



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: VARI Digital Full Stack Developer

Division: Research and Collections

Dept/Section: Research

Contract: Full time, Fixed-term contract for 36 months (1 October 2017-30 September 2020)

Salary: Competitive

Reporting to: Director of VARI

Background

The Research Department

The V&A is the world's oldest and largest museum of art, design and performance. It was the first museum to establish a designated Research Department and it is now home to the world's leading postgraduate programme in the history of design and material culture. The Research Department is part of the Collections Division and is charged with facilitating, promoting and conducting research across all aspects of the Museum's activities. The Department consists of a small number of permanent staff and a much larger number of visiting fellows as well as curatorial staff seconded into its ranks in order to work on specific research projects — including exhibitions and displays, print or digital publications and externally funded programmes that improve knowledge of and access to the Museum's collections. The Department also hosts a large postgraduate community: it co-delivers with the Royal College of Art an MA and PhD programme in the History of Design, and it plays a central role in the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) and Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) schemes. The V&A is now developing a V&A Research Institute (VARI) that will take its flourishing research culture into a new phase.

VARI: The V&A Research Institute

The V&A Research Institute (VARI) is a five-year programme of projects and partnerships supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It takes the V&A's pioneering research culture into a new phase that allows the Museum to experiment with new ways of studying, displaying and accessibly storing its collections. VARI will give better access to the V&A's objects and join its experts with academic scholars, practicing designers and makers and members of the general public. Launched in 2016, VARI will create an innovative arena for developing collaborative research that is both collections-based and object focused. By making the collections we house and the expertise we host

more visible, VARI will produce not just new knowledge but also new methods. Integrating research with teaching and learning, VARI will inform the Museum's major projects at its original location in London's South Kensington neighbourhood and at new locations around the country and across the globe.

VARI supports:

- collaborative research projects and research-driven teaching
- conferences and workshops
- public engagement events
- fellowships - internal and external, short- and long-term, early career and emeritus
- Andrew W. Mellon visiting professors
- research residencies for artists, designers and makers
- platforms for print and digital communication

Purpose of job

The V&A Research Institute (VARI) is seeking an inspired Full Stack Developer to work across the range of its projects and activities over the next three years. This is an exciting opportunity to work from the ground up on the co-design, prototyping, coding and production of specific, adventurous heritage/cultural digital projects, products and infrastructures as part of interdisciplinary research teams that include humanities fields, collections-based approaches, conservation expertise, museum documentation specialists, and more. We will be happy to consider developer-designers with skills weighted either to the front-end or the back-end, and are looking for the candidate with the best fit across this wide range of interest and skills.

The VARI Digital Developer-Designer will be working in a small interdisciplinary team similar to the context of a startup. This is a lively and intellectually exciting arena in which to work, connecting a world-class collection, staff expertise and wider communities in innovative ways through digital products. With knowledge of, or experience with, the design of both user interfaces and of information, you will be supporting the creative development and implementation of a portfolio of discrete projects across information architectures, collections data, digital humanities techniques, web and apps, open access publishing and the modular front- and back-end coding that supports all this.

The post-holder will work collaboratively as required with a range of internal V&A departments such as Research, Collections, Conservation, Exhibitions, Learning and Digital Media, as well as engaging with VARI's international community of artists, academics, museum professionals, information

scientists, policy organisations and other key stakeholders. The VARI Digital Developer-Designer will be engaged in prototyping and test-driven development of the digital innovation elements of the following VARI projects that are already up and running:

[The Leman Album: An Enhanced Facsimile](#)

[Content/Data/Object](#)

[Show+Tell+Share](#)

[Opening the Cabinet of Curiosities](#)

[Deciphering Dickens](#)

Open Access Publishing, including the relaunch of the V&A Journal of Research and Conservation

The post-holder will be directly co-designing and developing digital resources and platforms grounded in these exciting collections-based and museum-focused research projects, each of which aims to engage much wider publics. S/he will thus be a self-starter able to work with these project teams as 'clients', ultimately being responsible for developing appropriately innovative digital engagement products for each of the projects' research findings in ways that will extend beyond the projects and the Museum and into the public sphere. For those digital resources that will be channeled online, the V&A website offers significant scale, with over a million sessions per month.

The postholder will be physically based in the Research Department/VARI, deploying to areas of the Museum where VARI projects are based as required. This will also involve the postholder in other digital communities of practice at the Museum, including Collections Management (CMS) and Digital Media. S/he will work closely with project staff of VARI, including VARI's Project Manager, as well as the VARI Director and Deputy Director, in advancing VARI's overall goals and development.

