



Transforming Arts Organizations Worldwide

Capturing the Digital Opportunity in Museums

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - Research Findings
March 2022

Overview of the Research



- One of ABA's members in Spain commissioned a custom research project on how museums can take advantage of the opportunities provided by digital
- The project was conducted jointly with seven of the other leading museums in Spain
- It involved both interviews with museums around the world and experts as well as significant desk research
- This report presents the findings in two areas:
 1. Creating a digital strategy
 2. Building an organization that can embrace digital opportunities

Twenty Interviews Conducted

Museums				Experts	
In Spain		Outside Spain			
Thyssen Bornemisza Museum	Ancient, modern and contemporary art	National Portrait Gallery (UK)	Portraits of historically important British people <i>Budget: €24 million</i>	András Szántó Consultant, researcher, and writer in the museum field ('The Future of the Museum: 28 Dialogues')	
Reina Sofia Museum	20th-century art	Design Museum (UK)	Industrial, graphic, fashion, and architectural design <i>Budget: €11 million</i>	Javier Zamora Professor and expert in digital transformation at IESE Business School Barcelona	
Centro Botín	Contemporary art	Victoria & Albert Museum (UK)	Art and design <i>Budget: €130 million</i>	Ignacio Bachiller CEO of FEVER, a global tech-enabled entertainment discovery platform	
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao	Modern and contemporary art	Van Gogh Museum (NL)	Vincent Van Gogh artworks <i>Budget: €40 million</i>	Pierre-Yves Lochon Consultant, professor and founder of Club Innovation & Culture	
Caixa Foundation	Contemporary art	Munch Museum (NO)	Edvard Munch artworks <i>Budget: €8 million</i>		
MACBA	Contemporary art	Smithsonian Institution (US)	Comprises 11 museums <i>Budget: €882 million</i>		
Picasso Malaga Museum	Picasso artworks	Cleveland Museum of Art (US)	Paintings, sculptures, photography, design <i>Budget: €38 million</i>		
Picasso Barcelona Museum	Picasso artworks	ACMI (AU)	Film, TV, videogames and art <i>Budget: €18 million</i>		

Additional Research



Desk Research

- Researched the digital strategies of 30+ museums
- Reviewed a range of articles and conference proceedings
- Additional research on social media, AI, gaming, VR/AR and NFTs



ABA Studies & Activities

- ABA Signature Research Study: *Demystifying Digital Monetization* (March 2021)
- Custom Research on behalf of Thyssen: *Digital Experiences & Monetization in Museums* (January 2021)
- Attendance at MuseumNext Digital Summits (March and December 2021)

