

# Effective Cultural Communication via Information and Communication Technologies and Social Media Use

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## INTRODUCTION

Cultural organizations need to adopt contemporary methods and ways of communication for heritage management. Raising people's interest for cultural heritage may take place via the implementation of innovative communication tools that allow for engagement to take place. Research though has shown that cultural organizations are more reluctant than firms are to implement a two-way communication process with new technologies and social media. Do cultural organizations employ Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and social media in an interactive approach? This chapter aims to illustrate the significance that should be attributed to innovation through the use of technology for communication purposes by cultural organizations. The way communication trends take place in the field of cultural management and communication is presented, along with an overview of the technological outlook that can be invaluable. The use of innovative communication tools that are employed by cultural organizations for their communication strategies has been little researched as a topic. This study aims to add to the literature on the use of social media, mobile devices and ICTs by cultural organizations.

Technological advances have enabled a dynamic and effective communication of cultural organizations with their audiences and made more attractive. ICTs are used to enrich, transform and enhance the cultural experience. They can become

a powerful communication channel that may be a virtual 'direct' experience. They can disrupt linear sequences and provide usable and accessible in technology, content, navigation solutions for all people, irrespective of their age or abilities. Furthermore, the ICTs may permit exploration of cultural information, learning-by-doing in game-like environments that foster creativity and innovation.

The motivation for this chapter was the examination of the reasons why cultural organizations should use ICTs and social media in the cultural communication process with their public. The aim of this chapter to present the most popular communicative media that can be used by cultural managers to promote their cultural activities and organizations. The implementation of innovative and emerging technologies by cultural organizations has a role to play at their management and communication level of the organization. The chapter describes new applications employed by cultural managers that take into account the needs, preferences and expectations of the public and encourage them to interact with the cultural content and context. This may allow a more holistic approach to take place in regard to the trends and future outlook on the adoption of ICTs.

The adoption and implementation of innovative communication technologies may bring the visitor closer and connect him/her with the cultural organization. Curators and professionals who are in charge of media communication strategies in

cultural organizations may also find this study useful, because it illustrates innovative ways to incorporate web technologies in the promotion of the organizations and in the identification of visitors' needs and preferences.

However, the cultural messages shall use the appropriate medium and communication models to be transmitted via contemporary communication models. The use of innovative communication tools that are employed by cultural organizations for their communication strategies has been little researched as a topic (Padilla-Melendez & del Aguilla-Obra, 2013) where geographical and temporal boundaries are minimized (Bilton, 2015; Jeffres, 2015) and the co-creation of information via social media allows people to create content and post information online to like minded people.

## **BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH: CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, CULTURAL MARKETING, AND ICTS**

This chapter presents (a) both the implementation of innovative communication technologies with the use of ICTs via computers, mobile phones, telephone lines to access and manage electronic data on the web from the cultural organizations' point of view in order to illustrate the possibilities on offer for managing and promoting their services and (b) the implementation of social media that are internet-based innovative communication tools that bring people together through the use of user-generated cultural content. In doing so, a two way communication and engagement between cultural organizations, art and audiences can be promoted and cultural managers may more fully adopt both ICTs and social media.

There is a tendency of cultural organizations to overall ignore competition as part of the marketing approach; when they do so, they attend those cultural organizations that they are in their immediate whereabouts (Bennett, 2015). Cultural organizations need to embrace new strategies of marketing and use marketing tools and techniques,

as well as of social media, to disseminate their content and promote their activities to reach and communicate with new audiences (Fletcher & Lee, 2012), to increase their visitors and build stronger relationships and loyalty.

Cultural organizations are interested in developing relationships with different categories of the wide public. Firstly, simple promotional techniques were enough to achieve their goals. Nowadays, due to the economic crisis they needed to adopt a more sophisticated approach to marketing (Kolb, 2013). Furthermore, the explosion of ICTs and the extensive use of social media by cultural organizations suggested a 'transformation in cultural communication' (Russo, 2011) and an adaptation to users' changing usage behavior and expectations related to technological development and cultural changes (Shyam Sundar, Go, Hyang-Sook, & Zhang, 2015). Furthermore, they provided opportunities for user-generated content and co-creation (Holdgaard, & Klasturp, 2014; Sylaiou, Basiouka, Patias, & Stylianidis, 2013), education, enjoyment and entertainment (Charitonos, 2011; Hou, Wu, Lin, Sung, Lin, & Chang, 2014; Katz & Halpern, 2015; Kellner & Kim, 2010; Russo, Watkins, & Groundwater-Smith, 2009; Selwyn, 2009; Vavoula, Sharples, Rudman, Meek, & Lonsdale, 2009), and social utility for online communities (Allen-Greil & MacArthur, 2010).

In a continuously changing environment social media are a major challenge for cultural organizations, since they change the ways cultural meaning is perceived and the cultural products are consumed. They have become a part of everyday life and it is expected that cultural organizations adopt them to communicate with the wide public. Their use and growth have led to significant changes in cultural communication and the marketing strategies need to get updated and become adjusted to the new conditions. Social media can make cultural organizations' aims and scope attractive to a broader audience and include not traditional audiences and provoke their visit not only to their digital extension, but also to the physical site. Furthermore, they permit the interaction with the

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