

# Unlocking the collection

GET A CURATOR'S-EYE VIEW OF OUR OBJECTS

YOU CAN NOW PLAY CURATOR with more than 40,000 objects from the National Maritime Collection. Using your favourite digital device you can search, browse, share, tag and give a star rating to the objects that intrigue you. Each object has its own page and description, and many have images. You can share your thoughts, feelings and expertise by commenting on objects and uploading additional relevant content, such as photographs, from wherever you are in the world. Your contributions will enhance the information we have on the collection and help others to discover it via a simple Google search.

The project is a joint enterprise between the museum's digital outreach team – who provide the online communication and technical expertise – and the museum's registration, photography and curatorial teams who provide object data and images, the collection management system and curatorial expertise. We're using eMuseum, an industry standard product developed by US company Gallery Systems – a leader in collections software and services whose clients include some of the world's most prestigious museums, such as The J Paul Getty Museum and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The content you contribute will help us learn which objects you like, are curious about and want to see more of, and provide valuable additional information.

Another benefit of the new online collection database is the application programming interface (API) or 'discovery layer' that comes with it. The discovery layer will allow the museum, and interested third parties, to easily integrate collection content into new – and hopefully unexpected

– digital applications that contextualise the collection and expand the museum's reach and reputation. A good example of what can happen when cultural institutions have a publicly accessible discovery layer is Forte, the National Library of Australia's sheet music collection iPad app. The app was instigated by a member of the public who had been working on his own project in the library's public reading rooms and had used the sheet music discovery layer as a large dataset to help him solve a problem he was working on. The result – a prototype iPad app that allowed users to search the sheet music collection – formed the core of Forte.

With the museum's collection at 140,000 objects and still growing, the project is very much a work in progress. The museum's specialist photographers are capturing high-resolution images of key objects so you can view them in more detail online, while the registration and curatorial teams are also enhancing the information about specific collection objects.

To check out the collection, just type [collections.anmm.gov.au](http://collections.anmm.gov.au) into your web browser and search or browse the online database. We'd love to know your thoughts on the online collection – just email [web@anmm.gov.au](mailto:web@anmm.gov.au).

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