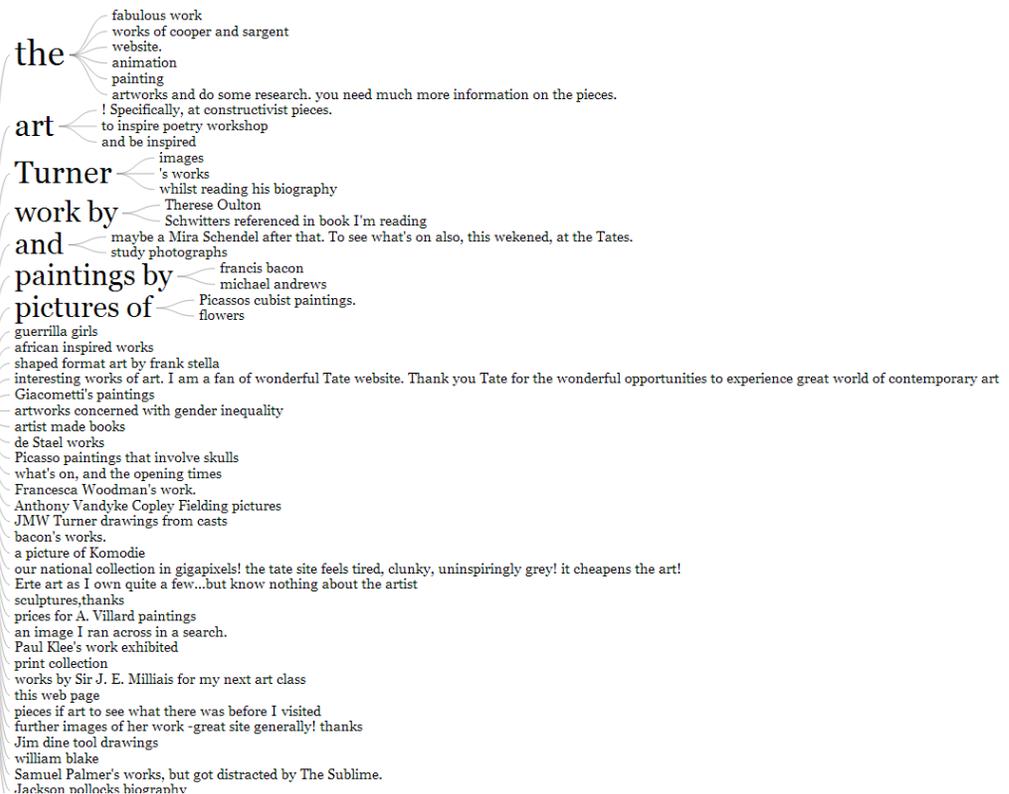
Several of the recommendations listed here are being implemented as part of the [Archives and Access project](#) or are included as separate projects in the digital roadmap.

This research has informed the overall website survey research. The most common motivations and actions were added to the survey question options. There are also additional questions about knowledge of art, involvement with art (professional, teaching, studying), level of study, level of teaching and type of visit. The responses will help us to create the digital audience segments and evaluate content expectations and needs.

research



Look at





Four main type of visits were identified in this research. These were:

- **Intellectual** visit where the user is interested in learning and finding specific information about a topic - for example for school/university work or professional work related to art.
- **Aesthetic/emotional** visit where users are searching for inspiration, visual in many instances, or come to the site to view images of specific artworks because they like them, saw them in a recent visit or sometimes because they live in other countries and can't see them in person.
- **Planning** visit where users are searching for artworks on display that they can see in their gallery visit.
- **Social** visit where the user is looking for artworks to share on social media or use on their own blogs/websites.

