

**FLORIN NECHITA**

**AN INTRODUCTION TO  
MUSEUM MARKETING  
COMMUNICATION  
IN THE DIGITAL AGE**



**Presă Universitară Clujeană**

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**PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ**

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## FOREWORD

I am not a specialist in the field of museums and museography, but this paper aims to provide ideas and a basis for discussion from the perspective of the marketing specialist with practical experience in the food & drink industry, of which almost 13 years in the beer industry. However, I did like history as a child, and later I discovered the pleasure of visiting art museums. Since October 2012 my entire activity takes place at the Transilvania University of Braşov, Faculty of Sociology and Communication, where I teach Marketing, Brand Management, and other disciplines related to marketing, branding, and marketing communication, so it was quite normal for me to look for and find current examples to illustrate these courses and seminars, even during museum visits. I would be glad to know that museum specialists will have found ideas in this book, which is addressed primarily to students in Communication and Public Relations, Digital Media, and master students in Brand Image Campaign Management. Several subjects from the disciplines I teach are described here, but I have chosen to approach them only from the perspective of the museums category.

Not being a digital native, but rather having an enthusiastic attitude toward solutions that involve combining the physical space of the museum with the presence of multimedia and solutions offered by the latest technologies to enhance the visiting experience, I think that through a photo I could better explain why communication in the digital age does not only mean digital technology and tools. As in the Romanian version of this paper, and this revised English edition, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam ranks first in the number of mentions in exemplifying topics such as consumer behavior, the marketing mix, public relations, guerrilla marketing, YouTube, Snapchat, Pinterest, Instagram, Airbnb or mobile apps. I chose the photo presented in figure 1 from my archive

of photos taken in September 2017 at the Rijksmuseum. I wrote at the end of the Romanian edition of this paper that the description of the photo - There is no app for that! - was inspired by the solution of one of the teams participating in the Transilvania Creative Fest (December 2014) at the Braşov - The legendary city: There's no app for it! brief and that the explanations will be included in the next edition of the book. The explanations are simple: in a world where the digital and the virtual are increasingly intertwined with the real environment, some things remain the same. I remember perfectly the sensations I had during the time spent around Rembrandt's famous painting - Night Watch - respectively the long time spent admiring the masterpiece, sitting directly on the comfortable carpet, the photo shoot, choosing and posting on Instagram the photo that best expressed the sum of that experience and then the re-examination of the picture with the support of the guide materials. And part of my experience as a visitor was the tactile experience of holding a card containing the story of the painting concentrated in a text of only 4-500 words, the ability to combine looking at the details explained in this card with looking at the respective sections of the real picture, as well as the feeling of belonging to a community (I spent some good minutes studying the reactions of other visitors and I was sure that we shared similar feelings and thoughts). I'm almost certainly wrong, but I also seem to remember a pleasant smell of the ink used for printing. But I'm not mistaken if I say that this entire experience could not be generated by an app or by any other digital tool.



**Figure 1. *There is no app for that!***

(Photo: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, F. Nechita - September 2017)

By far, most of the museums I visited in the last 8-9 years have been in other countries, while traveling to Erasmus+ teaching programs or various academic conferences. And one of the fastest ways to understand new places is to visit representative museums. And because when I travel abroad I usually take a few dozen photos a day, it was impossible not to have many photos from museums as well. In fact, there are articles in the academic literature about the motivation of visitors to take photographs in museums (Diehl, Zaubermaier and Barasch, 2016; Stylianou-Lambert, 2017; Weilenmann, Hillman and Jungselius, 2013). Some of the photos were taken with my marketer's eye and with the intention of using them in the future, and some were taken simply from the perspective of a visitor. Some of these photos were also used to illustrate the book *Interpretation and promotion of cultural heritage in museums (Interpretarea și promovarea patrimoniului cultural din muzee - in Romanian)*, written at the end of 2015 together with my colleague from the Department of Marketing and Tourism, Adina Candrea. Due to the pandemic, there was a significant decrease in the number of my visits to museums, so for the 2022 edition I had to significantly reduce my visual explanations.

This paper is structured in five chapters, just like the Romanian edition published at the end of 2020. The information in the first three is also found in a significant proportion in the book *Interpretation and promotion of cultural heritage in museums* (Candrea and Nechita, 2015), but I kept them because any discussion about museum marketing communication in the current period can not ignore the approach starting from the general (museum marketing) and making a brief foray into the use of traditional means of communication (presented in the 14 pages of the second chapter). The mini-chapter on guerrilla marketing was introduced with the main purpose of emphasizing the need for museums to adopt an unconventional and creative approach, the low budget of the communication being self-evident. Thus, the transition from traditional communication to communication through the new digital channels is ensured, channels that also facilitate the viral effect in spreading the messages that can be included in the guerilla marketing category.

Not all of the examples presented refer to museums in the category of those that meet the ICOM (International Council of Museums) definitions or are on the list of ministries that manage culture in those countries. Moreover, I would like to point out that in my favourite list of the museums I have visited so far, the Museum of Broken Relationships in Zagreb is still in the first place, a museum that I suppose opened without the authorization of the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Media, but which was recognized as the most innovative European museum in 2011.

Since the publication of the Romanian edition of this volume, I have managed to listen to all the 100 episodes of *A history of the world in 100 objects* made by BBC Radio Four plus the special episode (101) released on December 25, 2020. Moreover, in March 2022, on the same famous British channel, Neil MacGregor began a tour of museums in the UK, where he visits only one museum each episode, and its representatives are invited to choose a single object from their collections which they feel best illustrates their civic role, and the way they relate and want to relate to their local audience.

## *Foreword*

There are many examples inspired by the articles on the MuseumNext platform throughout the paper, but a turning point was my participation in the MuseumNext Digital Marketing Summit on November 22-24, 2021. Indeed, the community of marketers working in the field of museums is creative, and the solutions implemented by them in various parts of the world are inspirational and applicable in many other areas.

Although the deadline for the completion of this paper was December 2021, postponing it by seven months allowed the subject of gamification to be addressed in a separate subchapter. The impetus came from the proposal for cooperation with the Mureșenilor House Museum in Brașov for the project Secret of the Mureșianu family – gamified virtual tour. Also, a day dedicated to museums in Frankfurt, at the end of May 2022, brought new photos and ideas along with the necessary explanations. And the mention of the European Night of the Museums event had to be illustrated with a photo of a long queue of people waiting to enter the County Museum of History from the city they live in, Brașov.

Also, even this paper is in English and because I expect to benefit from an international audience of readers, I still kept most of the examples and references to the museums in Brașov present in the 2020 Romanian edition.

# 1. MUSEUM MARKETING

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) provides the following definition of museums: a museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment (ICOM, 2007). The ICOM definition is practically the same as in the '70s, and in 2016 an attempt was made to update it. A commission led by the Danish Jette Sandahl proposed a definition that states that museums are democratic, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the past and the future, and their purpose is to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and global welfare. Due to disagreements over the new definition, Ms. Sandahl and three other members of this committee resigned in June 2020, and the old definition is still in force (The New York Times, 2020).

Later edit! The new definition was approved on August 24th, in the framework of the 26th ICOM General Conference held in Prague. The ICOM Extraordinary General Assembly approved the new museum definition after an 18-month participatory process that involved hundreds of museum professionals from 126 National Committees from all over the world. Here it is the new definition:

A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing (ICOM, 2022).

The mission of museums goes beyond the sphere of collection and conservation, but also that of exhibition and education through objects owned, borrowed or manufactured for this purpose. Rentschler (2004) synthesized the function of museums and, consequently, their definition, thus showing the transformation from the functional (object-based) approach to the purposive (people-based) one. In the functional approach, the museums acquire, conserve, communicate and exhibit art for study and education, while in the purposive approach, the museums are for people to enjoy and to learn from collections which are held in trust for society. Focusing on the object versus focusing on the visitor is not an issue that has only one answer, as the practice of major museums around the world has shown that both can be successfully done without compromising their mission and core values (Komarac, 2014). Gurian (2002) considers that there are five major types of museums: 1. Object-centered; 2. Narrative; 3. Client-centered; 4. Community-centered; 5. National.

Museums are complex organizations due to the following reasons: the variety of activities carried out within them, the intangible nature of the obtained results, the diverse nature of the value produced, the role they have in society, etc. Museums simultaneously fulfill three major institutional roles: cultural, economic and political (Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt & Runnel, 2014).

It is interesting to mention the approach brought by Neil MacGregor in his recent collaboration with BBC Radio 4 that started in March 2022 and in which he aims to discover the ways in which museums around the UK are adapting to a changing society - and how they will shape the future of our society.

Over time, it has been considered that museums were created for the purpose of education, collection, conservation and research, but as society has evolved, the offer of museums has diversified, and they have become key partners in the tourism industry and creative industries, and the economic role of museums has become increasingly important. Thus, the museum's entertainment function appeared (Stephen, 2001). Consequently, we are witnessing a

progressive development of didactic and educational activities, as well as a diversification of the services and forms of communication of museums, all with the aim of transforming the visitor from a simple viewer of the content offered in exhibitions into a creator of meanings (Cumino, Spreafico and Zich, 2017).

### **1.1. THE ROLE OF MARKETING IN VALORIZING THE MUSEUMS' CULTURAL HERITAGE**

By implementing of appropriate marketing methods and new technologies museums will get positive financial outcomes as well as promoting the original mission of museums (Yin, 2020). Modern cultural marketing requires more than offering a good product or service, setting an attractive price and facilitating public access to this product, and this challenge must be met by marketing activities carried out by museums. The marketing approach in the field of culture requires: market research, the systematic study of consumer needs and expectations, and even the creation of new needs.

Museums are part of the universal cultural system for disseminating knowledge and experience, and the importance of applying marketing to museum institutions stems from complementing their role as stimulus factors for the economy, increasing incomes in the communities in which they are located and generating jobs. If in the past the main task of museums was to preserve the collections, museum directors now have to manage the various roles of these institutions in the distinct activities of collection, conservation, research, exhibition, education and find ways to make them as popular and competitive as possible (Kotler, Kotler, & Kotler, 2000).

Museum institutions are actively involved in the life of the local community and have a very important role in the education and cultural and spiritual development of society, offering a wide range of cultural services, sometimes unique ones, at affordable prices. If we add the economic impact that museums have on community life, then the approach in terms of management and marketing seems to make sense.

## *1. Museum Marketing*

Dunlop et al. (2004) calculated based on an impact analysis that independent museums and art galleries in Scotland had at that time achieved an income multiplication indicator of 2.36 (each pound spent in these spaces generated revenue for other sectors of 1.36 pounds), while for jobs, this multiplier was 1.86. In the case of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, it has been estimated that about 1.25 jobs have been created for every 1000 visitors (Plaza, 2010).

Through marketing techniques, museums can achieve their goal of increasing the number of visitors and attracting new categories of visitors. For this, a series of validated techniques are adopted in the field of marketing services and consumer goods, such as: free or reduced prices, adding new services to the basic service offered by the museum, the innovative arrangement of the exhibition space, organizing exhibitions or events outside the museum space, the use of new technologies and promotion channels.

The marketing approach results from the sociological perspective on leisure consumption, and research has shown that attracting and satisfying new audiences involves promoting the social interaction and emotional involvement of visitors through edutainment, new technologies and devices, exhibitions and impactful events (Cerquetti, 2011).

