Digital Culture Network

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Introduction to ticketing for museums and galleries

A guide in how to introduce a timed entry booking operation

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artscouncil.org.uk/dcn

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Introduction

With recent [government guidelines](#) coming into place, many organisations will be able to once again reopen their doors to the public. Within these guidelines the government have detailed a number of stringent measures that will ensure the health and safety of both its workforce and visitors, one of which being that organisations must stick to social distancing measures at all times.

For many organisations who offer free entrance to their visitors, implementing social distancing measures when you cannot always predict attendance numbers will prove a considerable barrier to overcome. To combat this the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) have offered the following solution in order to allow venues to open safely and ensure the guidelines can be adhered to.

> **"*Timed entry and pre-booking procedures could be introduced to reduce the number of visitors in locations at the same time*"**

By using a ticketing or booking system you will be able to set pre-defined capacity numbers for your venue and ensure the even flow of visitors throughout the day. It also provides you with key infrastructure to collect visitor data in order to support the [NHS Test and Trace](#) programme. However, for organisations that usually offer free entrance or a voluntary donation scheme, implementing a new booking system will be uncharted territory.

This guide looks to break down the key areas to consider when implementing a new ticketing operation and potential tools and platforms that you can implement to reopen safely.

Defining your requirements

Before the government guidelines had been published, many museums and galleries might not have considered any need to introduce a timed entry booking system. For many organisations, this puts some unnecessary barriers in front of visitors in freely entering your venue and accessing services. Introducing a ticketing operation may also seem like an incredible burden on small venue teams and volunteers that manage your visitor experiences.

Due to these restrictions, it's important that organisations highlight the core functionality that would be key for you to operate safely but wouldn't hinder visitors attending or put too much additional strain on your teams to administer. Below are some of the key features you should be on the lookout for when procuring a new ticketing system and why they might be vital for you.

Efficient timed ticketing set up
In order to control the number of visitors that you receive each day you will be looking to create multiple timed sessions for every day that you are open. This could result in some considerable time in the set up and creation of time slots, so you should be focused on a system that offers a straightforward set up or allows you to bulk create sessions across multiple dates.

Flexible visitor pricing structure
Depending on the business model you might be offering a free entrance to visitors or you may be charging a variety of different amounts depending on concession or group size. It is important to investigate the possibilities of the systems pricing functionality and that it complements the business model.

Multi room or venue set up
You may have multiple venues or rooms within the same building that may need to be ticketed separately in order to track appropriate capacities. If you have a set up like this then ensure that the system can accommodate this type of infrastructure and whether this affects the pricing plan of the software.

Variety of documented website integrations

A core element of making this successful will be integrating the booking system with your website in order for visitors to pre-book their tickets online. You should consider investigating how complex the integration process might be and whether this would take a considerable amount of time and resource to implement. On pages 9&10 of this guide we break down the different types of website integration and methods that are suitable for organisations with little to no redevelopment budget.

Simple registration process

Consider what visitor data is required by the system in order to complete a successful booking. Whilst this is a great opportunity to collect customer data, ensure that the overall process does not create more barriers for visitors to make a quick and easy registration.

Take donations

If you are offering free entry to visitors, this is a fantastic moment to upsell any giving schemes you are currently running and allow customers to donate during the booking process. Some systems also allow you to track gift aid declarations during the transaction which would allow you to maximise on that revenue.

Scanning and access control

To manage the even flow of your visitors, some systems will come with a scanning application that can be used on smart phones or portable devices to scan tickets as visitors arrive. This is a great way to track attendance numbers from those that registered online and then actually came to your venue. Most scanning applications will be able to work off Wi-Fi network and mobile data so it is important that you consider what networks you have available to facilitate the connection.