Intellectual	Aesthetic / emotional
<p><i>To research about Piet Mondrian and to see some of his paintings. My research is part of my Art A level and I knew that your website is a reliable and trustworthy source of information.</i></p> <p><i>I am a masters student and I am interested in collecting practices, and particularly the ARTIST ROOMS collection.</i></p> <p><i>Research early 18th century self-portraits and their provenance</i></p> <p><i>Learning for the exam of Modern Art History</i></p> <p><i>Look up first world war paintings for teaching and research purposes thank you</i></p> <p><i>To research the terms 'Romanticism' and 'Neo-Romanticism' and try to establish the parallels and contrasts</i></p>	<p><i>To admire the picture of Lady of Shalott</i></p> <p><i>Inspiration for a photography project.</i></p> <p><i>Get inspiration watching paintings</i></p> <p><i>To remember the artwork of Max Ernest</i></p> <p><i>Look at art! Specifically, at constructivist pieces.</i></p> <p><i>To see paintings</i></p> <p><i>To absolutely flood my soul with colour and (meaningful) form. Drawn in this morning by this Matisse 'The Snail'. (Enjoyed/imbibed together with a fresh brew of morning coffee) If I were not in Australia I would be planning a visit to the Tate, I try to visit every time I'm in London- sadly rarely, so this site keeps me 'topped up' until that happy day. Cheers & thanks!.</i></p> <p><i>To find a high resolution image of a painting I can't afford to see in person right now (I'm in Glasgow).</i></p>
Social	Visit planning
<p><i>Put an image of painting on Pinterest</i></p> <p><i>Pin carnation lily lily rose to Pinterest. Thanks.</i></p> <p><i>To make a gif for your The 1840s GIF Party</i></p> <p><i>There is a 'game' circulating on Facebook called Keep Art Alive .. I am searching for an artist's work ...someone I don't yet know about ... to forward to anyone who 'likes' my post</i></p> <p><i>Play a facebook game in which you get tagged with a name of an artist and then you have to post a pic by him. each person that presses "like" is tagged with another artist.</i></p> <p><i>to view works by Andre Derain and copy some pictures for my blog article.</i></p>	<p><i>To plan my visit to Tate Britain tomorrow</i></p> <p><i>To find out which paintings are on display in the free galleries so I can prepare a school visit</i></p> <p><i>Decide on sightseeing for 2015 trip</i></p> <p><i>To prepare for our pupils visiting the Paul Klee exhibition.</i></p> <p><i>Find info about what's new at tate britain</i></p> <p><i>To check which Picasso's are on view at Tate</i></p>

Differing levels of involvement with art were identified in the user responses. Some had a professional interest or were using the collection for study or teaching purposes. There is also another category of users who came with a more personal interest or hobby.

Professional	Studying	Teaching	Personal interest
Artists, curators, art historians	This includes children doing the homework/school projects, parents helping their children to university work	This range from primary/secondary school to University	Personal interest, hobby
<p><i>Look for exhibition ideas relating to dance. I'm a curator</i></p> <p><i>Research Nevinson's connections with Wadsworth & Futurism etc. "TheArrival " reminds me of Wadsworth's "Dazzleships in Drydock at Liverpool" (1919?). In the National Gallery of Canada. You have a preparatory drawing for "Return to the Trenches" which is also in the N.G.C. Stephanie , NGC docent.</i></p> <p><i>Researching for my book on John Nash; the Tate site is invaluable!</i></p> <p><i>I am a watercolour painter and need my Turner fix!</i></p> <p><i>Collecting images of paintings that have inspired me as an artist for a tv interview.</i></p>	<p><i>To gather some information on a futurist sculpture for a college essay</i></p> <p><i>I came to this art site in order to find related art ideas, concepts, visual artists and artworks for my thesis.</i></p> <p><i>I needed to find out research about Roy Lichtenstein for my art homework. This website was very helpful, thankyou.</i></p> <p><i>Artist research for my BA in fine Arts. I find the Tate Collection a great resource and appreciate the ability to regularly access it. Thank you.</i></p> <p><i>Examine paintings in close detail for university work. History of Art student</i></p> <p><i>Research for an Art History paper on Sir John Everett Millais. Thank you.</i></p>	<p><i>I Am a convenor of the History group of the U3A, and wish to know more about the Camden Town Artists</i></p> <p><i>Research in preparation for writing new University-level course on 18c British art</i></p> <p><i>I came to collect links to images of paintings for students to use as they study the history of British art.</i></p> <p><i>Find materials for English class - describing pictures, telling stories in past.</i></p>	<p><i>To have a look at Erte art as I own quite a few...but know nothing about the artist</i></p> <p><i>To discover the work of Jannis Kounellis as my daughter met him yesterday.</i></p> <p><i>To research a painting I own</i></p> <p><i>Research for personal interest</i></p> <p><i>Have a framed,small "print" of this work,and wondered if its got a value.</i></p> <p><i>Wanted to show my 9 year old daughter some of Samuel Palmer's work</i></p>

