

Digitizing masterpieces for the world to explore

Home of the Dutch Masters partners with Dell Technologies to make 1.1 million artefacts accessible to all.



The Rijksmuseum is the first in the world to digitize its entire collection of masterpieces and historical artefacts, making them accessible to all while also preserving cultural heritage for future generations. The museum's partnership with Dell Technologies is making it possible to achieve this monumental goal.

Transformations



The Rijksmuseum is breaking out of the physical confines of its building by digitizing the visitor experience.



Experts are using the latest AI technology to restore a masterpiece of the Dutch Golden Age.



The museum has gained the flexibility to maintain operations during unprecedented disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outcomes



Showcases more than a million artefacts to the world.



Provides global, round the clock, digital access to the museum's masterpieces.



Leads world's most advanced painting restoration using machine learning.



Extends the reach of the museum beyond its physical footprint.

When we think of a museum, our first perception is of a place. But the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam is proving that in today's era, a physical building is only part of the story.

The museum is a key attraction for the millions of people who come to the Dutch capital each year. It welcomed 2.7 million visitors in 2019, who came to see some of the 1.1 million artefacts on show, including the world's most extensive Rembrandt collection.

Restoring a classic

But not everyone can get to Amsterdam, and the museum only has space to exhibit around 8,000 artefacts at any given time. How could it give more people the world over the opportunity to enjoy this exciting cultural and artistic heritage? The answer was to digitize the entire collection and make it available online, 24/7. Now fans of great art can invite the Dutch Masters onto their smart phones and laptops.

"We're aiming to achieve the same quality and experience as you would have visiting the museum itself," says Rob Hendriks, Head of IT at the Rijksmuseum. "To do that, we're pushing the boundaries of what's possible."

The Rijksmuseum is one of the first in the world to completely digitize its collection – a process that began in 2009 with the restoration of Rembrandt's 1642 masterpiece 'The Night Watch'. Teams used advanced digital technologies to learn how Rembrandt put paint on canvas and to determine the best treatment plan for restoration. To do this, they used high-resolution photography and artificial-intelligence techniques powered by Dell Technologies storage and services.

A beautiful partnership

The success of the project, which restored previous lost edges to the painting and gained praise from international media, validated the museum's decision to continue its digital transformation with Dell Technologies.

Thanks to an end-to-end technology portfolio including storage, virtualization and server solutions, the Rijksmuseum is able to address its larger IT challenges of data management, security and digitization. Key data center technologies include: Dell PowerScale storage, Dell VxRail hyper-converged infrastructure appliances, Dell PowerEdge servers, Dell data protection appliances and networking devices.



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Plus, through a key engagement with channel partner IT Creation the museum could quickly deploy Dell client solutions to support their employees’ pivot to remote work.

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Digital experiences for a digital era

Today, art lovers the world over can access treasures that were previously locked away in archives. Using the Rijksmuseum’s app and website, they can tour its grand halls and even visit the gift shop, providing an important income stream to the museum. This proved invaluable during 2020, when visitor numbers fell by 75% due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We want to meet the needs of every visitor, both physical and online,” says Hendriks. “By adding curator commentary to our virtual tours, we offer new ways of experiencing our collection.”

Is it a masterpiece in its own right? Not only has the Rijksmuseum preserved a vital cultural heritage for future generations, but it has made this accessible to anyone in the world, for free. It’s setting an example to museums across the globe to explore digital strategies in managing their own collections and promoting their value to society.

[Learn more](#) about the Rijksmuseum’s digital transformation.

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