Main Responsibilities of VARI Digital Developer-Designer

1. To develop and create, working with VARI research teams, a portfolio of innovative and accessible co-designed digital products, effecting proof-of-concept prototyping, costings, and production of these digital products for launch on time and on budget
2. To effect research and advise on the range of back-end architectures and platforms, as well as digital interfaces and user experiences, that could be brought together inventively to produce exciting, appropriate, digital products for VARI's projects
3. To engage quickly with the research interests, methodologies and aims of VARI's projects and their teams and to work closely with existent research teams of VARI's defined projects to co-design -- through collaborations, workshops, and user groups -- the discrete digital products appropriate to each project's aims and research findings

4. To work effectively with V&A Digital Media, Collections Information, and IT Teams to bridge research activities, existent architectures/infrastructures, and public-facing digital resources in ways that complement their departmental practices and style guides
5. To actively engage with other VARI, Research Department and wider V&A research activities in a manner supportive of VARI's aims to stimulate and support innovative cross-disciplinary developments in working processes and methodologies
6. To participate in the creation of supporting documents for fundraising for the production of digital products where required
7. To be committed to health and safety and ensure familiarity with all of the Museum's health and safety policies and procedures.
8. To be security conscious, ensure familiarity and cooperation with all Museum security procedures and ensure they wear a security pass at all times when on Museum premises.
9. To promote equality and diversity in all aspects of their work by developing and maintaining positive working relationships, ensuring that colleagues are treated fairly and with respect/dignity and actively contributing to developments that support the museum's strategy for widening access, inclusion and diversity.
10. To carry out ad hoc duties as requested by appropriate managers within the Museum's relevant departments.

Person Specification

Essential Skills

1. An MA qualification or equivalent experience in an appropriate and relevant research subject area: Digital Humanities, museum and/or archive studies/management, information management/science
2. Knowledge of a wide range of softwares and their functionalities, including current and future developments
3. Ability to identify and learn appropriate open source and other adaptable softwares, APIs and information sources relevant to the success of VARI's digital projects and products
4. Experience of working with data models, thesauri and collections documentation information architectures
5. Experience with object-oriented programming and semantic architectures
6. Experience of user experience design, or of working closely with user experience designers, from designing a brief to managing production schedules and budgets
7. Experience of working successfully in tandem with a wide range of colleagues from different disciplines and practices including humanities, collections and digital media to produce public facing digital products, educational multimedia, or interactive experiences

8. Experience of participation in workshop-based research and development of digital projects and products, including experience of user focus group work
9. Evidence of problem-solving skills and a record of innovation in digital contexts
10. Experience of managing digital projects to completion on time and on budget
11. Back-end languages and systems knowledge should include: Ruby, Python, PHP, Postgres, Ubuntu and/or others. Front-end languages should include: Javascript, ES6, React. General skills should include: Git, responsiveness, test-driven development, Wordpress, Drupal

Essential Behaviours

12. A self-starter with an entrepreneurial spirit who can use their initiative inside interdisciplinary collaborations
13. Genuine interest in collections, museums, and their research stakeholders including the wider audiences engaged by the V&A
14. Good communication skills and inclusive collaborative working habits
15. Good attention to detail, observational skills, and problem solving skills

Desirable

1. Doctoral level qualification in Digital Humanities or extensive experience with Digital Humanities concepts and tools
2. Experience of working with colleagues managing server, network and hosting environments at larger institutions such as HEIs, museums, or other public service contexts
3. Knowledge and skills relating to project management and working effectively with project managers
4. Experience of working alongside IT and CMS infrastructure teams in large institutions and the application of change control for delivering products
5. Experience of articulating research practices and methodologies in co-publishing contexts with other researchers
6. Experience of open access publishing contexts and infrastructures
7. Understanding of higher education research context

Other Information

Hours/Salary:

Net working hours (i.e. excluding meal breaks) are 36 hours per week

The salary for this role will be **COMPETITIVE**. Salaries are reviewed on an annual basis.

Annual leave:

28 days plus 8 days public holidays

Pension benefits:

You will be auto enrolled into the Museum's Group Personal Pension Scheme and have the opportunity on completion of Probation to an enhanced pension provision, including an employer contribution of 10%.

Other benefits:

- Non-contributory life assurance policy (to value of 4 x annual salary)
- An interest free season ticket or bicycle loan is available after three months.
- Free entrance to all the major museums and exhibitions in London as well as many others.
- Subsidised staff restaurant
- Discounts on purchases in V&A shops
- Childcare Voucher Scheme

Application process:

Please apply online via the V&A's website at www.vam.ac.uk/jobs

If you are having technical difficulties applying online, please use the online chat functionality which can be found on the bottom right hand side of the form. Alternatively, you can contact **Vacancy Filler** directly on **01509 236434**, and quote the role reference number and your application number (if known). Please note, Vacancy Filler are contactable, Monday – Friday between 9.00am – 5.00pm.

If you have any queries regarding the role and/or the V&A's recruitment process, you can email us – contacthr@vam.ac.uk or telephone us on 020 7942 2937 (Working hours Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm).

Closing date for receipt of applications is midnight 6th November 2017

Interviews to be held on 14th November 2017