The reason for the introduction of marketing in museums and other cultural institutions stems both from the desire to democratize culture and from the increased need for funding. In addition, we can talk about the existence of a competition within the specific sector in which these institutions operate, but also about an extra-sectoral competition with other branches or areas of leisure services. The adoption by museums of a marketing-focused approach requires knowledge of the needs and desires of visitors, not just the heritage they manage (Rentschler, 2002).

The first step in having a real marketing approach will be manifested by conducting studies on various categories of visitors and non-visitors, and then by building promotion programs designed to create and develop a strong and appropriate image of the museum institutions.

## **1.2. MARKETING ENVIRONMENT**

In order to be successful, museum institutions must understand what the public wants and what are the general trends that will affect their proper functioning. Museums, the economy, society and virtually the entire environment form an ecosystem designed to enable sustainable development (Pop et al., 2019). Signals from outside the organization must be detected quickly and through the internal capabilities that the organization develops and adapts continuously, it must act both to achieve the objectives of heritage conservation and to develop strategies to attract and satisfy visitors.

The microenvironment includes: the suppliers, intermediaries (within the distribution chain, intermediaries that ensure the message is conveyed to consumers), customers (individual or institutional), competitors and the public (all governmental and non-governmental institutions, associations and organizations that express different group interests, media, public opinion and which, through their attitudes, opinions and actions may have a favorable or unfavorable impact on the institution) as well as the museum staff.

Part of the organization's microenvironment is the organization itself. The way it is organized, its internal and decision-making structure, the processes, these are all part of it and the way in which the organization manages to achieve its objectives. Creativity has become part of the equation that aims to support and develop a competitive position of museum institutions, and their managers must focus on the collection of ideas that contribute to the process of organizational innovation (Litchfield and Gilfield, 2012).

The public that museums target and with whom they must engage in active relations is a specific concept of marketing, part of the internal environment, and in this case should not be confused with the visiting audience (as this is only part of the organization's audience). The term stakeholder is widespread used in the marketing and management literature. Among stakeholders we can

enumerate: locals; tourists; educational units; sponsors and donors; members of support groups; central or local government agencies and authorities; mass media; tourism promotion companies and associations; foundations and associations of various kinds; museum professionals and researchers.

The influence of public opinion and the media is beneficial, but sometimes their influence can be contrary to the current interests of museum institutions. In support of the latter statement, a famous case is the headline of discussions on the appropriateness of returning objects that are part of museum heritage and come from the period of colonial rule or their acquisition by means that are borderline illegal. Thus, the British Museum is under pressure from public opinion and the British and international media to comply with the Greek government's requests for the return of heritage pieces from the Parthenon, which Lord Elgin sold to the museum two centuries ago (Smith, 2014).

The involvement of the public in the promotion of museums can be achieved through specialized communication agencies or with the support of various non-profit organizations. For example, several activities carried out within the projects of the Faculty of Sociology and Communication, within the Transilvania University, took place in several museums in Braşov and aimed at generating ideas for possible communication plans for them (Nechita et al., 2014, Migdalovici and Nechita, 2014).

### **The demographic environment**

Significant demographic trends need to be carefully assessed in order to determine the extent to which they may affect the ability of museums to achieve their objectives and the directions to be considered when formulating their policies. Starting from the current demographic situation, short, medium- and long-term trends are identified. There are situations in which the core target group may disappear within a certain time frame. On the other hand, ethnicity and race cannot be seen as factors acting in isolation and the importance of generational factors is increasingly being discussed.

Future generations will grow up under the influence of totally different factors from those that marked the development of previous generations (Farell and Medvedeva, 2010).

The partnership between culture and health inspired by MoMA (New York Museum of Modern Art) is a suggestive example of the way museums adapt to demographic trends (one of the most impactful being that of an aging population). The Policy Handbook on Promotion of Creative Partnership (2014) report shows that many European museums, inspired by this New York Museum, have launched programs for people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. This program includes conversations and analyses of works of art, made in order to give those affected by this disease a chance to explore and exchange ideas about art and artists, experience intellectual stimulation, to the connections between personal stories and the world, access personal experiences and long-term memory and participate in meaningful activities that stimulate personal development.

And because the demographic environment also includes the health status of the population, we must also cite an example that might seem silly, but is very real: Canadian doctors can prescribe visits to art museums (Goodnet, 2019). And doctors in Brussels believe that a museum spree could be a possible treatment to help patients affected by COVID-19 to rebuild their mental health (Boffey, 2021).

### **The economic environment**

The first element of the economic environment that influences the number and structure of visitors is purchasing power. The influence can be direct, by affecting the budgets allocated for leisure, or indirect by influencing the budgets for holidays and, implicitly, reducing the number of visitors among tourists.

The economic environment decisively influences both the financing flows coming from the public area and those coming from the private sector through donations. The financing model differs from country to country, but it is certain that the evolution of the

## *1. Museum Marketing*

economy influences these financing flows, adding to the evolution of the economy the influence of the political-legal factor on budgetary allocations to culture or through sponsorship legislation. In Europe, funding is largely dependent on government agencies, while in the United States, funding is dependent on donations and own sources. Around 2005, art institutions, the percentages were at approximately 90% government funding in Europe, and in the US 50% of the budget came from donations and 50% from ticket sales (Rangan and Bell, 2006). In Europe, at least for the financing of the establishment of museums, we must also consider the amounts coming from non-reimbursable European funds. Thus, in Iasi, in northeastern Romania, five new museums were inaugurated in July 2021, in the new House of Museums, using non-reimbursable European funds of over 3 million euros (Mihai, 2021).

The relationship between the economic environment and museums is biunivocal. The development of the museum sector can contribute to economic growth through its interdependence with other creative industries. An example is the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, which manages to give a new image to the city of the Basque Country, so that the number of non-Basque tourists after the museum opened increased from 100,000 / year to 800,000 / year (Plaza, 2010).

### **The technological environment**

The technological environment of cultural organizations has changed significantly, and new technologies have entered the space of museums and have been received in various ways, ranging from initial reluctance to enthusiasm. While studies on the degree of acceptability of new technologies have focused on the specific attributes of technologies and their perception, the literature addressing the adoption and spread of new technologies specifies that familiarity with technology and openness to potential users are the factors that determine the perception of new technologies. Thus, technologies that would provide advantages when used by

museums may not be perceived as having real benefits by visitors (Kang and Gretzel, 2012).

New technologies allow the extension of these services in enclosed spaces in buildings. Because visitors usually bring their mobile devices with them, mobile apps that rely on location services can enhance the visiting experience by offering recommendations on specific objects, collections, or exhibits that are of interest, based on previous museum visits. When combined with data that analyzes the habits and movement of mobile device owners, these services customize the content that is delivered.

### **The political-social and cultural environment**

It is important to study the overall relationship between members of a society to the cultural and leisure offer. Especially after the early 1990s, with the spread of the idea that the entertainment function that museums should provide is important, museums actively participated in the realm of leisure-related industries such as: movie networks, shopping malls, or sporting events and competitions. The new museums aimed to be described globally by the cultivated image associated with novelty, architectural style, and promotion rather than by what they exhibit (Message, 2006).

The influence of the political and legal environment on the activity of museum institutions can be illustrated with examples that come from the area of extreme negative impact (regime changes, wars, ISIS activities in Iraq and Syria or the Taliban regime in Afghanistan are full of examples of robbery of heritage objects, the assassination of well-known historians and specialists or the deliberate destruction of historical sites) to the positive impact of political decisions such as the one taken in 1997 by Tony Blair's Labor government to rely on the creative industries as the engine of economic development in Great Britain by initiating the Creative Industries Task Force (Flew, 2012).

## The natural environment

In the marketing literature, almost every time a reference is made to the natural environment there are references to increased pollution, environmental degradation, the effects of global warming, ozone depletion and reduced water reserves (Kotler, Armstrong and Opresnik, 2021, pp. 98-100). What effect do these phenomena have on the way in which museum institutions manage to fulfill their mission? The destructive action of factors such as pollution sheds new light on the function of museums for the conservation of cultural and historical heritage. For example, the Acropolis Museum in Athens began conserving and restoring caryatids, which were replaced with copies in 1979. The originals were subjected to a complex restoration program, removing corrosive factors and cleaning layers of pollutants using laser-based technology (fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** *The relationship between the natural environment and the conservation function of museums*

(Photo: Acropolis Museum, Athens, F. Nechita - October, 2015)

Why is the analysis of the internal and external environment important in marketing? All marketing and management decisions must be based on the famous SWOT analysis (Strengths and Weaknesses of the organization, respectively Opportunities and Threats of the environment). The SWOT analysis for museums can be performed for the entire organization or for certain components and processes. Kotler, Kotler and Kotler (2008, p. 48) propose a very

clear set of questions that need to be answered in order to perform the SWOT analysis for a museum.

### **1.3. MARKETING RESEARCH AND UNDERSTANDING VISITOR BEHAVIOR**

Marketing studies are needed in order to understand why certain categories of people visit museums, what should be done to increase the audience and to assess the reactions of visitors during the visit. Museums develop and adapt their activities to promote and interpret the heritage they hold based on the demographic and socio-cultural characteristics of various categories of current or potential visitors. In order to be able to improve and develop the quality of the offer and the visitor experience, it is necessary for the museum institution to understand and measure the various indicators for assessing customer satisfaction. Basically, this evaluation represents the systematic collection of data about exhibitions and other programs that are useful in making decisions and improving the managerial act in museums.

According to a Harvard Business School case study on the management of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Rangan and Bell, 2006), the three categories of marketing research conducted in this museum were: 1) marketing research conducted for the purpose of understanding the consumer in order to expand the audience; 2) analysis of special exhibitions; 3) understanding the visiting experience in order to increase the retention rate (percentage of visitors who return on other occasions).

In order for museums to be able to develop strategies that address as large an audience as possible, both those who regularly visit museums and non-visitors, marketing responsables must consider dividing them into several categories and analyzing each category. All visitors have various physical, social, intellectual, or even special needs. The development potential of museum audiences comes precisely from the diversity of audience types. The challenge for marketers stems from how the museum will be able to carry out

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activities that represent a large part of the community. In addition, it is not enough to know the answer to the question who is interested or could be interested in the museum offer, but also to the question why?

The concept of target groups fits very well in the context of museum marketing. The task of marketing responsables and museum managers is to identify these groups with distinct demographic, psychographic and behavioral traits in terms of attitude towards the interaction with the museum and to make descriptive profiles of these groups, in order to prepare specific programs. Specific offers addressed to each segment of visitors or potential visitors are needed to enhance the experience of visiting or interacting with the museum. For example, an art museum, a history museum, a science museum or an outdoor event will produce distinct experiences for the visitors. For this reason, research on the visiting public or the event participant will have to analyze each experience separately (Stylianou-Lambert, 2011).

In order to improve the reception of information from museums by the younger generations, the so-called generations Y and Z (digital natives), it is necessary to achieve a complementarity between new technologies and the classic presentation and interpretation of exhibitions. An example of good practice is provided by the Šibenik City Museum in Croatia (fig. 3).



**Figure 3. Presentation of exhibits on TV screens and touch screens**  
(Photo: Šibenik City Museum, Šibenik, F. Nechita - May 2014)

Museums in Braşov are also particularly receptive to the integration of new technologies to make young people interact with the museum offer in a way that they appreciate as attractive. The Casa Mureşenilor Museum implemented virtual reality and a virtual assistant (Nechita and Rezeanu, 2019; Duguleană et al., 2020), and the Braşov County Museum of History used tactile devices both inside and outside the museum (fig. 4).