Audience Insight

Implementing a ticketing system provides a great opportunity to learn more about your audiences. Consider whether the system can integrate with a Customer Relationship Management platform which will then allow you to enter into a dialogue with your bookers. Consider as well collecting contactable data and request permissions to enable you to follow up with a survey about their experience at the venue. If you want to do some basic segmentation analysis on your bookers, you could look to collect additional data such as age and postcode during the booking process to enable you to do so. You also have the opportunity to get your ticketing data straight into a sector specific segmentation and analysis tool like Audience Finder. Factor in whether a ticketing system is compatible with that platform beforehand in order to maximise on its use.

Booking and ticketing platforms

From any initial research you may have already undertaken, you will see there are a variety of different systems on the market all offering varying functionality at varying cost.

Finding the system that meets your functionality requirements and budget is vital, so it is important you explore a wide spectrum of systems to ensure you select the right product for you.

On the next page is a list of ticketing systems that are commonly used across the sector and meet some or all of the functionality expectations listed previously. This list is not designed to be exhaustive and there are still a variety of products that are not listed on this document.

TICKETSOURCE

TicketTailor
Low fees. No fuss.

digitickets
Proactive Ticketing Solutions

trybooking

Art Tickets

eventbrite

ARTSVP

Digital Culture Network

	Performs Well	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet

	Timed entry set up process	Flexible pricing structure	Multi room and venue set up	Ease of website itegration	Simple data collection	Processes donations	Scanning & access control	Commission paid on value tickets
ARTSVP	Simple timed entry set up	Simple pricing structure	Multi room set up on premium plan	Simple integration	Streamline data collection	Does not process donations	Scans ticket barcodes	£20.00 - £50.00 a month depending on plan. Unlimited bookings.
Ticket Source	Simple timed entry set up	Flexible pricing structure	Unlimited venues & rooms	Simple integration	Detailed data collection	Processes donations & track Gift Aid	Scans ticket barcodes	0% commission on free tickets and 7% on value tickets. Discounts available for charities.
Ticket Tailor	Simple timed entry set up	Flexible pricing structure	Unlimited venues & rooms	Simple integration	Detailed data collection	Processes donations	Scans ticket barcodes	0% commission on free tickets and 50p per ticket of value. Discounts available for charities.
The Ticket Sellers	Simple timed entry set up	Flexible pricing structure	Unlimited venues & rooms	Simple integration	Detailed data collection	Processes donations & track Gift Aid	Scans ticket barcodes	0% commission on free tickets and 6% + 47p per ticket of value. Discounts available for charities.
DigiTickets	Simple timed entry set up	Flexible pricing structure	Unlimited venues & rooms	Simple integration but incurs set up fee	Detailed data collection	Processes donations & track Gift Aid	Scans ticket barcodes	£1,500 set up cost. Various payment plans available. Only suitable for venues with paid events
Try Booking	Simple timed entry for set up on mass	Flexible pricing structure	Unlimited venues & rooms	Simple integration	Detailed data collection	Processes donations	Scans ticket barcodes	0% commission on free tickets and 5% on value tickets.
Art Tickets	Simple timed entry for set up on mass	Flexible pricing structure	Unlimited venues & rooms	Simple integration	Detailed data collection	Processes donations & track Gift Aid	No scanning features	Free to use but you must be a partner venue in the National Art Pass Network
Eventbrite	Simple timed entry set up	Flexible pricing structure	Unlimited venues & rooms	Simple integration	Detailed data collection	Processes donations	Scans ticket barcodes	0% commission on free tickets and 6.5% + 49p per ticket of value. Discounts available for charities.

**Data correct at time of time of publication, prices not inclusive of VAT

Booking and ticketing platforms

There are also a variety of more comprehensive ticket and booking systems suitable for this sector. These are charged on a commission basis as well, however they will have base rate of commission that you will be expected to pay per year/month.

