

What's up elsewhere

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The word 'interpretation' was completely missing in professionals' vocabulary here in Finland, and interpretation-related projects with which we have been involved showed the need for interpretation training.

Thus we ran a Finnish language course in interpretation. The course was completely online, since it would have been difficult to get working professionals to take days off for travel. Gianna Moscardo from James Cook University (Australia) gave an inspirational series of lectures (not in Finnish, though), along with a couple of Finnish specialists (Petri Raivo and Teppo Loikkanen). The meaning of having a good theme and the process of planning interpretation especially seemed to create great moments of discovery and even exhilaration for the participants.

Now we are exploring the possibility of conducting such a course internationally. From the interpretation perspective the challenge is to create a concise way of doing this that really offers professionals new tools to make their work better. There is also a pedagogical challenge: fostering discovery means presence. Will we be successful in creating an online presence that is involving enough?

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Collections for the future

The Scottish Museums Council has published a strategy to guide the development of the collections held by Scotland's museums. The strategy aims to:

- promote Scotland's diverse museum collections and their potential as community and cultural resources at local and national level
- support museum staff to develop and sustain collections confidently, openly and effectively
- encourage museums to provide increased and innovative opportunities for users to truly engage with collections

Museums are increasingly familiar with the need to consider issues of intellectual as well as physical access to the more than 12 million items they hold. Interpretive planning – understanding the audience, conveying clear messages and evaluating success – is becoming an established way to approach this.

You can get a copy of A National Collections Development Strategy for Scotland's Museums via www.scottishmuseums.org.uk or telephone Gillian Findlay, Collections Development Manager on 0131 550 4126.