**Figure 4. Interaction of children with touch screens in the project:  
*I was citizen of Stalin town.***

(Photo: Gymnasium School Nr. 30 Braşov, F. Nechita - November 2017)

An important aspect of understanding visitors' behavior is to analyze it in the three stages of visiting: 1. Pre-visiting or making the decision to visit; 2. The actual visit; 3. Post-visit (Kawashima, 1998).

During the visit you can observe various behaviors in visitors, such as the different time of interaction with the exhibited objects (some objects are more stationary, some visitors move faster through all rooms) or you can use additional methods to obtain information (museum staff, audio guides, scanning QR codes, consulting mobile devices). At the end of the visit, some visitors buy books or souvenirs.

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Visitors' reactions to a visit to a particular museum can take place immediately during the visit, or they can happen in the evaluation phase of the visit. The reactions and impressions of the visitors related to the museum's offer or the quality and breadth of the experience can be positively influenced by the quality of interaction with the museum staff, the ambiance created and the diversity of complementary products and services available (information and promotion materials), souvenirs, the permission to film or take photos). The percentage of visitors who bring their smartphones with them when they visit museums is around 100%, and their tendency to take photos and share their experience on social media is very high. The author of these lines is in the category of those who take many photos (over 200 photos in a visit of the Rijksmuseum that took almost 8 hours) and post very little (fig. 5).



**Figure 5. Taking photographs and sharing them during the visit.**  
(Photo: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, F. Nechita - September 2017)

The organization of the exhibitions and the activities in the museum, subsequent to their opening, must consider creating visitor engagement, defined as attachment, commitment, devotion, involvement or emotional connection. The factors that determine the creation of this engagement of the visitor with the exhibition are (Taheri, Jafari and O'Gorman, 2014): previous knowledge (familiarity, expertise resulting from the visitor's skills or previous interaction with the museum); multiple motivations (self-expression, self-actualization and enrichment of knowledge, self-image,

attraction to the group, recreation); cultural capital (tastes, educational capital and social origins).

The complexity of visitors' behavior is determined by the multitude of factors that directly or indirectly influence the decision-making process before, during, and after the visit and can be explained only by the system of factors that act in interdependence. These influencing factors can be classified into cultural factors, social factors (social class, reference groups, family, role and status) and personal factors (age, occupation and income, personality and self-image, lifestyle and values, attitudes) (Solomon et al., 2016).

The creation of programs and exhibitions that address various generations or that contain a greater number of stimuli that are specific to the targeted segment could increase the efficiency of the museum's activities. Thus, generation Z can be engaged through touch screens (provided by the museum, or stimulating them to use their own mobile devices) in order to convey the desired information. In contrast, for older people, for which we would want to create the experience of reliving childhood memories, taking olfactory stimulation into account could be a solution (Stevenson, 2014).

Given that children have major influence on the cultural consumption of their parents, it is important to carry out activities for families in museums (Colbert and Courchesne, 2012). In the case of art exhibitions, children can be involved as complicit spectators or participants in a common learning experience, and in both cases, partners have the role of reducing the distance between the child and the museum by breaking the cognitive and psychological barriers that separate them (Caru and Cova, 2011). An example of this is provided by the special room for activities for children, within the Sternberg Palace Prague or Museum of Communication from Frankfurt am Main (fig. 6).

## 1. Museum Marketing



**Figure 6. Children's activity rooms.**

(Photo: Sternberg Palace, Prague, F. Nechita - August 2015 and Museum of Communication, Frankfurt am Main - May 2022)

And also related to the influence of children in the decision to visit museums, I remembered the statement of Jared Jones, guest-services associate at the Sacramento History Museum, in a material broadcast at the Digital Marketing Summit organized by MuseumNext, in which he talked about the large influx of visitors brought there by children who saw the video content on the TikTok account of this museum, which was the most watched account on this platform in November 2021.

A person's lifestyle is expressed through their activities, interests, and opinions and outlines how they interact with the environment and should not be confused with their personality. For museum marketers, it is recommended to consult studies on attitudes and the use of products and services in various categories.

As a subject for reflection in the field of visitor behavior, we need to better understand why there is such a large discrepancy between the desire for cultural consumption in an event such as the Night of Museums and their attendance at other times of the year. For example, in Braşov, in the evening of the European Night of Museums event, the number of people storming the historic center turns the city into a real celebration. Being the first one after 2019, the edition of May 14, 2022 seemed more crowded and livelier than ever. The number of people waiting to enter the County Museum of History is more than illustrative in this regard (fig. 7).



**Figure 7. European Night of Museums at Braşov.**  
(Photo: F. Nechita - May 2022)

## **1.4. IDENTIFYING CONSUMER SEGMENTS**

Creating a profile of the visitors, while considering the various characteristics of museums, is of particular importance for museum managers and marketing managers. Identifying homogeneous segments of visitors can be a first step in defining and developing effective strategies that should aim to maximize visitor satisfaction. These recommendations, regarding the identification of segmentation criteria and relevant segments, are specific to marketing, regardless of the category of products or services addressed, and their application in the cultural field is no different.

Segmentation studies conducted by museum specialists in collaboration with organizations, research companies or universities with experience in conducting marketing research will be able to detect these categories of visitors or non-visitors. Unlike absolute non-visitors (the category of people that are almost impossible to turn into visitors, regardless of the creativity of the strategy used to attract them to the museum), non-visitors are represented by that category of people who say they rarely or never go to museums, and for certain reasons (especially personal and conjunctural) do not frequent the museums, but who would become loyal museum visitors in the future.

An example of defining three segments and the profile of visitors that was created following a study conducted in two museums in Trento and Bolzano, Italy, is provided in Brida, Disegna and Scuderi (2013). The three groups defined following the cluster analysis among the visitors of the Museum of Archeology of South Tyrol in Bolzano and the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Trento were the following: 1) the knowledge seekers; 2) the unmotivated; 3) the interested.

Another category of visitors that is increasingly targeted by museums is that of people with special needs. Concern for people with disabilities by targeting them with distinct museum products and services also involves consulting them in order to provide information in accessible formats, individual guides, audio guides,

tours involving touching and handling objects, practical workshops, "sensory gardens", as described in one of the older projects of the Royal National Institute for the Blind (UK). By including virtual reality solutions and Avatar VR gloves, it was possible to create a sense of touch for visually impaired visitors of the National Gallery in Prague, who had the opportunity to "touch" famous sculptures such as the bust of Nefertiti or Michelangelo's David (Enns, 2018).

There are also research initiatives funded by the European institutions that have aimed to identify good practices that museums should follow in order to involve people with various forms of disabilities, and one of them was the Arches project.

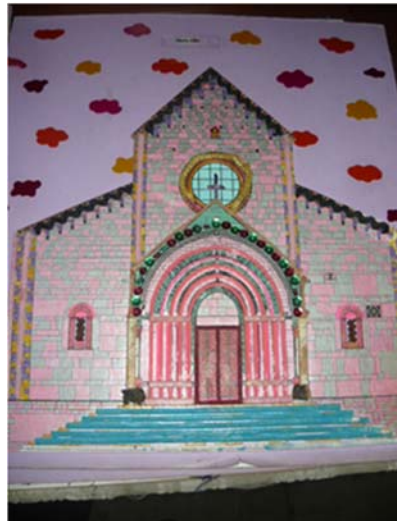
Another example of adapting the requirements of the category of visitors represented by the visually impaired is Museo Omero in Ancona. Named after the well-known blind poet Homer, this museum was founded in 1993 by the Ancona Local Council with a grant from the Regional Council of the Marche region and became a state museum by law in 1999, law which was passed by the the Italian parliament and which confirmed its unique status in Italy. In fact, Homer's Museum is not just for the visually impaired. Of the 17,000 visitors registered in 2012, only 390 people had such deficiencies. Museum staff consider Museo Omero to be a three-dimensional guide to art history (Levent and Pascual-Leone, 2014). Indeed, my own experience of interacting with 1:1 or 1:2 copies of famous statues was unique, which was also confirmed by students of the Faculty of Sociology and Communication who participated in a mobility project in May 2018 (fig. 8).

In fact, the idea of presenting the main information in a format that is accessible to the blind is present in another frequently visited attraction in Ancona, the Metropolitan Cathedral of San Ciriaco. At its entrance, a model of the cathedral is presented, accompanied by a tactile guide made of materials of different textures that explains to the blind visitors the successive historical construction stages of the cathedral (fig. 9).

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**Figure 8. Exhibits at the Museo Omero in Ancona.**  
(Photo: Ancona, F. Nechita, October 2014 - left and May 2018 - right)



**Figure 9. Exhibition for the blind in the Metropolitan Cathedral of San Ciriaco in Ancona.**  
(Photo: F. Nechita - October 2014)

## **1.5. MUSEUM MARKETING MIX**

Marketing studies are needed in order to understand why certain categories of people visit. Marketing specialists have designed numerous classifications of marketing tools, the most widespread being the one that includes the four major pillars: product, price, placement and promotion or the 4 Ps. Due to the particularities of the services, there was a need to analyze additional factors in the marketing mix. Thus, Cowell (1984) proposed extending the marketing mix with three other additional variables: people, physical evidence and process.

### – Product

- A short description of the theme, the character of the exhibition, etc.;
- The purpose and objectives pursued;
- The main and secondary target audience;
- The messages that are communicated to visitors;
- The context (location, safety measures, conservation and special rules);
- The design of the exhibition (exhibition plan) and highlighting the elements of functionality and attractiveness;
- The index of exhibits - origin, characteristics, significance, special considerations;
- Facilities offered to visitors;
- Associated programs;
- Educational materials.

The choice and planning of the aforementioned elements will lead to the realization of an exhibition or museum product that will produce a memorable (visiting) experience. Basically, even more than a product, museum staff should focus on delivering an experience. Idea of the importance of experience as a way to generate added value, to create a true economy of experience was launched in the 70s by Alvin Toffler (1970) and received a new

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impetus after the publication of the famous works of Pine and Gilmore (1998, 1999). In order to create a memorable visiting experience, it is necessary that the package of services associated with the basic museum product be consistent, carefully selected, and delivered with professionalism by the museum staff. And sometimes they try to generate a multisensory experience like the Maurithuis in The Hague, for example, which succeeded by including real scents in their art exhibition (Maurithuis, 2020). Also in Netherlands, in Utrecht, the Centraal Museum presented a '4D art experience' for both visitors who can see and visitors who are visually impaired or blind appealing to other senses: smell, hearing and touch for interpretation of two original still life paintings: Still life with fruits, nuts and cheese by Floris Claesz van Dijck and Still Life (tray with apples) by Bart van der Leck (Murphy, 2021a).

The visiting experience is determined by a mixture of emotional and spiritual factors, and people's expectations about it are dynamic and influenced by various factors. Sheng and Chen (2012) group these factors into 5 categories: 1. ease and fun; 2. cultural entertainment; 3. personal identification; 4. historical reminiscences; 5. the desire to escape to an alternative world (escapism).

The visiting experience begins before the public arrives at the museum. The visiting experience depends not only on the interaction of the visitors with the exhibitions, the Internet pages and with the interpretation materials, but also on the interaction with the museum staff, the members of the group they belong to, as well as the interaction with other visitors. The visiting experience ends long after leaving the museum and depends on a multitude of events and life experiences (Falk and Dierking, 2013).

