

Communicating Intangible Cultural Heritage Through Interactive Textile Interfaces

CONTEXT + OBJECTIVE

Museums are increasingly using digital technologies to share cultural heritage, yet many traditions are difficult to communicate through screens alone. Practices such as Scottish Gaelic waulking songs combine touch, movement, rhythm, craft, and community—qualities that are experienced rather than simply observed. This research explores whether interactive woven textiles can offer new ways of engaging with traditions both living and no longer practiced.

My research explores how interactive textile interfaces might be used to communicate intangible cultural heritage. I currently have a focus on Scottish Gaelic waulking songs, a tradition in which women sang while rhythmically fulling newly woven cloth. Waulking practices are a good case study because they combine music, movement, textiles, craft, and women's history. With songs, coordinating tempo, and social interaction, they sit at the intersection between craft, folk music, and community activities



PROTOTYPE + WORKSHOP CONCEPTS



PARTICIPATION

I am seeking textile practitioners, weavers, textile artists, museum and heritage professionals, and members of the general public to take part in 60–90 minute exploratory research sessions. These could be interview or interaction-based. Participants will be invited to interact with waulking songs, textile samples and early design concepts, discuss their experiences and perspectives on cultural heritage, and/or take part in a semi-structured interview and short questionnaire. The sessions are designed to inform the development of an interactive textile interface for communicating intangible cultural heritage, and no prior knowledge of Scottish waulking traditions is required for members of the public.

What to Expect

- Explore woven textiles and historical materials
- Experience recordings of Scottish waulking songs
- Share your thoughts in an informal discussion
- Complete a short questionnaire (optional interview)
- Time: approx 60–90 minutes

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