There are users coming with a specific task in mind or particular interest - such as finding information about a specific artist or artwork. In contrast, there are users coming to the online collection with a more unfocused goal, looking for example for inspiration and letting the website lead them.

Targeted visit	Untargeted visit	
<p><i>To find the name of an artist and painting hanging in the 1540 gallery.</i></p> <p><i>To see the Weeping Woman</i></p> <p><i>To learn more about the work of artist Donald Judd.</i></p> <p><i>Learn about The Cornfield by John Nash</i></p> <p><i>I was looking for the painting, Love and Death by Watts, referenced in Siegfried Sassoon's Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man.</i></p> <p><i>To make a gif for your The 1840s GIF Party</i></p> <p><i>Wanted to know the media Lichtenstein used for Whaam for an article I'm writing.</i></p>	<p><i>Find a painting for school, that helps show a good sense of depth</i></p> <p><i>Look at african inspired works</i></p> <p><i>Search black artists links to theatre</i></p> <p><i>Look at artworks concerned with gender inequality</i></p> <p><i>Find examples of abstract painters using black and white</i></p> <p><i>Look for french artists</i></p> <p><i>I wanted to find botanical representations, including drawings, paintings, ceramics, and other sculptures.</i></p> <p><i>To look at pictures of flowers</i></p>	<p><i>Browse the site since I live in Toronto</i></p> <p><i>To gain inspiration</i></p> <p><i>Browse images</i></p> <p><i>Get inspiration watching paintings</i></p> <p><i>To look at paintings</i></p> <p><i>Look for great artworks with nice aesthetics to post on my blog</i></p>
<p>Search</p>	<p>Browsing by category, subjects...</p>	<p>Explore art options (by colour, show random artwork....)</p>

USAGE

Users carried out different activities within the online collection and used different website features.

