Hands-on teaching about material culture used to be part of the anthropology curriculum. From a cognitive anthropology point of view, this made good sense: artifacts are outputs an inputs of individual cognitive processes and directly involved in extended and distributed cognition and in cultural epidemiology. This – and the web availabilty aspect of the project – is why we welcome this University College London initiative:

"[E-Curator research project](#) "3D colour scans for remote object identification and assessment" is a one-year project currently underway at UCL Museums and Collections. This project draws on UCL's expertise both in curatorship and in e-Science. It takes advantage of the presence at UCL of world class collections across a range of disciplines and of a state of the art colour scanner, the quality of which is unequalled in the UK. The project explores the use of 3D colour scanning and e-Science technologies to capture and share very large 3D colour scans and detailed datasets about museum artefacts in a secure computing environment."

West African Medicine bundle.

"The aims of e-Curator are to

* Develop a traceable methodology for recording the surface detail and colour quality of a range of object types and materials
* Explore the potential for producing validated datasets that would allow closer and more scientific examination of groups of objects, the processes involved in their manufacture, and issues of wear and deterioration.
* Examine how the resulting datasets could be transmitted, shared and compared.
* To begin to build expertise in the use and transmission of 3D scan data as a curatorial tool.

At a time when museums are being urged to enter into more international partnerships, to engage with different cultural perspectives, and to loan their collections more freely, the development of e-Curator could alleviate some of the practical barriers to the movement of people and objects, enhancing international scholarship and facilitating the safe movement of artefacts."

A 3D viewer can be downloaded [here](#) and used with a gallery of objects, but alas has been developed only for Internet Explorer so far.