You may wish to only consider these options if you are charging an entry fee to your visitors. These systems include:
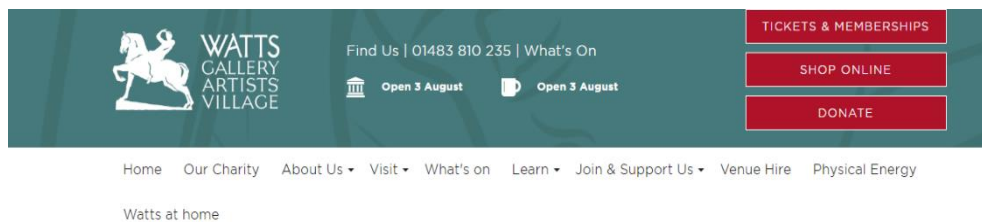
Website integration

To avoid queues or traffic at your entrance points it will be beneficial to introduce pre-booking and ticketing functionality to your website. This can seem like a costly process, however most ticketing systems offer a few differing integration types from easy to complex.

White Label integration

White Labelling is probably the easiest and less intrusive method of integration and essentially involves your ticketing platform generating its own unique booking site which you link to from your website when someone wishes to purchase tickets. It will be clear to customers that they are leaving your website and moving onto the booking site, but depending on the system you choose they may offer bespoke styling for your ticketing site so that it matches your own branding and looks cohesive.

Organisation – Watts Gallery | Ticketing System – Digi Tickets

URL: https://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/

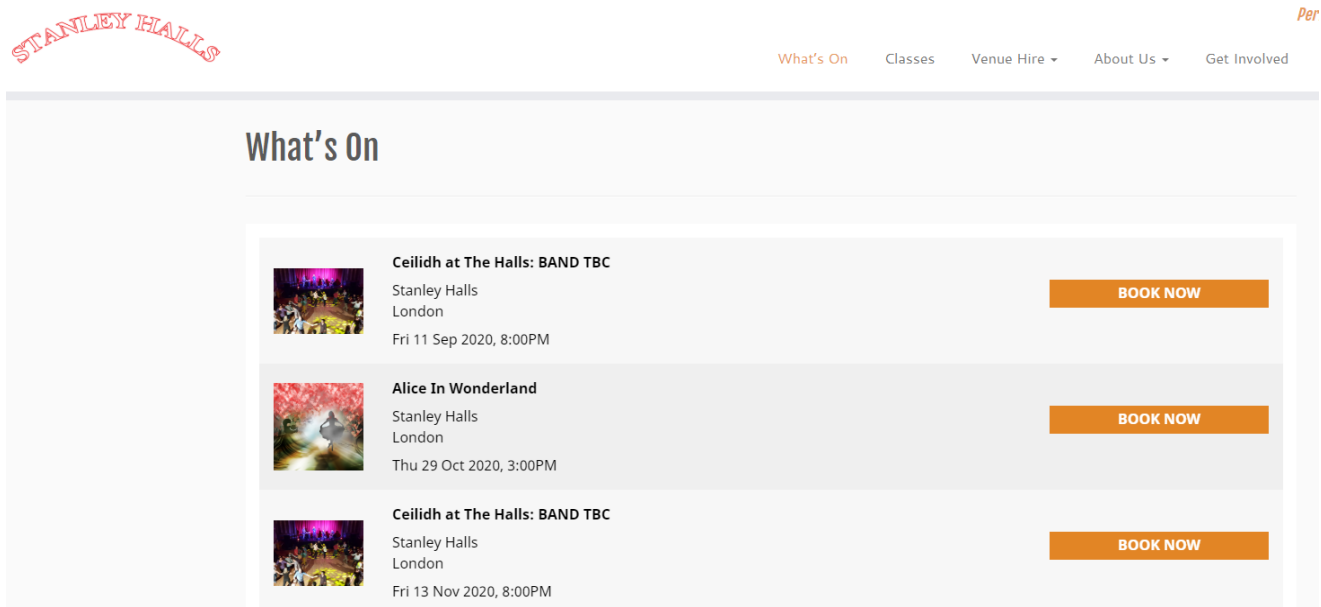URL: https://wattsgallery.digitickets.co.uk/tickets
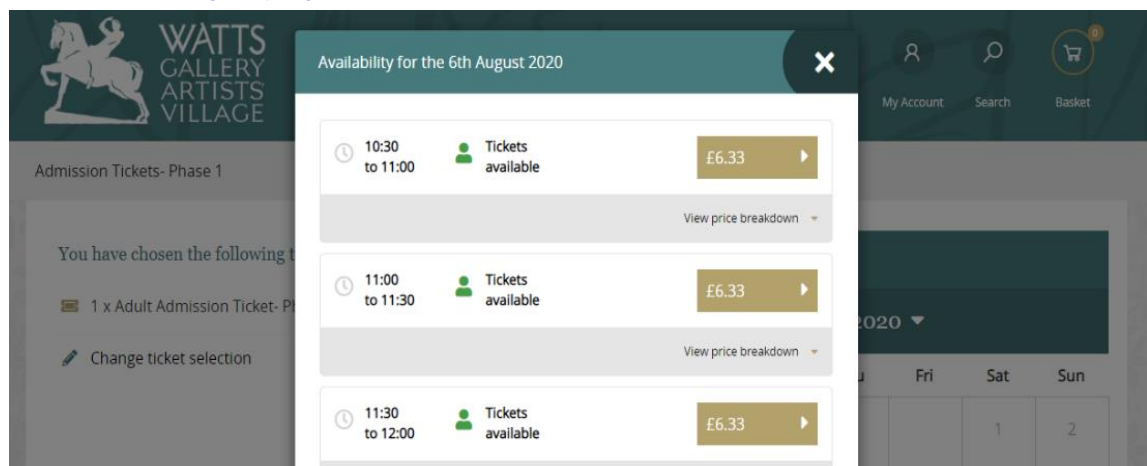
Website integration