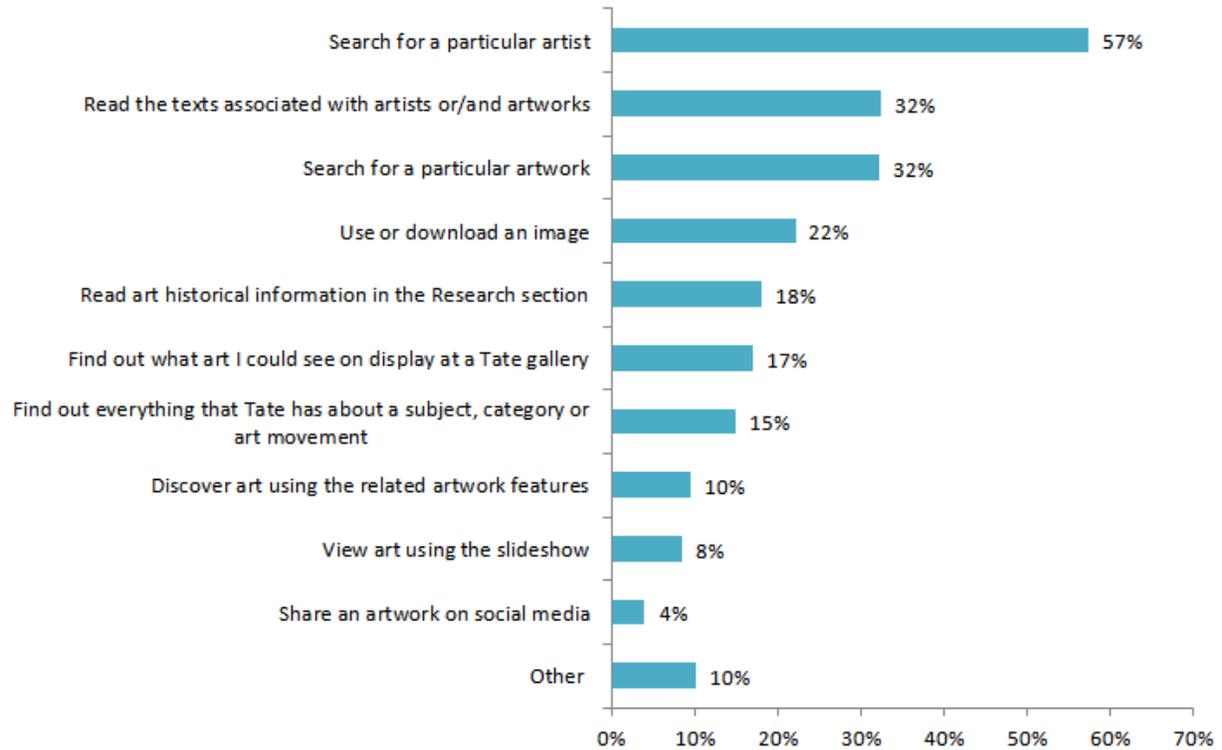


Figure: Activities respondents engaged with during their visit to the online collection (N=673)

The majority of users came to the collection searching for a particular artist or artwork. Turner is the most searched artist on the website and was mentioned by 5% of the respondents in this study.

Before the visit	After the visit
<p><i>to plan my visit to Tate Britain tomorrow</i></p> <p><i>to find out which paintings are on display in the free galleries so I can prepare a school visit</i></p> <p><i>Decide on sightseeing for 2015 trip</i></p> <p><i>To prepare for our pupils visiting the Paul Klee exhibition.</i></p> <p><i>find info about what's new at tate britain</i></p> <p><i>To check which Picasso's are on view at Tate</i></p>	<p><i>to research the works of William Scott after visiting the Belfast exhibition of his work at the Ulster Museum</i></p> <p><i>Visited yesterday and wanted to have another look at the website.</i></p> <p><i>look again at JMW Turner sketch seen at Turner and the Sea exhibition, N Maritime Museum</i></p> <p><i>As an A level student, to find pieces I'd seen when I last visited the gallery, to use in a project.</i></p> <p><i>find the title of a painting I've seen at the Tate</i></p>

Based on analytics data and heatmaps on the landing page of Art & artists, we can see a high usage of the search box and some popular browsing options like artist, category and subject. We can also see a high number of clicks on the 'Show me another' button in the top image which is a successful feature in helping people to discover art and bring visitors to the artworks highlighted here. The heatmap also shows that there are more clicks on the panels about what's on display than on the explore art panels, suggesting that a large number of people come to this page to plan a visit to the permanent collection.

Tate Britain Tate Modern Tate Liverpool Tate St Ives

TATE

Search

Art & artists Works Blogs & channel Join & support Learn Research About Shop

Art and artists



George Stubbs
Riders, 1785

Discover art from the Tate collection and beyond

We hold the national collection of British art from 1500 to the present day and international modern and contemporary art. Our collection includes nearly 70,000 artworks by over 3,000 artists and grows every year.

You can also access nearly 2,500 artworks by Joseph Mallord William Turner from other collections. Together with Tate's own holdings, these form the most comprehensive online catalogue of Turner's work.

