

OPENING ARCHIVES CASE STUDY

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

The East Riding Blockdown Contemporary Collecting in Minecraft



HERITAGE DOMAIN:

Museums, Libraries and Archives

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The East Riding Blockdown project aimed to capture youth experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic for the East Riding Archives' collections using the videogame Minecraft as a creative medium and platform for digital storytelling. Participants documented their COVID-19 experiences within Minecraft, using blocks to build and a 'book and quill' item to write. Images of these creations were then exported as digital files for permanent preservation in the East Riding Archives, becoming part of 800 years of East Riding history. The project aimed to empower young people to add their voice to the archives, and to increase awareness of what archives are to this demographic. Their contributions also addressed a collections gap for the East Riding Archives where previously, there were no young people's voices in the collections.

PROJECT STATS (data accurate as of April 2022):

- 50 young people from East Riding took part remotely and in-person through Archiverse Minecraft events.
- 48 individual records were added to the East Riding Archives Catalogue by young participants.
- 3,177 page visits to the East Riding Blockdown website.
- East Riding Archives collaborated with 7 organisations, including Libraries and Museums, schools and voluntary services.

SUCSESSES:

- The project reached a new audience of young people, particularly primary-aged children, who hadn't engaged with archives before.
- For the first time in the history of East Riding Archives, young people created a collection of records and added them to the archive collection.
- East Riding Archives developed their approach to community engagement and audience development.

- A pilot was created for using a video game for contemporary collecting with young people. East Riding Archives are planning to use this creative approach in an upcoming oral history project with migrants and refugees in East Riding.

LEARNINGS:

- Young people are interested in the concept of archives and particularly enjoyed the possibility of having their voice permeate through the generations.
- Different methods of participation extended the project's reach. A blended approach, where young people visited the archive building physically and virtually, was particularly successful in engaging participants.
- The project opened up East Riding's Archive to new ways of thinking: 'If we want to reach out to new diverse audiences, we have to be willing to experiment with non-traditional technologies' (Project Lead).

TOP TIP FOR WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES AND ARCHIVES:

Always make a plan for how people will ACCESS your 'digital archive' in 5, 50, and 100 years' time. This includes considerations of how the records are described, arranged and preserved, and by whom.

LINK TO DIGITAL OUTPUTS:

East Riding Blockdown project website: www.eastridingblockdown.org

ERBP collection on the Archives Catalogue (permanent): <https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=zERBP>

ERBP collection on Preservica, East Riding Archive's online 'digital archive' (permanent): https://eastriding.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/SO_3ec7570f-349f-4b27-9f26-d965d41accf0/