When its collections are presented with flair and imagination, a museum can be the most effective way to place each visitor in context, showing them at the same time how the models have changed but also how much they have been preserved. Museums are those places where visitors want to see the testimonies of the past interpreted, not just simple objects. Understanding the product offered or the changes that may appear in how the audience relates to the museum can also influence rebranding decisions. It is the case of Food Museum from UK (former Museum of East Anglian Life) rebranded after the collective realisation that the museum's existing collection is well placed to tell the story of food (Cousins, 2022). And because the previous two sentences referred to (re)branding, I think it is appropriate to refer here to the visual identity of the new museum in Oslo dedicated to Edvard Munch. The London-based design studio, North, has created a typographic identity for the new museum which aims to balance the Norwegian artist's iconic image and engage more diverse audiences (Wong, 2020). And the visual identity of the museum could not but be bold, as long as the architecture of the building and the whole concept of the museum are spectacular. According to Stein Olav Henrichsen, the director of the museum, "Forget everything you know about museums! This is totally different." (Wainwright, 2021).

Regarding the services associated with the basic product offered by museums, we should also mention: the guidance services, museum information office, wardrobe, special rooms for mothers and children, innovative solutions for interaction with the exhibits, places dedicated to the sale of souvenirs, books, rest or public catering.

Starting from the idea that learning is fun, museums have expanded their number of activities complementary to the traditional activity and become part of the

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edutainment process, namely combining educational and cultural activities with commercial activities and technology specific to the world of entertainment (van Aalst and Boogaards, 2002). From the perspective of museum professionals, the benefits of edutainment are certain, but the risks of excessive spectacularization are questioned (Balloffet, Courvoisier and Lagier, 2014). A term introduced by Bryman (1999) to describe the spectacularization adopted by many organizations to present their offer is disneyfication.

Of particular importance in creating a memorable experience is the possibility for visitors to interact with the exhibits or copies of them, as well as the creation of devices or installations that allow experimenting with the concepts of the exhibition (fig. 10).



**Figure 10. Interactive exhibits and devices.**

(Photo: Tesla Museum, Smiljan, Croatia, F. Nechita - May 2014,  
Museo Galileo, Florence, Italy, F. Nechita - October 2014)

### – Price

The most visible element of the pricing policy and, in most cases, the one that does not have the greatest impact on museum revenues, is the level of the entrance fees. According to Zbucea (2008), the level of the entrance fee to a museum or exhibition is difficult to establish, both due to internal and external causes, so it becomes

necessary to find a balance between achieving the museum's objectives, the access of the interested audience as well as the targeted one, preserving the exhibited works and attracting funds for the museum. The price policy covers the level of the museum entrance fees, the type and variety of discounts granted according to the different special people categories (children, pupils, students, retirees, people with disabilities, group discounts, etc.), different prices or not for special temporary exhibitions or those of other museums, complementary services (cafeteria, souvenirs) or special activities (space rental, props rental).

A decade ago, museums in Italy made about 140 million euros from tickets sold to about 60 million visitors annually, 43% of which were non-paying (Brida, Meleddu and Pulina, 2012). The existence of such a high percentage of non-paying visitors presupposes the existence of preferential treatment and special offers aimed at categories of people such as pupils, students, retirees.

In the UK, there are no fees for access to national museums and national galleries, following a government decision in 2001. Inspired by the British example, French museums experimented with this model in 2008 for half a year, as an initiative of the then newly elected President Sarkozy (Dowd, 2011).

Another issue related to pricing is the way in which the prices of museum tickets are established. Studies have shown that tourists are willing to pay more than residents, although the latter are the most enthusiastic about the opening of new cultural facilities (Bedate, Herreo and Sanz, 2004). In many developing countries, the majority of visitors are foreign tourists (Boyan, 2006) and, for this reason, there are policies that involve the application of dual prices. In such countries, applying

### *1. Museum Marketing*

prices based on the willingness to pay for foreign tourists, without significantly reducing the visit rate, can lead to an increase in ticket revenues by up to four times (Sharifi-Tehrani, Verbcic and Chung, 2013). However, such studies do not measure the possible frustration of foreign tourists towards the adoption of dual-pricing. What is certain is that in the vast majority of cases there is a significant difference between the costs and revenue from fees and the activity of the souvenir shop, so it is necessary to supplement the income from donations or support from local or central authorities. A 2017 Art for Numbers report indicated a difference between costs/visitor and average income from fees, gift shop, cafe bar/visitor of \$47 (\$55 - cost and \$8 average income) (Norah, 2020).

Pricing strategies adopted by museums may consider differentiating the price between different categories of visitors (reduced price or free tickets for retirees, children, pupils, students), additional rates for admission at specific times in the day based on reservation and/or online purchase, discounts for groups, inclusion in the standard ticket price or additional payment for guides or audio guide/tablet, rates for exclusive events, prices for annual subscriptions. An example of such a differentiated approach according to the type of visitors, special services and the type of exhibition is shown in Figure 11.

TICKETS	
Erwachsene / Adults	€ 16
Wien Karte / Vienna City Card	€ 15
Ermäßig. / Concession	€ 12
Gruppen / Groups	€ 12
Timeslot «Caravaggio & Bernini»	€ 4,5
Premium-Ticket «Caravaggio & Bernini»	€ 30
Ein Abend mit Caravaggio & Bernini» »An Evening with Caravaggio & Bernini»	€ 49 / € 39
Führungen inkl Timeslot Guided Tours incl. time slot	€ 11 / € 6
Jahreskarte / Annual Ticket	€ 44
Jahreskarte U25 / Annual Ticket U25	€ 25
Mo, Di, Mi, Fr 9-18 Uhr Do, Sa, So 9-17 Uhr	
ÖFFNUNGSZEITEN OPENING HOURS »CARAVAGGIO & BERNINI«	

**Figure 11.** Entrance ticket prices to *Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna*  
(Photo: F. Nechita - November 2019)

#### – Price

In the context of cultural products and services marketing, distribution is understood as the set of processes and means that ensure their flow from the producer to the consumer audience (Brătucu, Enache and Pralea, 2013).

The distribution of museum products and services is most often done through a direct channel, respectively within the "producer" museum. However, in addition to the offer of museum services and products at the museum, there are other ways to access the targeted audience segments, such as: national exhibitions, international exhibitions, periodicals published by museums and educational programs.

From the point of view of the physical place where the contact is made between the target audience and the offer of the museum institution, the following physical contact spaces can be defined:

- Permanent exhibition spaces.
- Other museums in the country or abroad.
- Online environment / Virtual museum.

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- The spaces where the educational programs take place.
- Special exhibitions held in unconventional spaces.

In order to facilitate the access of the public to museums, the road signs leading to them is very important. The location of the signs and guiding panels that direct visitors to the museums, the graphics and visibility of these signs contribute decisively to the inclusion of these points of attraction on the tourists' visiting list (fig. 12).

Museums, in turn, should also collaborate in making tours, with or without making common tickets. A positive example in this direction is the collaboration of museums in Braşov for promoting the European Night of Museums. The poster created for the 2014 edition can be a suggestive invitation in this regard (fig. 13).



**Figure 12.** Road signs leading tourists to museums.



**Figure 13.** Promotional poster for the European Night of Museums event (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

(Photo: Merida, Spain, F. Nechita - May 2015)

Another way to put visitors in touch with the museum product is to make traveling exhibitions. In this situation, logistical and legislative aspects must be considered, such as the insurance of heritage assets and the special organization of their storage, handling and transportation imposed by the need for their physical protection (Zbucea, 2008).

Still in the context of the discussion on the availability of the cultural offer of museums, the aspects related to the access of people with locomotor disabilities or other types of disabilities should be emphasized. The accessibility of museums does not only mean solving access problems for people with locomotor disabilities or solving problems related to physical access and solving issues regarding transportation to museums. Digital accessibility is also an issue in the field of placement strategies or increasing the availability of museums' cultural offer.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when it spread to Europe in early March 2020, major museums became more accessible online to the general public, as physical accessibility reached zero. Google, through The Arts & Culture Initiative, has offered virtual tours in about 500 museums around the world, including MoMA (Museum of Modern Art New York), Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rijksmuseum, National Gallery and British Museum in London, Musée D'Orsay and the Palace of Versailles in Paris or the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (Bianchini, 2020). The reopening of museums was done with restrictions on visiting time and routes, compliance with physical distance requirements or even the obligation to book tickets online (Searle, 2020).

– Promotion

Promotion has the role of transmitting the messages of the museums to the target groups and it can be achieved through a series of activities that aim to make a convincing presentation of the collections and attract visitors. Product and price strategies and policies determine the interest of the target

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audience, but the audience must be informed and convinced about the offer.

At present, people can be touched by the messages of the communication only with the help of those means that are also able to deliver an experience in the relationship that they have with the organizations and the products or services they offer. The technological evolution has changed people's behavior and created communication environments that require a high degree of interaction and personalization, being very suitable for strategies based on brand experience or customer experience. From the perspective of museum marketing, the communication that is addressed to potential visitors must go beyond the informative role and introduce them to the future experience.

The specific promotion techniques with applicability to museum marketing are detailed in the following chapters.

## 2. USING TRADITIONAL MEDIA IN MUSEUM MARKETING COMMUNICATION

To promote the cultural heritage of museums, you can use various classic advertising methods, whether it is banners, posters, TV commercials, radio or on the Internet. All require the audience's attention and can more or less communicate a well-defined and persuasive message. The available budget is important, but special attention must be paid to the way in which the message is "delivered". A creative message, a high-impact image or a campaign that addresses several senses of the audience, can engrave the message in their memory or make them pay more attention to the promoted exhibition or the overall image of the museum.

The plans for the promotion of the cultural heritage in museums must answer a series of questions, such as: the analysis of the context and marketing objectives (why?), target group (who?), communication objectives (what?), techniques, tools and media channels (how and where?), budget (how much?) and measuring results (how efficient?).

Setting goals is especially important, and their diversity can be quite high. The development of communication campaigns can start from various objectives, such as: developing the museum's image, attracting visitors, transmitting information about the museum's offer, increasing the museum's prestige, attracting sponsors and funding or, as a long-term goal, museum brand development (Zbucea, 2014).

The communication objectives, as well as the entire communication strategy of the museums, will be correlated or will derive from the other elements of the marketing mix. For example, a communication strategy designed to attract new audiences to the museum is closely linked to product policy, to supply-side innovation. An unique way of heritage interpretation and attracting

## *2. Using traditional media in museum marketing communication*

new categories of audiences to museums is to include contemporary art and popular culture in exhibitions in museums other than those that seem to fit these themes.

The techniques used for promoting the cultural heritage in museums have been structured according to the various means of communication that are available to the museum: traditional media advertising, public relations, direct marketing, sales promotion, events, new media, and guerrilla marketing. This structure is rather theoretical, the demarcation line between the various options or promotion channels is very fine and flexible. As with promoting products and services, the communication mix involves combining means and techniques in a creative way in integrated communication campaigns.

From the perspective of museum communication, the choice of communication channels such as television, radio or billboards is limited by access costs. The costs of producing the message are not negligible either. Zbucea (2014) recommends the partnership with an advertising agency, which could take over some of the aspects related to the communication campaign, pro bono.

### **2.1. TV, RADIO AND PRINT ADVERTISING**

For most products and services, television has remained a strong and attractive transmission medium because it provides a large coverage for the population and it benefits from certain particularities in terms of transmission, processing and reception of information. The information is transmitted in a continuous flow and the verbal and visual messages are transmitted simultaneously. In the context of communication campaigns for museums, the realization of them according to the recipe followed by the brands of products and services of large companies remains a desideratum. The access of museums to this means of communication is restricted by the very high costs of dissemination. Motivated by the great impact that television still has among viewers around the world, TV appearances should not be left out from the objectives of communication responsibilities in museums.