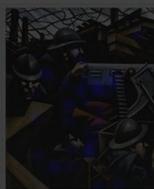
Find art and artists

Browse artworks

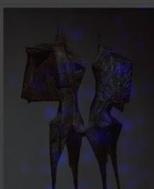
Explore art



Context
Highlights of the Tate collection
A selection assembled by Tate curators to give you a flavour of the collection



Subject
World War I
Many artists across Europe experienced the First World War at close hand



Artist
Lynn Chadwick
2014 is the centenary year for this key figure of mid-century modernism



Style of art
Surrealism
One of the most influential of all twentieth-century art movements unleashed dreams, nightmares and fantasies in visual form

What's on display



Tate Britain
Browse the current selection of British art from 1500 to the present day, on show at Tate Britain



Tate Modern
Explore the displays at Tate Modern, including the main thematic zones: **Pretty and Crafty, Energy and Excess, Structures and Curvy and Transformed Visions**



Tate Liverpool
DJA Piper Series: Constellations offers a fresh way of viewing and understanding artworks through correspondences rather than chronological narrative



Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, St Ives
Browse the current selection of artworks on show

More on art and Tate's collection



About the Tate collection
Our collection has grown enormously in size and scope since Henry Tate's founding gift to the nation in 1897



J.M.W. Turner Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours
Read about one of Britain's great Romantic artists



ARTIST ROOMS
A collection of international contemporary, created through one of the most imaginative gifts ever made to museums in Britain



Art on Demand
Order prints of artworks from Tate's collection and current exhibitions, direct prints and framed to your specifications

Shortcuts

- Tate Members
- Tate Store
- Tate Collections
- Working at Tate
- ARTIST ROOMS
- Press office
- Picture Library
- Copyright and permissions
- Privacy and cookies
- Terms of use

Connect

- Contact us
- Blog
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Social media directory
- Podcasts

Support

- Tate's charitable status
- Donors
- Patrons
- Letters of inquiry
- Corporate Members
- Sponsorship
- Corporate and private events

Email sign-up

Keep up to date with Tate events, exhibitions and news

Sign up

IMPROVEMENTS

Users were asked about what we could do to make the online collection better. There were 289 comments in response to this open question which included suggestions but also positive comments about the site.

Positive comments

First long visit here. site seems excellent. quality (and quantity!) images and information. quick loading. easy to navigate. gold stars to the media team.

It's always provided what I want on my various visits

Keep up the good work!

It is as great as it is- quick and kind response of the Tate staff. Active and enthusiastic effort to be connected with the viewers. Free opportunities to download the images of great and precious works of art. I have an impression that Tate is very open and free so feel very close to it. The more I use the website, the more I am grateful.

At this stage nothing as it has been an excellent source of citation for my essay on the Sublime and concept of beauty

You do a wonderful job already! Thank you.

actually it's great, I've enjoyed your site, this research project is the first time I've been here.

I think it is pretty good, much easier to use than the IWM or the NG

your site is wonderful thanks!

You seem to have made positive changes (higher quality images, easier to navigate) since I was working on a Reynolds/Gainsborough talk last spring. I think you are doing a great job. Thank you!

Not sure how you could improve on brilliance. . . .

Everything is perfect

To see what is on now at Tate and look at interesting works of art. I am a fan of wonderful Tate website. Thank you Tate for the wonderful opportunities to experience great world of contemporary art and you enrich my everyday.

Looking at the work of Tracey Emin to understand more about her concepts. There is a lot of information about the concepts and themes of the work but it would be nice if there was information on the process of the artist.

Include links to other websites/other areas of the Tate website with further information about the artist. Provide further information in the form of downloads

there is no information here other than technical. looking for an abstract or brief or curatorial introduction

Expand information about the artist/work/movement and those associated, be it subject, texts, exhibitions, collectors.

I would like to know more about the conservation and restoration of the paintings

Have some in depth multimedia features

Have more biographical information

A 'further reading' section

Links to online video footage

Connect artist pages with current and previous exhibitions.

May be give us more examples or tips on where to go for more information to find more art or direct us to any suitable resources.

Lesson plans for those who teach seniors

Available pdf download publications

- Many users are preparing their visit and checking information about what is on display in the galleries. Some users found it difficult to find this information. The floor plan available on the old website was mentioned by some users as a useful tool to prepare the for visit.