Outline



Context



Strategy
Findings



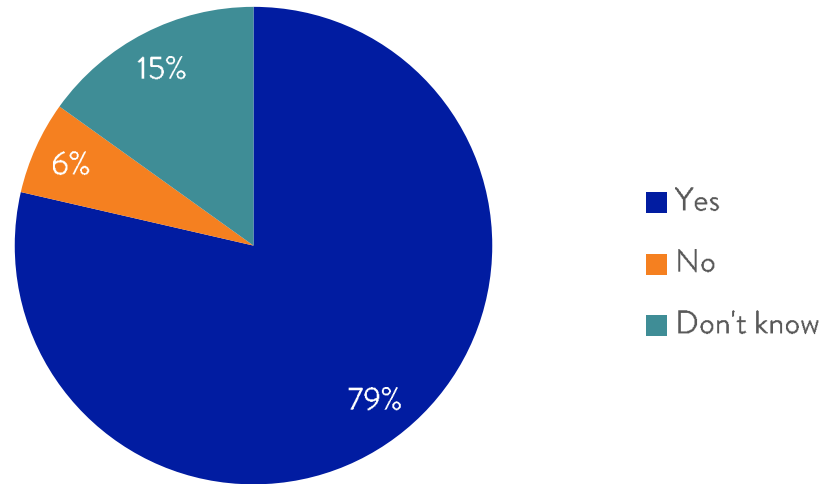
Organization
Findings



Next Steps

Museums Believe Digital Is Important

Museums considering increasing their digital offer after lockdown



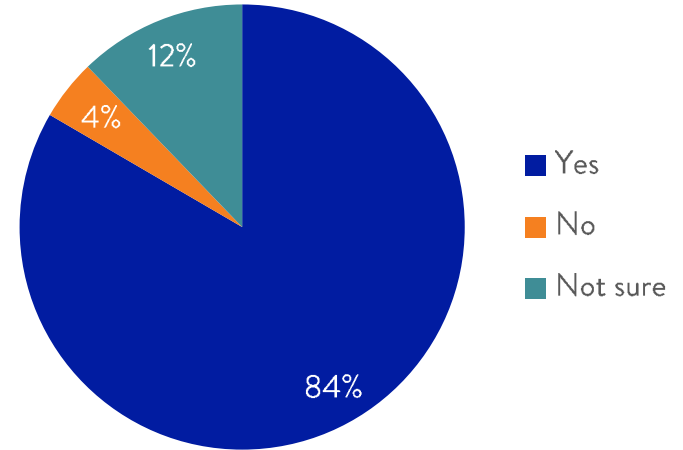
Source: *Museums, museum professionals and Covid-19: third ICOM report*, International Council of Museums, July 2021

However, Many Feel That They Need to Rethink Their Digital Strategy...

Many cultural organisations are not confident in their digital strategy....



... and most museums are currently rethinking their digital strategy



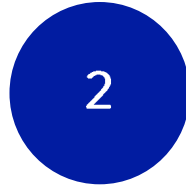
Source: ABA's Arts Organization Leader Benchmarking, March 2021

Source: *Museums, museum professionals and Covid-19: third ICOM report*,
International Council of Museums, July 2021

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Context



Strategy
Findings



Organization
Findings



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Overview of Lessons Learned

1

Arts and cultural organizations have made **tremendous progress** in digital over the past 18 months.

2

They are currently in an experimentation phase trying different ideas and **no single 'answer' has emerged.**

3

What is clear is that a digital strategy is not something independent - it needs to be **closely tied to the museum's overall mission and strategy.**

4

Museums cannot afford to excel at digital everywhere, they need to **focus on one or two areas.**

5

Measuring results is critical to building both momentum and confidence in the organization.

6

To attract a broad audience, digital content should have a **personal connection** at core and be easy to consume and try. **Storytelling** is key.

7

While fully embracing digital requires time and cultural change, **best practices are emerging** on how to be successful (even with limited resources).

8

Digital has opened up **significant opportunities** for museums - which will only continue to grow.

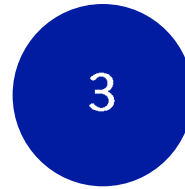
Outline



Context



Strategy
Findings



Organization
Findings



Next Steps

8 Best Practices for Embracing Digital Internally



1. Board and CEO commitment to digital: align on objectives, communicate them to the rest of the organization, and allocate budget and dedicated staff



2. Customized organizational structure: adapt org charts and process to facilitate building digital muscles



3. New skills and talents: bring on board a strong digital leader and involve digital natives to bring fresh perspective and to change the culture.



4. Partnerships to deliver the digital strategy: collaborate with digital and non-traditional partners, building an ecosystem.



5. Agile approach: willingness to monitor, evaluate, experiment quickly and make mistakes on digital activities.



6. Audience centered thinking: focus on the needs of the audience to inform your strategy.



7. Data-driven approach: take decisions and actions based on data and customer feedback, but within the context of a broader vision for digital and the museum



8. Step-by-step approach: recognize the time it will take to embed digital – at least two to four years.

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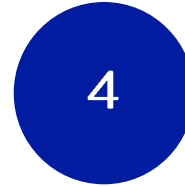
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Strategy
Findings



Organization
Findings



Next Steps

Emerging Questions Moving Forward

- 1) What part(s) of your mission can best be supported by digital?
- 2) What would success look like - and how would you measure it?
- 3) What activities would deliver your objectives and the needs of your target audiences?
- 4) What possible partners could you involve?
- 5) What resources, skills and organizational changes would you require?
- 6) Where should you focus and what should you prioritize?



Contacts

Steve Sacks
President, ABA Europe
steve.sacks@advisoryarts.com

Pilar Cárdenas
Senior Director, Spain
pilar.cardenas@advisoryarts.com