Overcoming the barriers generated by high broadcasting costs could be achieved with the help of partnerships developed with broadcasting networks, through which museums contribute to the creation of TV content. One argument for viewers' interest in museum content is the existence of the Museum TV channel (Wikipedia) in France. It appeared in 2010, and since February 2021 it is also in the offer of the telephone service operator Orange.

As in the case of television, radio is a communication channel to which museums have less access for budgetary reasons, although the costs are significantly lower than in the case of television. Although paid communication campaigns are most often inaccessible to museums, their presence on radio stations can be achieved as a result of public relations campaigns or through media partnerships.

A first and famous example is the one offered by the partnership between the British Museum and the BBC. The program *A history of the world in 100 objects* consisted of broadcasting 100 episodes of 15-minutes each on BBC Radio 4, with each episode being dedicated to an object from the collection of the famous London museum. The show aired weekly, and the items presented were chosen so that their story would cover a specific historical period. This campaign also aimed to reach new audiences for the museum (Hoyle, 2009). In addition, following this collaboration, the range of souvenirs provided by the museum was improved, namely by publishing the book and the set of CDs containing the 100 stories, written and narrated by the director of the British Museum himself, Neil MacGregor. All episodes of this program are currently available on the BBC podcast application. Also, from the cooperation of BBC Radio 4 and Neil MacGregor resulted *The Museums that make us*, a project that aims to explore local, regional or city museums in the UK, in order to answer the question 'What are Museums for in 2022?'

A Romanian example that illustrates the campaigns carried out on this medium, being remarkable especially because of the possibility offered to small museums, is the Radio România Actualități campaign, *365 – one museum a day*. Thus, almost half of

## *2. Using traditional media in museum marketing communication*

the approximately 1000 Romanian museums registered in the *Guide of museums and collections in Romania*, administered by the National Institute of Heritage, were presented by the correspondents of the public radio station.

Although historically the written press is the first mass media, today, its use as a means of promotion has left the field open to other means. The prices of medium or long-term campaigns through newspapers and magazines are high in relation to the possibilities offered by the communication budgets of museums. However, as in the examples listed above for television and radio, the creation of direct media partnerships or partnerships supported by brands that could be associated with the museum's image could allow for coherent communication campaigns through the print media as well. At the same time, newspapers and magazines are the most sensitive to information transmitted by museums in public relations campaigns or events.

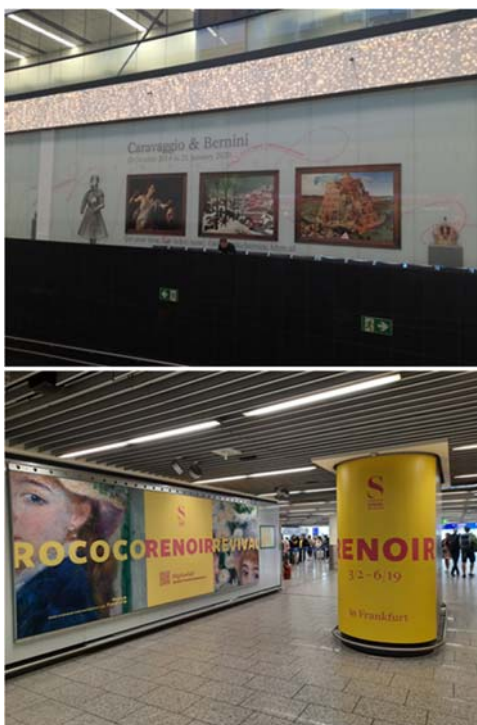
### **2.2. OUT-OF-HOME AND TRANSIT ADVERTISING**

Advertising signs and signage can fulfill two functions, a cultural and communication function and an ideological one. A classification of forms of advertising signage could be: outdoor, transit and indoor advertising.

Some classifications could also include indoor advertising in the same category as outdoor advertising, since both are performed in public spaces (outside the door of private spaces). The classification can go in more detail, by looking at the location of the poster or advertising message more precisely and thus, we can also talk about elevator advertising as another form of billboard-type, even unconventional advertising.

Digital panels (both exterior and interior) are also used. These have a number of advantages, in addition to the possibility to place the message in the desired area, but you can also choose the time of the day when you want to broadcast the message, at costs that are different depending on the estimated audience.

If we refer only to large signs, we can list several advantages: obtaining a high impact due to the possibility of placement in crowded places, reaching large audiences with relatively low costs compared to other traditional media, adapting the message to the events or temporary collections promoted. The disadvantages consist in: the difficulty of measuring their efficiency; the impossibility to communicate complex messages through this means of communication; relatively high production costs. To these disadvantages are added the costs of renting the advertising space, costs that only large museums, such as the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna or Städel Museum in Frankfurt (fig. 14), can afford.



**Figure 14.** Advertising signage at the Vienna (top) and Frankfurt (bottom) airports to promote a temporary blockbuster exhibition at the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Städel Museum in Frankfurt.  
(Photo: Vienna, F. Nechita - November 2019, Frankfurt, F. Nechita - May 2022)

## 2. Using traditional media in museum marketing communication

More unconventional signage and outdoor advertising approaches are also used for the promotion of exhibitions, such as the one chosen by the Janus Pannonius Museum in Pecs in order to attract visitors to the da Vinci exhibition (fig. 15). An 8.5 m high replica of Colossus, the horse imagined by da Vinci, was placed in the central point of Pecs, Szechenyi Square.



**Figure 15. Unconventional signage for an exhibition.**  
(Photo: Pecs, Hungary, F. Nechita - May 2014)

The example presented above, as an unconventional form of outdoor advertising, can be included in the category of ambient advertising. It is characterized by the placement of ads on unusual items or in unusual places and consists of using non-traditional and alternative methods to generate the viralization of the message. It has the great advantage that it pushes the message directly to the final consumer and gives the possibility to maintain the brand notoriety through the attention it attracts.

Ambient advertising can be found anywhere. The key to a successful ambient campaign is to choose the best media format available and combine it with an effective and impactful message. A common trend in ambient advertising is to take an object and make it on larger or smaller scale. Something either abnormally large or abnormally small will increase curiosity and attract the audience to come and look more closely. For example, in 2010, at the Wellington

Airport in the capital of New Zealand, Visa, the sponsor of the Pompeii exhibition at the National Museum of Art gained well-deserved notoriety for the creativity of the TBWA Wellington advertising agency. Their idea was to simulate a lava river inside the baggage carousel, so that this execution of ambient advertising would have an impact both on the spot and through media coverage (Ads of the World, 2010).

### **2.3. SALES PROMOTION**

Sales promotion actions can target current visitors (loyalty programs, subscriptions, offering promotional items to increase the brand recall rate) or attract new categories of visitors (temporary price reductions, coupons, inclusion of more museums in the price of one ticket, group facilities). Sales promotion actions can address both the basic services offered by the museum (visiting the collections) and the complementary ones (space rental, event organization, promotions and discounts for products and services offered in souvenir shops or in the cafeteria). Large and well-known museums manage to sell a large number of souvenirs, and these are an important part of the museum's promotion strategies (fig. 16).



**Figure 16.** *Souvenirs offered for sale in the Judische Museum Vienna (left) and the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna (right).*

(Photo: Vienna, Austria, F. Nechita - November 2019)

Loyalty actions target current visitors and should focus on finding marketing strategies that motivate the audience and

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determine sporadic visitors to return to the museum (Mejón, Fransi, & Johansson, 2004). Also focused on current visitors are the promotional activities in the cross-promotions category, encountered after purchasing the ticket that offered access to several museum attractions in Pécs, but also a 50% discount coupon for coffee or mineral water from a partner cafe (fig. 17).



**Figure 17. Combined ticket for several museums containing a discount coupon to a non-museum partner.**

(Photo: Pécs, Hungary, F. Nechita - July 2021)

## 2.4. PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLIC EVENTS

Public relations definition involves performing actions aimed at maintaining a favorable image of the museum institution and its events, as well as neutralizing and counteracting possible negative information and attitudes. In general, public relations arose from the need to develop connections not only with current and potential customers and suppliers, but also with a number of interested public bodies, which could have a favorable influence on the organization.

Public relations are considered an integral part of an organization's management and communication. It is widespread, popular and persuasive when it comes to consumption, including cultural consumption. Public relations involves several types of activities, such as: writing and editing messages; relations with the press and placement of materials in the press; monitoring the presence of the organization on mass communication channels and the Internet; organizing special events; creating connections and

contact with representatives of the community, the press, the political or business world, with members of the organization or those outside it.

Certain events in the life of museums can turn into very good opportunities to generate media exposure and strengthen the links between the museum and its various audiences. For example, four years after its reopening in 2013, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam wanted to create an event celebrating their 10 millionth visitor. This visitor was personally received by the general director of the museum and was informed that he had been awarded the opportunity to spend a night in the museum, in front of Rembrandt's famous Night Watch (Rijksmuseum). It was the first time that a visitor had the opportunity to spend an entire night at the museum and of course this was widely reflected in the traditional and online press.

Museums must not only play a role in enhancing the economic effects of culture, but also in increasing its social role, and events are traditionally used as a way of measuring the contribution of cultural heritage as a factor in the production, development and innovation of the societal function (Lazzeretti and Capone, 2013).

Events are seen as a means of reducing barriers to visiting and succeed in attracting larger and more diverse audiences than usual. Also, in the case of events that are positively appreciated by the participants, the satisfaction of participating in the event correlates with the desire to participate in a new event organized by the museum and with the intention of recommending such events to acquaintances (Barbosa and Brito, 2012).

According to the authors cited above, events could be seen as tools that museum management must use to increase its audience. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that in most situations, new visitors attracted in this way are event goers, i.e. people who usually go to such events, not future visitors of permanent or temporary collections. The less the events are related to the standard activities and current exhibitions of the museum, the more difficult it

## 2. Using traditional media in museum marketing communication

is to make the equivalence between the event participants and the visitors of the museum.

There are three essential elements to consider before organising an event. The first focuses on the question of where is my target audience?, the second focuses on the answer to the question: what are the characteristics of my target audience?, and the final one seeks an answer to the question: how to increase awareness among my target audience?. It all comes down to emotion, and if the proposed event is able to generate emotion through the creative concept applied, then the individual in question will be part of the actual participating audience.

A successful event that attracts a large audience in museums across Europe is the European Night of Museums, organized under the auspices of UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the International Council of Museums (ICOM). At this event, museums and other cultural institutions open their doors until late at night, on the nearest Saturday to May 18 (adopted by ICOM as International Museum Day). The first event of this kind was the one that took place in 1997 in Berlin under the name of *Lange Nacht der Museen*. In 1999, the event was organized in France under the name "Spring of Museums" (*Le Printemps des Musées*), at the proposal of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, and starting in 2001 the event was organized in all signatory countries of the Council of Europe. Another concept was born in 2002, at the initiative of the mayor of Paris, under the name *Nuit Blanche*, a night dedicated to creativity and art. Since 2005, the event has been promoted as the European Night of Museums, and one of its main goals was to attract a younger audience (this audience being even more nocturnal) (Dumbrăveanu, Tudoricu and Crăciun, 2014).

Smaller events than the European Night of Museums can be done smartly and without high costs, but with great effects in gaining the loyalty of a certain audience segment and with constant press coverage. An example that can perfectly illustrate this idea is the *5 O'clock Recital*, a series of chamber music concerts organized by the Casa Mureșenilor Museum in Brașov.