Iframe or booking widget integration

This style of integration allows the entire booking journey to occur on your own website and won't send the customer off to another booking site to make their purchase. This integration type will take some work with your web development team as it involves specific code being inserted into your website's back end. It should be well documented by the ticketing system provider on how to achieve this process effectively.

Organisation – Stanley Halls | Ticketing System – Ticket Source

URL - https://www.stanleyhalls.org.uk/whats-on/

URL - https://www.stanleyhalls.org.uk/whats-on/

Website accessibility

When you potentially consider ticket purchasing functionality via your website you should factor in the increased user traffic your site may receive and how accessible it is to your users.

Depending on the type of ticketing platform integration, described on pages 10&11, there will be some responsibility from whoever manages your website to ensure they consider the different way users may interact with the site. For example, users might:

1. Use a keyboard instead of a mouse

2. Change browser settings to make content easier to read

3. Use a screen reader to 'read' (speak) content out loud

4. Use a screen magnifier to enlarge part or all of the screen

5. Use voice commands to navigate a website

Website accessibility principles apply to all aspects of your service (including code, content and interactions), which means all members of your team need to consider them when managing your website.

1. Perceivable: People need to be able to access web content through the senses of sight, hearing, and/or touch if they are to be able to use it.

2. Operable: People should be able to find and interact with web content using whatever input methods are available to them (e.g. keyboard, voice recognition), and have control over how they use it.

3. Understandable: Use plain, simple, direct language for clarity of expression and ease of understanding, using your audience's language and avoiding jargon.

4. Robust: Content needs to be able to be perceived, operable and understood using the wide range of technologies available for people to choose from.

If you are currently funded or usually eligible for Arts Council England funding, you can find out more about your website's accessibility and how to implement the guidance above by contacting the Digital Culture Network

Managing visitor capacities

As an organisation following the latest government guidelines, you will be able to determine what your maximum capacity of visitors will be within your spaces at any one time. If you offer free entry to your visitors, you may want to consider that some customers may register for a ticket but not show up on the day which may result in you turning potential visitors away at the door. You may want to think about the following potential solutions;

1. Setting clear time restrictions for visitors so that they must arrive at an agreed time before their designated time slot and a cut off time for entry so you can release their space to other customers.

