

The Applications of Digital Reality in Creative and Oceanic Cultural Industries: The Case of Taiwan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Digital reality technologies have become a key component of promoting creative and cultural industries in Taiwan. In 2016, Taiwan's Ministry of Culture funded 45 projects to promote creative and cultural industries in this island country. A total of USD\$25.6 million dollars have been granted to this project. Among these projects, the applications of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies have been found to be the latest trend in Taiwan's creative and cultural industries. This chapter employs a case study approach to survey the current state of digital reality technology applications particularly in the area of creative and oceanic cultural industries in Taiwan. Using a detailed description of these best practices among creative and cultural industries to promote Taiwanese oceanic culture, this chapter aims to provide a detailed examination of digital reality applications in the creative and cultural industry sectors in a non-Western context.

INTRODUCTION

Defining Creative and Cultural Industry

The term, cultural industry, can find its historical root in the Frankfurtian school (Abruzzese & Borrelli, 2000). This concept often refers to industries “which combine the creation, production and commercialization of creative contents which are intangible and cultural in nature” (Mariani, 2018, n.p.). Cultural industries often include a wide variety of information-intensive and –dependent economic sectors that produce artifacts through advertising, marketing, journalism, publication, public relations,

etc (Hesmondhalgh, 2002, cited in Deuze, 2007). According to Mariani (2018), industry sectors such as audiovisual, cinematographic productions, crafts and design, phonographic contents, printing and publication, multimedia, among others are also considered to be part of the cultural industry ecosystem. More specific categorization of the creative and cultural industries includes advertising, architecture, arts, design and fashion, film and TV, music, and culture, as well as IT, software, and digital game (UK Creative Industries, 2018).

With the emergence of knowledge-based economy, this term increasingly appears with a more recent term, creative industry, which carries less critical cultural connotations, but with more economic benefits these particular activities can bring to a country (Ministry of Culture, 2015). Both terms refer to similar categories of economic activities, but creative industries place more emphasis on “the product or service contains a substantial element of artistic or creative endeavour and include activities such as architecture and advertising” (Mariani, 2018, n.p.). The merger of mass production of culture and individual creative activities has led to the interchangeable use of “creative industry” and “cultural industry” (Deuze, 2007) and sometimes with a newly coined term, “creative cultural industry” (UK Creative Industries, 2018). The original definition of “creative industries” refers to “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (Yoshimoto, 2003, p. 1).

The emergence of several digital technologies has posed new challenges and opportunities to the cultural and creative industries (Deuze, 2007). For example, the advent of multi-platforms has allowed cultural and creative production to be simplified and their contents to be disseminated to consumers (Deuze, 2007) through both the traditional print media and more contemporary social, mobile, and reality-creating technologies. Furthermore, these emerging digital platforms often influences how information will be commented, shared, and produced among users (Deuze, 2007). Some noteworthy examples will be the rise of Twitter, YouTube, and other social media platforms as the channels to share and comment on these creative and cultural contents.

The popularity of creative and cultural industries has attracted a lot of enthusiasm around the world (Fung, 2016; Ministry of Culture, 2015; UK Creative Industries, 2018). For example, Fung (2016) examines the growth of creative industries in China and argues that its development has been affected by two factors: global reliance and ideological control. As a rising economic powerhouse, China’s cultural and creative industries have been relying on international capital, management, and foreign talents (mainly from Taiwan, and Hong-Kong) (Fung, 2016). Furthermore, despite its apparent contradiction with the core value of creative industries that emphasize individual creativity, the ruling Chinese Communist Party government has exerted stringent control over its media industry to control and generate cultural contents that “could easily sway, mobilize, or narcotize the public” (Fung, 2016, p. 3007).

However, the approach to take advantage of the economic potential of creative and cultural industries is varied among countries. As one of the foremost countries to promote creative and cultural industries as a potential economic sector, their size, as measured by the *Gross Value Added* (GVA) is estimated to reach £101.5 billion in U.K. in the year of 2017 (UK Creative Industries, 2018). The rapid rise of creative and cultural industries in UK can be demonstrated by its 53.1% increase of these sectors, when compared with 29.7% growth among other economic sectors in UK (UK Creative Industries, 2018). However, despite the economy of Japan is three times of that of U.K., the creative industry sectors in Japan are still in their nascent state in terms of the total revenue generated and the total number of employment related to creative and/or cultural industries (Yoshimoto, 2003). In Japan, about 3.2% of its workforce (1,878,000 persons) is employed in creative industries, according to the 2001 statistics (Yoshimoto,

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