Other events can be held in order to attract new audiences, among people who are not frequent visitors to the museum. For example, by exhibiting some projects of high school students from the Gymnasium School Nr. 8 in the Museum of Urban Civilization in Braşov, a large audience was created by the parents, grandparents and friends of the students (fig. 18).



**Figure 18.** *Opening of the exhibition **The familiar city** at the Museum of Urban Civilization in Braşov.*

(Photo: F. Nechita - May 2019)

Directly or in partnership with other organizations, larger events can be organized, which attract a large audience, outside the museum space, often in its immediate vicinity. An example in this sense is the one represented by the organization of the International Festival of Historical Reenactment by the Braşov County Museum of History (fig. 19).

## 2. Using traditional media in museum marketing communication



**Figure 19.** *The International Festival of Historical Reenactment, 2nd edition.*  
(Photo: F. Nechita - August 2017)

The events present the cultural context in an unconventional or more relaxed form and this stimulates the involvement of the participants to a greater extent than contemplation. They offer the participants a special dimension that must be explored through active emotional involvement that can offer a real creative adventure of living the cultural act. Through events, cultural consumption takes place both through observation and through active involvement.

As the author of this book, I would not end the subchapter about events without mentioning the collaborations I had with the museums of Braşov and to which the students of the Communication and Public Relations program contributed. The organization of meetings between specialists in advertising and public relations and students of the Faculty of Sociology and Communication in the space of Braşov museums also aimed to promote the cultural and historical heritage of Braşov County.

### 3. GUERRILLA MARKETING

A subchapter entitled Guerilla marketing can be found in Candrea and Nechita (2015) inside the chapter *Techniques for promoting the cultural heritage in museums* and it emphasizes the importance of constantly searching for creative ideas needed to implement guerrilla marketing (guerilla marketing is the concept proposed by Jay Conrad Levinson in 1984 and applied by American entrepreneurs who did not have high communication budgets, but had to "fight" in markets dominated by large corporations). The inclusion of guerrilla marketing in a separate chapter is justified by the fact that this type of communication can be equally explained with examples from both pre-digital and digital eras. The topic of guerilla marketing and this mini-chapter, placed as a bridge between the chapters that describe two different eras of communication, were rather chosen for reasons related to ... marketing. The term guerrilla marketing is very popular among the students I teach. The common element in the marketing communication of companies or organizations in the nonprofit sector must be creativity and finding those solutions for "wrapping" the message in such a way that it manages to penetrate the minds and souls of current or potential consumers. But because this paper refers to marketing communication in a sector where communication budgets can be characterized as rather modest, a short chapter on a communication technique characterized by an unconventional, creative and low-budget approach is welcomed.

Several of the examples presented above can be included in the concept of guerrilla marketing (fig. 15). The ubiquity of digital communication channels (briefly described in the context of museum communication in the next two chapters) facilitates the viral effect in spreading messages that can be classified in the guerrilla marketing category.

### 3. Guerilla marketing

Unconventional advertising does not use persuasive messages that try to convince the public to buy or consume, but rather messages that address the customer's subconscious, by creating memorable images and experiences.

Guerrilla marketing is an unconventional promotion system that is based on the combination of three fundamental factors: energy, time and imagination, with the advantage that it saves on often expensive marketing costs. This promotion strategy can produce surprising results because it manages to focus local customers in the most unexpected places, while promoting the idea of a well-established advertising technique, which ensures positive reactions among customers and stimulates its spread.

Whether using sensory or cognitive methods, guerrilla marketing is captivating and interesting, as it is a way to break away from traditional marketing patterns, which means a different communication technique. Guerilla marketing involves achieving maximum results on a minimum budget, and to be successful in guerilla marketing constant innovation is required. The main features of the guerrilla marketing technique:

- reduced coverage area from a geographical point of view;
- careful planning to have the effect of arousing the audience's curiosity and creating short-term turmoil;
- designing in such a way that the target audience does not realize that it is a marketing tactic used to promote a product/service, but for social causes or non-profit activities successful ideas can attract attention and sympathy even though the purpose and sender of the message is revealed;
- the sequentiality of the message that can generate the desire to follow the next episode and share it among acquaintances;
- technology is the guerrilla marketer's best friend.

The category of guerrilla marketing includes specific techniques: unconventional events, ambient advertising, viral

campaigns, experiential marketing. Museums also use these guerrilla techniques, the main purpose being to promote collections and attract new audiences (Nechita, 2014).

Examples of guerrilla marketing campaigns come more easily from large and famous museums that have higher communication budgets, although the example of the reopening of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam after 10 years of renovation is rather an example of a low-budget action related to the unpaid advertising and the free media coverage obtained. Thus, the famous Dutch museum organized a flashmob in a mall which consisted of acting out Rembrandt's famous painting, *The Night Watch*. The YouTube video went viral in a very short time and certainly contributed to the increase of the desire of foreign or local visitors to return to the famous museum. And the appreciations regarding the creativity and the unique form of communication for the reopening of the museum were also addressed to the museum's sponsor ING, a famous international bank founded in the Netherlands.

Several other simple and quirky campaigns (from the guerilla marketing category) were presented in December 2019 in an article by Jim Richardson, founder of MuseumNext, an inexhaustible source of examples related to communication and innovation in the museum field. I will mention below four of them together with links to the original sources taken from Richardson (2019b).

The first example is from the well-known and innovative museum Rijksmuseum (2018), although the approach resembles another favorite example, namely the promotion of the exhibition about Pompeii at the National Museum of Art in Auckland, in 2010 (Ads of the World, 2010). An impactful idea put into practice by the most important museum in The Netherlands at the main gateway to this country, the Schipol Airport. And the second example also involves the collaboration of an important museum, namely the High Museum of Art in Atlanta with an airline, Delta. In this case, the famous mustache of Salvador Dali was painted on a Delta 757 plane.

To promote a temporary exhibition, the Canadian Museum of Nature (2016) chose to dress about a dozen of people in inflatable

### 3. Guerilla marketing

dinosaur suits. This promotion with a simple concept went viral with more than a million people viewing films of the dinosaurs doing everything from yoga to taking a ferry. As the main result, the museum increased its number of visitors by 1600%. The exhibition *Ultimate Dinosaurs* was created by the Royal Ontario Museum and is presented by the Science Museum of Minnesota.

From the perspective of museum marketing communication, I think an example involving the Tinder dating network is more appropriate here than in subchapter 4.2 Museums in the new social media landscape. Royal Ontario Museum cleverly used this marketing channel to tell young people about their *Friday Night Live* (#FNLROM) event by creating Teddy the Dinosaur profile for this dating service. Teddy was about conversation and the whole experiment aimed to get back to the roots of social media: dialogue (Dodge, 2017).

Many of the communication activities carried out by museums at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and the establishment of lockdown measures can be included in the category of guerrilla marketing. Mediated by social media, the innovative ways of engaging audiences online quickly went viral because they managed to bring smiles and relaxation in a tense period. An interesting case study that I saw at the MuseumNext conference was the one regarding the National Cowboy Museum in Oklahoma (Lee, 2020). Also, in the same category is the initiative of Shedd Aquarium in Chicago to turn Wellington the penguin into an online guide, and the film went viral with worldwide views (Gabbatt, 2020). With the aquarium closed due to the Covid-19 outbreak, Wellington was given the opportunity to visit parts of the building usually denied to a penguin, including an exhibit of Amazonian fish.

Still during the pandemic, but after the lockdown period, Paris Musées and train operator Transilien SNCF have joined forces and launched the Paris Museum Train for passengers travelling through Île-de-France. The train was decorated with works from some of the city's 14 municipality museums in order to highlight the rich artistic heritage of the city's museums (Murphy, 2021b).

## **4. MARKETING COMMUNICATION FROM WEB 1.0 TO WEB 4.0**

The most important strategic advantage for museums, conferred by access to the Internet and social networks, is the ability to access many target audiences without the filter of specialized staff (Rus, 2010). The introduction of Internet-based multimedia information systems and the use of social networks offer museums the opportunity to redefine the traditional offer and promote new cultural experiences by involving a global network of visitors, who can also take part in the production of cultural services. In the museum context, new media involves the translation of older practices and representation into digital form by introducing changes in display, working practices, and in the museum's relationship to its audience (Henning, 2006). Museums must decide how to make the best use of the Internet and the services offered by social networks, as well as the allocation of technological resources, but without a strategy the negative effects can outweigh the positive ones (Padilla-Meléndez and del Águila-Obra, 2013).

The tools used in the online communication of museums have naturally followed the evolution and development of the Internet. Thus, in the period generically referred to as web 1.0 or the first phase of the Internet, museums mainly used it in a read-only format, respectively in a form of presentation of the information that is characterized by limited interaction with website users.

The second phase of the development of the Internet, namely web 2.0, a term launched by Tim O'Reilly in 2003. Almeida (2017) considers that this phase developed between 2000 and 2009, with the revolution of social networks, high interactivity and user participation in content creation. A network effect was created by developing an architecture of the participation, creating and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, so that the experience of using the Internet became much richer. During

this phase, these famous websites appeared: Wikipedia, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram, and mobile access via smartphones also developed during this period.

The stage defined as web 3.0 or semantic web presupposes the existence of semantic technologies (open standards), the processing environment that allows human-machine cooperation and the development of large social communities on the web. Almeida (2017) considers that this phase extends from 2010 to 2019, and its specificity is the way users organize and search for content. The goal is to customize and optimize online searching based on user interests and desires. Online ads are also subject to this personalization requirement based on user behaviors and preferences.

The stage we are currently in is the beginning of web 4.0, also known as the symbiotic web because computers and human brains are going to work in a symbiosis. There are authors who also use the term in relation to cultural heritage, but the examples found in the academic literature can be included at most in the web 3.0 category (Permatasari, Qohar and Rachman, 2020).

Not only museums, but other organizations and companies are also in various stages of Internet development. Unfortunately, there are many who have not properly entered even the web 1.0 stage or if they do own a website, they just have it for the sakes of having it. For example, a study conducted in Norway, answered by 82 museum managers allowed, based on four dimensions (1. perception of museum benefits from social media; 2. perception of own and museum support in social media activities; 3. perception of conflicts that arise from social media usage; 4. social media-related values), to define the following four typologies of museum leaders: resourced leader; resource stressed leader; ideological skeptic; social media optimist (Booth, Ogundipe & Røyseng, 2019).

## **4.1. WEB 1.0 AND WEB 2.0 DIGITAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

### **Websites**

The role of the websites is to determine potential visitors to access them and to get in touch with the information they contain. The content of the website is its most important element and includes graphic elements (movies, photos, animated graphics) and sound elements (songs, sounds).

The National Heritage Institute of Bucharest through the CIMEC team (Center for Informatics and Cultural Memory) has currently created a list of web pages of 1043 museums in Romania that offer search possibilities by county and locality or main profile. A future research topic or a topic for a bachelor's thesis or dissertation could even be an analysis of all the websites in the list created by CIMEC and providing an answer on the state of communication of museums in Romania. How many of them have moved to web 2.0 or later?

Websites can be considered as manifestations of the concept of Museum 2.0 (Srinivasan et al., 2009), a concept derived from the concept of Web 2.0 developed by Tim O'Reilly in 2004, as a leap in the development of websites from the non-interactive version to their more interactive and collaborative versions. If at the beginning of the decade it was stated that there was a low presence of Web 2.0 tools on museum websites and large differences between the different countries studied (López et. Al., 2010), a few years later, other authors claimed that the presence of Web 2.0 found its place between ways to enhance the experience and interaction of visitors with museums (Verboom and Arora, 2013). It is considered that Web 2.0 tools fostered the dialogic communication between museums and their public and the relationship between museums and publics changed towards more interactive and collaborative forms (Capriotti and Kuklinski, 2012). Moreover, through the website you can design the brand personality as well (Vinyals-Mirabent, Kavaratzis and Fernandez-Cavia, 2019).