2. Have clear messaging so that customers know to inform you should they not be able to make the booked date in order for you to release their slot and sell to another customer.

3. Consider retaining a portion of your capacity for 'walk ins' so you can always provide some tickets at the entrance.

4. Potentially consider charging a small nominal fee for online bookings to cover admin costs which may encourage attendance on the day.

Managing visitor accessibility

Ensuring the safety and comfort of visitors with specific access requirements should be a priority in managing your capacity for each time slot. For example, you may want to consider how many wheelchairs you can safely fit in to the space at any one time and the effect this may have on your overall capacity numbers. You may want to think about the following potential solutions;

1. Setting aside a certain number of 'Accessibility Tickets' from the general capacity to accommodate these visitors.

2. You may decide you would like these tickets available online so that customers with accessibility requirements can easily register to visit your venue. Your chosen ticketing provider should be able to explain how to portion off these tickets and how to display them online.

3. Ensure that you factor in a carer or companion that may accompany this customer by labelling the entrance type to include "personal assistant / carer / companion" and count this into your capacity.

4. You might be wary of potential individuals taking advantage of this system if you do not hold any eligibility or verification checks at the point of registration, so you may want to consider placing some ticket checking measures at the point of entry to the venue.

Impact on your organisation

Managing a timed entry ticketing system will have some connotations to your overall operation and potentially create a whole new way of working for your team to get used to. For some teams, using technology like this can be a completely alien concept and it's important to recognise this and encourage learning as much as possible. You may want to think about the following potential methods to overcome this;

1. Give your team as much lead time to the implementation process as much you can, this may be difficult during the current circumstances but surprising your team with brand new kit on the day of its use can be very daunting.

2. Involve your team as much as you can in the decision-making process and reasoning for why you are implementing this specific software. All of this comes back to everyone's safety so that your organisation can reopen its doors to the public.

3. Try to avoid 'on the job' rushed training sessions for members of your team that will be using the system. Create a specific time and safe environment for your team to get comfortable with the software and make it as interactive as you possibly can.

4. Be as supportive as possible and look to nurture your team's learning so they can grow in confidence over time.

5. Create Digital Champions within your organisation who have a natural affinity for using the software and task them with spreading positivity and knowledge of the system to others.

6. Focus on the online experience as much as you can to ensure it is working as effectively as it possibly can to avoid continued intervention from your team. Be sure to listen and adapt to any feedback given by the general public to improve the experience.
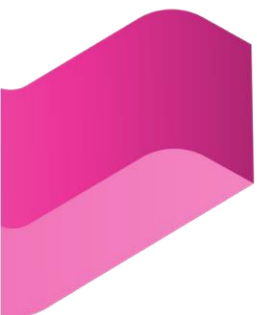
NHS Test & Trace data collection

Organisations within specific sectors such as museums and galleries will need to collect and store visitor data to support [NHS Test and Trace](#) in the prevention of further Covid-19 outbreaks.

In the latest [Government Guidelines](#) issued on July 2nd 2020, the government have laid out the vital data you will need to collect for all persons that visit your venue. On the occasion that a member of the public tests positive for Covid-19 and has stated that they have visited your premises recently, you will need to be able to provide the details of the visitors who may have come into contact with them during that time.

The guidelines state that venues should collect the following vital data wherever possible:

1. The name of the customer or visitor. If there is more than one person then you can record the name of the 'lead member' of the group and the number of people in the group.

2. A contact phone number for each customer or visitor, or for the lead member of a group of people.

3. Date of visit, the arrival time and where possible, the departure time.

4. If a customer will interact with only one member of your team (e.g. a hairdresser), the name of the assigned team member should be recorded alongside the name of the customer.

If you are introducing timed ticketing to your venue, the data that you would collect as part of the booking process covers the basic required data laid out above. You may wish to consider how you might manage a 'Check In & Out' process using a manual method or ticket scanning functionality provided by your ticketing system to fully comply with the guidelines.