Re-instate the floorplans as per the National Gallery website that enables you to click on a room on the floorplan and see all the works in that room

Make clear which works of each artist is on display, and exactly where, and don't show on the website works which we can't see on our visit.. On the first page, a simple list, or direct link to a simple list of Displays, and Artist Rooms would be helpful.

It is not very straightforward these days to search for what is on in particular rooms - it used to be easier. I am a teacher and when I bring groups it is helpful to identify what is in each room. Make the permanently displayed collection more obvious

- Some users suggested having a Tate account to save content, which they could access on future visits.

have personalized online account, where I can save previous searches, upload images, have reading lists, etc..

Create the facility to make my own folder of selected images. similar to the Courtauld website- Art&Architecture

Let me tag pictures to create my own virtual gallery without downloading images.

- Some users suggested improvements to the navigation, search functionality and browsing options. This included adding more terms in the subjects and categories to find artworks.

The search option was a little difficult to use if I was searching for art movements.

Add search word tags

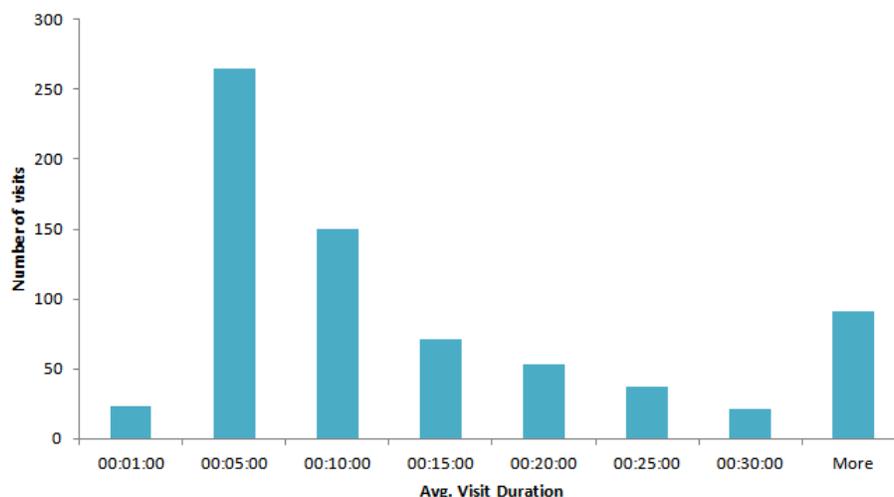
Make a separate Tate 'Explore the online collection' website

Other suggestions for improvement mentioned only once in the comments are: transcriptions of notes, history timeline, translation to other languages, improve citation, bigger font size, print button.

Behaviour

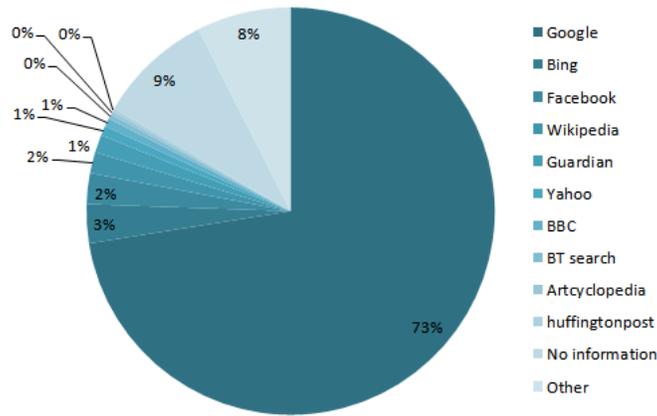
Data from the respondents

Visit duration



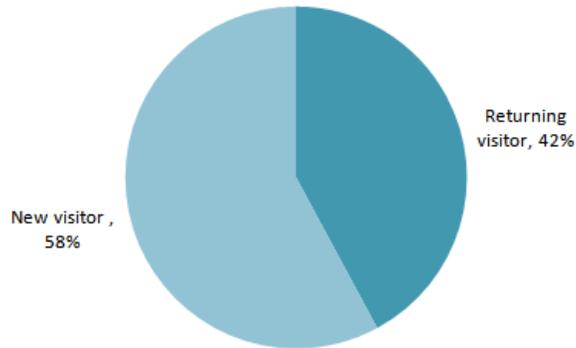
Because the survey appeared once the user had visited at least 3 pages and spent at least 10 seconds in the page, this distribution excludes shorter visits. Despite the fact that this distribution is not representative of all the visitors, it shows that there are very long and in-depth visits to this section of the website.