#### 4. Marketing communication from web 1.0 to web 4.0

The museum's website plays an important role both in attracting visitors, and the evaluation, although complex, must be done to ensure the effectiveness of this tool in communication (Kabassi, 2019). For the analysis of communication through websites we can use a grid adapted from Nechita, Lozo and Candrea (2014), a grid proposed for the analysis of websites of national parks and created by synthesizing the models proposed by Koulioska and Andreopoulou (2013), Andreopoulou et al. (2014), Luna-Nevarez and Hyman (2012) and Fernandez-Cavia et al. (2014) (Table 1).

**Table 1. Website analysis variables and sub-variables**  
(Source: Nechita, Lozo & Candrea, 2014)

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sub-variables</b>
Details and informations aids	Information about the products, the services, the activities Contact information Local information Digital map Live web camera Weather forecast Additional topics with information on different categories Calendar applications Newsletter RSS
Visual, textual information and presentation style	Audiovisual material Downloadable files Homepage size Page layout Number of images Animated images Page intro
Navigation and interactivity	More than one language Search engine Sitemap Updated organization information Online survey Online communication form Website visitor tracker Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Links to others organizations Code access
Advertising	Third person advertisement Segment marketing Information & accomodation booking systems

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sub-variables</b>
	Tickets purchasing Other near the site attractions
Social media	Social media sharing Social media profile Forum

The analysis of websites can also be done by directly questioning their users. A model for conducting an online questionnaire to test aspects such as content, ease of use, (non)existence of promotion, emotions associated with use, aesthetics, subjective norms, attitudes and intentions regarding the website and the museum (Pallud and Straub, 2014).

Website quality plays a determinant role in users' behavioural outcomes and has the potential of influencing e-loyalty, trust and perceived control. Besides, trust has a positive influence on e-loyalty and perceived control, according to a research conducted by Garcia-Madariaga et al. (2019) on Prado and Thyssen-Bornemisza museum websites.

The offer of the museums in the physical location is completed with the online presentation option through virtual museums. In the case of virtual museums, we are talking more about their inclusion in the concept of web 2.0 or even web 3.0. Virtual museums manage to improve the experience by facilitating the interaction with museum artifacts, and the comparison between real and virtual museums indicates that important issues still need to be resolved. These include the collaboration between museum specialists (curators, historians, archaeologists, etc.) and information technology specialists to reduce dependence on paid software and the widespread use of open-source packages, proposing models for exploring the conceptual orientation of museums and acting in complementarity with the real museum (Styliani et al., 2009).

Communication through websites is dynamic, and the content must be adapted as often as possible. Even the structure of the website must adapt when crisis situations such as the one generated by the COVID-19 pandemic occur. In some cases, access to virtual

tour facilities should be more visible or there should even be a section answering possible questions about the restrictions and visiting conditions imposed by the existence of the pandemic. The most frequently asked questions by visitors about the problems related to the influence of the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by museums refer to how to keep a distance during the visit, but also upon entry and exit, the existence of a visiting trail, personal items that are allowed and/or prohibited, which sections of the museum are closed, if there is an obligation to purchase a ticket in advance and how to do it, what additional sanitation measures are being taken (van der Heijden, 2020).

But the way communication must be done through websites must consider the principles of storytelling. For example, Jeff Rosen, Director of Project Development for BRC Imagination Arts, said: "As a result of shorter attention spans, the twenty-first century will need even better storytellers in cultural attractions. We must capture the public's imagination in less time and hold it for longer." (Handler Miller, 2020).

### **Email Marketing**

Email advertising or email marketing is frequently used both in commercial communication and for the communication of non-profit organizations. In the case of museum communication, the messages are directed to different audiences for which there is an e-mail address database, as well as the explicit permission to send messages to these addresses. The explicit consent of the recipients is very important in order to be able to contact them via e-mail.

Advantages of email marketing campaigns: low costs; relatively high efficiency; the possibility of building a database of subscribers to the museum's newsletter grouped by interests so that specific messages are addressed to the specific audience for which the message was built; the possibility to connect to the website; suitable for announcements related to events, new exhibition launches or announcements of interest in the areas of interest marked when providing the email address.

The disadvantages of email communication refer to the possibility of interpreting them as spam when the messages were sent without a prior subscription or when the content does not refer to the one marked as of interest at the time of subscription. Another disadvantage is the use of antivirus software that can send certain emails directly to the spam box.

To find information specific to museums I searched in the collection of tips offered by museumnext.com, and there I found only one article on this topic. Thus, Turner (2020a) recommends the use of email marketing platforms such as Constant Contact, Mailchimp, Sendinblue and Moosend and provides details about the facilities and costs for each platform. Another recommendation of the author is that the newsletters be scheduled and sent during the periods when the chances for them to be opened are the highest. Because they manage numerous email marketing campaigns or regular newsletters, these platforms offer insights such as the following:

- The best day to send an email is Tuesday, and the second is Thursday. A good day to send is also Wednesday.
- For organizations that send two emails/newsletters per week, it is recommended to schedule them on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- The best time of day to send emails is 10-11 a.m., with an extended period of 8-12 a.m.

Turner (2020a) also states that these insights are simply indicative, and the newsletter sendings should be scheduled according to the target group (institutional recipients vs. people, their demographic variables, etc.). The author's recommendations regarding the use of images in messages, the integration of newsletter options in the website (opt-in forms), and compliance with the GDPR (general rules on personal data protection) are also important.

## **Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing (SEO and SEM)**

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the visibility of websites when they are displayed by a search engine. Through this optimization process, the number of visitors to the museum's website can be substantially increased. According to Turban et al. (2017, p. 276), the main steps of SEO are:

- Creating website content
- Choosing keywords
- Adding keywords to the content
- Submitting the website in search engines
- Identifying the ranking in search results
- Page optimization
- Website traffic analysis
- Website maintenance and re-optimization

For greater efficiency, keyword buying is used, which has the role of placing the site in a better position when searching for those keywords. Social networks also have an important role in generating traffic on websites.

## **Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Google Ads, Google AdSense**

SEM involves submitting the website in various search engines to index it by positioning in the first search results after paying a sum of money for this preferential placement. The position obtained on the first page of the search by certain keywords depends simultaneously on both the bid and the algorithm that the search engine uses to determine the relevance of the ad to a keyword or phrase used in the search. Search engines indicate that the results of these searches are ads through a specific graphical element.

Google Ads (formerly known as Google AdWords and Google AdWords Express) is a program of sponsored links that are placed at

the top of the page. The URLs (Uniform Resource Locator - the address of the resource on the web) of these ads are created based on keywords and a daily bid budget. Google uses ranking algorithms to synchronize between the keywords selected by the advertisers and the search activities. The payment is made when the online advertisement is accessed (click on the ad), and the payment is transferred from the prepaid budget that was previously bid. For commercial campaigns, there are usually several advertisers who want to appear in the first places in the Google display, and for this reason the search system of this search engine combines the criteria of the bid budget with that of the relevance of the keywords.

If a museum uses a Google Ads campaign, those keywords are unlikely to be bid by another museum or cultural institution. For example, at the time these lines were first written (August 2020 for the Romanian version of the book) there were no ads for museums when searching for key phrases such as "free time in Braşov", "tourist attractions Braşov", "museums Braşov" or "Braşov exhibitions" ("timp liber în Braşov", "atracții turistice Braşov", "muzee Braşov", "expoziții Braşov"). The same result was obtained when the search was done in August 2021 and in July 2022. Even when searching for the English expression "must see in Brasov", there were no suggestions on the first page leading to museums in Braşov. As a small recommendation, I believe that the opening of an exhibition or the presence of a blockbuster exhibition could be "helped" to appear in the attention of potential visitors during periods when the options of locals or tourists in a particular destination are diverse and competing with the promoted event. Instead, a search for the phrase "museums to see in Berlin" displayed, on August 3, 2020, the invitation to visit the Espionage Museum in the German capital (fig. 20).

#### 4. Marketing communication from web 1.0 to web 4.0

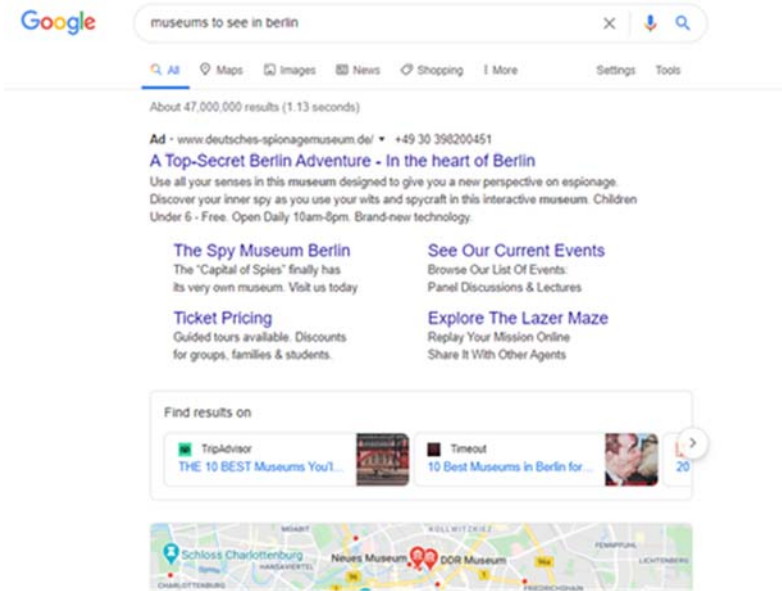


Figure 20. Ad example in an SEM campaign.  
(Screenshot taken on August 3, 2020)

Searching the top museums recommended by TripAdvisor or Timeout does not place the Museum of Espionage in the top ten recommended museums, but the paid campaign certainly managed to attract enough visitors who planned to visit one or more museums, but did not have this museum on their initial list of options. Also noteworthy is the text of the short description that is visible after the search, namely the direct address, the challenge (discover the spy inside you), the urge and promise to experiment with all the senses, the description of the museum with the terms "interactive" and "the latest technology", the opening hours and the information that it is "free" (even if this only applies to children under 6).

Interestingly, a new search on August 20, 2021 returned the same museum in Berlin, a result marked as an ad, and searches for "museums to see in Paris" only displayed organic results. Similar searches for London and Rome also return posts and results marked as ads, but not from museums.

## **Google AdSense**

Google AdSense is an affiliate program run by Google through which websites offer texts, images, movies or interactive ads that are targeted to the content and audience of the site. Google manages, sorts and maintains these ads. For example, if someone is looking for a term related to the content of an affiliate website, then they are redirected to the website of the advertiser. The synchronization between the displayed ad and the content of the website affiliated with the program is based on Google algorithms. In March 2020, there were two million website owners earning money by joining Google AdSense, earning money when visitors access the ads displayed on their websites by redirecting a portion of Google's revenue from those who run campaigns through this search engine.

Website optimization for search engines is a rather difficult process, but there are also many specialized companies that offer SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and Google AdSense services, but it must be borne in mind that with this optimization, it takes time to get good results.