For further information please refer to the full guidelines [here](#).

Data storage and the GDPR

As with any personal data collection that you undertake, you must store and protect this data in accordance with the [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR) guidelines that were released in May 2018. For many organisations who are just starting out with timed ticketing, this might be the first time you are regularly collecting and storing data from your visitors.

The basic framework of the GDPR falls under the following six key principles to abide by:

Lawfulness, Fairness & Transparency
Organisations must make sure their data collection processes do not break the law and that they do not purposefully conceal practices from the person who they are collecting data from.

Purpose Limitation
Organisations can only collect data for the purposes of which they state they will use it for.

Data Minimisation
Organisations must only process the amount of necessary personal data to achieve the stated purposes laid out in statement 2.

Accuracy
Organisations must take every reasonable effort to ensure that any data stored that is incorrect or incomplete is rectified or removed from their records.

Storage Limitation
Organisations must not store data for any longer than is deemed necessary. They should be able to justify the length of time and for what purposes they retain the data for as long as they do.

Integrity and Confidentiality
Organisations must ensure that the data is processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security so that it is not accessed, damaged and shared by anyone unlawfully.

For further detailed information on these principles please visit the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) website.

As a matter of course the ticketing technology platform you choose to procure will be GDPR compliant and will ensure that any personal data it processes will be done securely. It is however what you do with that data once it is processed that the system cannot account for, so this is why you must have your own security measures and policies in place to ensure compliancy with the regulations. Below are a few key areas to focus on:

Privacy policy

If you are processing personal data then you must have a privacy policy in place that will detail to your customers what data you are collecting and for what purposes. It should be visible on your website and easily accessed during the booking path when a customer is entering their information. All ticketing systems listed in this document will allow you to link to your privacy policy at point of purchase. You can download a privacy policy template from the ICO here

Customer consent

You may wish to take advantage of this booking process to collect data for marketing purposes such as email addresses. This should be detailed in your privacy policy and you should also have a marketing 'opt-in' question to track consent from your customers in order to do so. All ticketing systems listed in this document will allow you to create your own data capture questions during the booking process to collect data for marketing purposes. For more information on consent please refer to the ICO website.

☐ Please tick this box if you'd like to receive further communications (email and/or post) from Henry Moore Foundation.

Example: https://www.henry-moore.org/

NHS Test & Trace consent

The Government Guidelines do not state that you have to ask specific consent in order to share data for the purposes of NHS Test & Trace, however it is deemed best practice to communicate with customers in your privacy policy and/or at the venue clearly that this data sharing may occur.

Data security

For any electronic data collection you must ensure you have strict security measures in place to protect unlawful access to data lists. This includes ensuring computers are locked away securely when not in use and your team use strong passwords for devices and systems that store data. For more information on security please refer to the ICO website.

Museum & gallery examples

Standard ticketing solutions

Venue: Henry Moore Foundation --- https://henry-moore-foundation.arttickets.org.uk/
System: Art Tickets --- https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/programmes/art-tickets

Venue: Simon Lee Gallery --- https://www.simonleegallery.com/exhibitions/
System: ARTSVP --- https://artsvp.co/

Venue: Edinburgh Museums --- https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/
System: Eventbrite --- http://eventbrite.co.uk/

Venue: Watts Gallery --- https://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/
System: Digitickets --- https://www.digitickets.co.uk/

Museum & gallery examples

Comprehensive ticketing solutions

Venue: The National Gallery --- https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/exhibitions
System: Tessitura --- https://tessituranetwork.com/

Venue: Barbican Art Gallery --- https://www.barbican.org.uk/
System: Spektrix --- https://www.spektrix.com/

Venue: Museum of Literature Ireland --- https://moli.ie/visit/tickets/
System: TicketSolve --- https://www.ticketsolve.com/

Venue: Royal Academy of Art --- https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibitions-and-events
System: Tessitura --- https://tessituranetwork.com/

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Thank you

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