

# National Museums Scotland looks to grab new audiences with digital game of territories

Museums and galleries are continually looking for new ways to engage audiences and deepen the visitor experience. National Museums Scotland may have just taken things to the next level with an innovative on-site experience called *Capture The Museum*. Launching on May 17th, it's a tense, physical team game: visitors explore galleries with mobiles in hand to seek out exhibits, solve puzzles and claim territories to beat their opponents.

It's a far cry from what you might expect to find in such an august institution – but that's exactly why National Museums hope it will appeal to new audiences. Hugh Wallace, National Museums' Head of Digital Media, describes the game: "It's a genuinely exciting addition to the museum experience and one that makes totally different use of the space. Innovating in such a complex building was always going to be challenging but I'm thrilled about what we've come out with. No-one has done anything like this before."

Visitors download an app to their smartphone and sign up to either the Red or Blue clan; the game can accommodate up to 50 players at a time. The two sides plan their strategies then spread out across the National Museum of Scotland. A map that updates in real-time shows which clan owns which 'territories' – the differently themed galleries in the Museum. Players scan into territories using their phone's camera, where they prove their understanding of the exhibits to earn the high score. After 30 fast and furious minutes the clan with the most territories is crowned the winner.

*Capture* was the product of a research and development fund from the Technology Strategy Board, seeking new ways to enhance visitor engagement. Bristol play specialists [Thought Den](#) devised and created the game, enlisting fellow Bristol startups [Splash & Ripple](#) for their experience creating street games.

Ben Templeton, Creative Director for Thought Den, said: "We wanted to create an experience that is 'heads-up' – engaging people with the space, not just the screen on their phone. The live aspect of the game was designed to appeal to a new generation of museum-goers who have come to expect immersive media experiences. Why shouldn't museums be the place to give them that?"

The app was built using HTML5 and JavaScript so it can be made available for the majority of smartphones. For launch the app can be downloaded on iOS only and an Android version will follow. See [www.capturethemuseum.com](http://www.capturethemuseum.com) for more information.

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## Notes to editors

Visitors can play Capture The Museum at the National Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh. The experience launches on May 17th and will be part of the Museum's ongoing special events programme. For more information players should visit [www.capturethemuseum.com](http://www.capturethemuseum.com)

**Thought Den** is an award-winning digital studio founded in 2008 and based in Bristol. The small, specialist team use the power of play to encourage people to learn in new ways and explore the world around them. In 2012 the team produced a mobile art app called Magic Tate Ball that has since achieved more than 100,000 downloads. Their previous clients include Tate, Science Museum, BBC, Southbank Centre and Bristol Zoo.

**Splash & Ripple** are 'Purveyors of Fine Experiences' who use a combination of street gaming, theatre and clever digital media to create live productions that tell stories in entirely new ways. Current projects include Ghosts in the Garden at the Holburne Museum in Bath, where visitors use a steampunk Time Radio to talk to people in 1824.

**National Museums Scotland** is one of the leading museum groups in the UK and Europe and it looks after collections of national and international importance. The organisation provides loans, partnerships, research and training in Scotland and internationally. Our individual museums are the National Museum of Scotland, the National Museum of Flight, the National Museum of Rural Life and the National War Museum. The National Museums Collection Centre in Edinburgh houses conservation and research facilities as well as collections not currently on display.

**For more information please contact:**

Ben Templeton  
Creative Director, Thought Den  
ben@thoughtden.co.uk  
+4477 5150 8311