Traffic sources



73% of the respondents came from Google. This is very similar to the Google Analytics data.

New vs Returning visitor



58% of the respondents were new visitors and 42% returning. This is similar to the Google Analytics data. Google brings new visitors, who are generally people searching for art topics or artist names and who arrive at pages not in the top level navigation.

Appendix

List of questions

Q1: Help us improve our site. What did you come to the online collection today to do?

Q2: Which of these did you do on your visit? Tick all that apply

- Search for a particular artist
- Read the texts associated with artists or/and artworks
- Search for a particular artwork
- Use or download an image
- Read art historical information in the Research section
- Find out what art I could see on display at a Tate gallery
- Find out everything that Tate has about a subject, category or art movement
- Discover art using the related artwork features
- View art using the slideshow
- Share an artwork on social media
- Other

Q3: What could we do to make the online collection better for you?

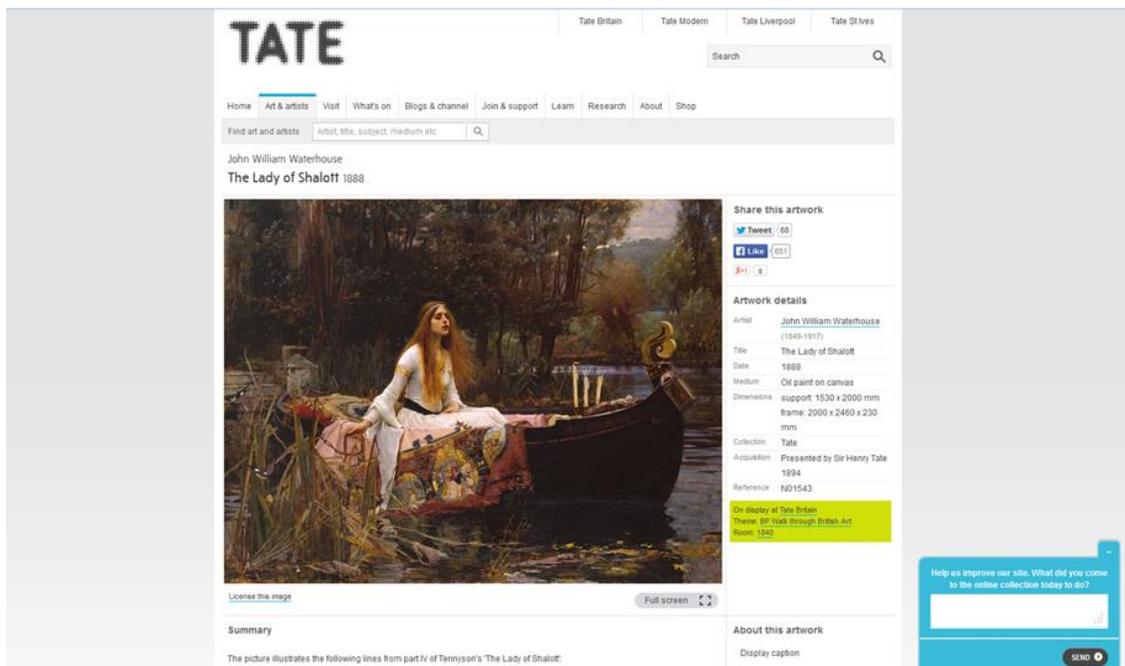


Image: Screen grab of the survey pop up on the Art & artists pages



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