In order to increase organic traffic, it is also important to maintain and update your Google Business profile, especially since the opening hours change from season to season. Not only is updating your profile important, but so is getting Google reviews as a rapid way to improve local SEO and increase online visibility. The steps needed for creating Google Business are the following: 1. Go to <https://www.google.com/business>; 2. Sign in to the Google Account, or create one; 3. Enter the museum's address and create or claim the listing; 4. Fill out basic information about the museum and submit for verification.

It is also important to use Google Analytics to understand the sources of website traffic and to measure the impact that ads have on online ticket sales. Museums can turn to Ad Grants, Google's ad funding program for nonprofits. This program is described on the Google website, where there is also a case study of the Van Gogh Museum.

Google Analytics provides information about: Visits; New & returning visits (users that are visiting the museum webpage for the first time versus those who have been before and are returning); Visitors; Bounce (the term for a visitor leaving after viewing one website page) and Bounce rate (the percent of sessions within a single page visit); Page views (Google Analytics breaks this term down further into two categories: page views and unique page views. ); Pages per visit (how many pages a visitor has viewed or landed upon within a single visit); Dashboard (the primary interface that seen and interacted with upon first opening up Google Analytics); Traffic sources; CPC when paid advertising campaigns occurs; Conversion (clicking through an ad and being taken to another destination such as website, Facebook page etc.) (MuseumNext, 2020).

## **Blogs**

Blogs allow museums to make a deeper connection with readers by facilitating the presentation of longer texts that relate to objects and events. The topics of the museum's blog posts can focus on specific themes related to the museum, the presentation of behind-the-scenes aspects of programs and collections and the development and strengthening of relationships with museum professionals (Holyfield, 2020).

Posts addressed to visitors can target two distinct moments of the visit process: 1. the phase before the visit; 2. the post-visit phase. For the phase before the visit, the content of the blog posts should provide more general descriptions and reasons why potential visitors should make the decision to visit. Posts aimed at increasing post-visit satisfaction will provide additional explanations to the explanations offered within the museum or will refer to the achievements of the museum as an institution or its staff (awards, recognition at local, national or international level). Subscribers to the museum's newsletter can be notified of new blog posts. Ideally, notifications about new appearances should be sent only to the audience targeted by the new appearances. For example, not

everyone who has subscribed to the museum's newsletter should be notified about a new post for conservationists.

Statistics and recommendations of social media specialists on the use of blogs state that (Gebauer, 2020a, b):

- Posting regularly is recommended - most bloggers post once a week.
- Currently, it takes 3 hours and 20 minutes to write a blog post, compared to 2 hours and 14 minutes in 2014.
- The average of a post is over 1000 words, but a text length of 2,250-2,500 words is recommended because longer posts are more visible when traffic comes from search engines.
- Over 50% of bloggers practice guest hosting, respectively posts outside their own blog.
- Updating old posts may be more important than creating new content.
- Over 95% of bloggers use social media to generate traffic, and over 64% use SEO for this purpose because 53% of traffic comes from organic search.

The author of the article from which the above statistics and recommendations were extracted was also surprised to find that 42% of bloggers do not use the analytics tools of those blogs.

## **Podcasts**

Unlike the museum-blog-visitors relationship, podcasts and podcasting in a museum context can be talked about not only as a useful tool before and after the visit. Kang and Gretzel (2012) conducted a survey for visitors who used podcasts instead of audio guides and, unsurprisingly, young people and people with a higher affinity for the Internet reported that their use had a positive contribution to the enhancement of the visiting experience.

Museum podcasts have their ancestors at the National Gallery of Art in Washington (1958) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1963), but the technical solutions of those times are rather anecdotal

about the first audio guides (Kennedy, 2006). But because the topic of this book is about museum marketing communication and much less about interpreting museum heritage, I think it is more appropriate to continue to address some aspects of using podcasts outside museums (podcast as in radio, not as an audio guide).

According to [podcastinsights.com](http://podcastinsights.com), at the beginning of October 2020, approximately 1.5 million podcasts with 34 million episodes were recorded globally, and in April 2021 the figures from the same source indicated over 2 million podcasts with 44 million episodes. To highlight the popularity of podcasts, [podcastinsights.com](http://podcastinsights.com) cites Apple and [Fastcompany.com](http://Fastcompany.com) with statistics that counted about 525-550,000 podcasts and 18.5 million episodes in mid-2018. According to the research company Nielsen (2020), in the United States, 49% of podcast listening is done at home, 22% in the car, and podcast listeners follow about 5 programs a week.

The adoption by museums of this communication tool does not require special material efforts, but only a computer, a digital interface, editing software, 1-2 microphones and ... CONTENT. As with websites, blogs or online social media accounts, content that is interesting to your target audience is the key to success. Once the content is interesting, the issues related to the actual production, file storage and choice of podcasting platforms are insignificant.

A solution for making podcasts with interesting content about the history of Braşov is the one resulting from the cooperation between the Braşov County Museum of History and Radio Braşov. Thus, through the History of Braşov in 30 seconds project, 60 short and relevant "pills" about the history of the city were first broadcast on the radio, and then they were uploaded on the YouTube channel of the museum. This example could just as well illustrate the subchapter on radio or the one on YouTube. I also placed it here to make another recommendation on how to get started in the world of podcasting.

YouTube is not a podcasting platform, but many people associate it with a podcast platform, and this is because it is possible that much of this content is consumed only as audio content. And

from this example of the Braşov museum we can extract the recommendation for initiating collaborations with media entities that have the technical possibilities to make podcasts, but which would also benefit from the quality content that museums can prepare. And what would be the main criticism that can be brought to the above project? The answer is: Continuity. Podcasting involves continuity in the creation and delivery of content.

Charr's (2019b) recommendations for museums that use podcasting for external communication are:

- Strategy – here the format and the subject must be considered, and they must not change from one episode to another.
- Visual identity – presupposes that the museum logo is visible and that there is consistency between all forms of visual communication.
- Where the podcast is published – will it only be published on one or more platforms? Linking podcasts to your website is another aspect to consider.
- Podcast format analysis. One can adopt a narrative style or one can use the conversation between one or more experts. There is also a mixed version that involves an introductory presentation and then continues with the conversation between experts.
- Hiring a specialist / sound engineer for the first episodes.

## 4.2. MUSEUMS IN THE NEW SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Social media and museums can be viewed in terms of the concept of participation or the collection activities implemented through the use of this tool or from the perspective of using it to educate and inform visitors (Lotina, 2014). Being on social media is not enough, and it could be even counterproductive if the museums do not understand the new communication and interaction mechanisms these platforms provide (Badell, 2015).

According to Martin Juhls (2021), founder of Initiative Kulturkommunikation:

Most museums use social media to present their work and projects and to stay in touch with their audience. The ratio between annual visitors and actual followers is often around 100 to 5. This means a museum that has 100,000 guests usually has only around 5,000 followers on social media. The only exceptions are art museums with an international audience of people who are following but not actually visiting.

The interactive nature of social media allows marketers to develop a dialogue with visitors and to better understand their needs and desires. Through the Internet and smart mobile devices, a more consistent emotional engagement can be achieved between the visitor and the museum, and at the same time, through these devices, the visitor becomes an active and real-time promoter of the museum. In the social media context, Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) state that engagement is a multi-dimensional concept that includes cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions. From a quantitative point of view, the engagement rate can be quantified by the following dimensions:

- Popularity - measured by the number of likes (or other types of post reactions)
- Active involvement in discussions - measured by the number of comments
- Virality - measured by the number of shares.

The results of a study conducted at the end of 2017 on 30 museums in Italy concluded that the level of engagement in social media between museums and visitors is quite absent. Despite the fact that Italian museums are very popular on Facebook and Twitter, they use social media only in one-way communication without developing an engagement approach (Romolini, Fissi & Gori, 2020).

Social media is a set of online platforms that allow users to interact with each other quickly and efficiently, satisfying the need to belong to a group. If before we were talking about one-way communication, social media brings a novelty in the online environment, two-way communication. Users have the opportunity to create online content, to make their ideas and opinions heard beyond temporal and spatial barriers, to form online communities based on their interests. Somewhat surprisingly, Pepe and Bournique (2017) found that at that time, in Eastern New York State museums, social media was used primarily to communicate with adults and seniors, and to increase the impact of communication among young people, the authors recommended calling on young volunteers to get involved in communicating with their peers. This conclusion also reminds me of the collaborations for students' practice on the communication with the museums in Braşov, the main "hook" in expanding the collaboration being exactly the student teams that create content for online social networking pages, especially Instagram.

Through social media, users can establish from simple friendships to professional relationships, they can become members in various communities. Moreover, users have the opportunity to create an image in these relationships through personal profiles. The use of social media by museums can be framed in three organizational aspects: marketing (promoting the image of the institution), inclusiveness (developing an online and virtual community) and collaboration (aspect that goes beyond the dimension of communication, aimed at promoting collaboration with the audience) (Kidd, 2011).

Social media promotion is also a good way to research consumer opinions. All comments, posts from users or influencers in the online environment can be considered a source of information regarding the brand's reputation. Depending on what is said, the image of the organization can be adjusted, while radio or television broadcasting does not provide any feedback from the audience. The tools by which users can vote, classify or evaluate a brand, product, service, become effective means of measuring feedback.

ICOM's (International Council of Museums) (2019) guide for social media divides the channels of this communication medium into four main categories:

Charr's (2019b) recommendations for museums that use podcasting for external communication are:

- Blogs (e.g. LiveJournal, Blogger, Wordpress) - ideal for longer articles and reports.
- Micro-blogs (e.g. Twitter, Tumblr) - ideal for short messages to be delivered immediately (status updates, "hot" news or breaking news, live events)
- Networking / social networking (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn) - ideal for building communities and sharing medium-sized articles
- Photo/Video (e.g. YouTube, Instagram) - ideal for communicating with powerful visual messages and creating a visual database.

We must not forget the communities created through social networks around a common passion or goal and which allow members the opportunity to exchange new experiences and information, and museums use their own voice and authority to encourage communication with the communities. Traditional museums try to reach out to various groups and communities and to manage their collections in consultation with various relevant groups, and Anderson (2019) used the example of how the Victoria and Albert Museum interacted with Egyptian museums and the British community of Egyptian origin. Or nowadays, the connection

between real communities and online communities is more and more close, considering that online social networks are the link between various people or institutions are quite separated physically or limited by the lack of time to manifest offline. The digital communication tools such as social networks and virtual communities work in combination, both individually and jointly, in generating traffic to the museums (Fernandez-Lores, Crespo-Tejero & Fernández-Hernández, 2022).

Social media tools are: collaboration platforms and multimedia platforms or online social networks.

### **Collaboration platforms**

This category includes wiki platforms that allow volunteers to contribute information based on their expertise and knowledge and allow them to edit the content of articles on various topics. Wikipedia is one of the most used online platforms, which has caused a lot of controversy regarding the accuracy of the information it contains. Wikipedia allows publishers and volunteers to permanently add information, and old content can be edited and updated with more accurate data. In addition to text, images, maps, graphs, and other statistics can be added.

The relationship between museums and wiki platforms has been discussed in the academic or specialized literature. For example, Phillips (2013) stated that Wikipedia provides a model that creates a bridge between the museum's role of "temple" - or place of authority - and the "bazaar" of social media-mediated opinions, where everyone has a voice.

Given the role of Wikipedia as a major source of information, ICOM conducted a campaign in early 2020 with Wikimedia (the owner of the Wikipedia project), aimed at increasing the presence of museums on the well-known platform (Lopomo, 2020). The presence on Wikipedia gives museums visibility and interconnection with other data. The list of museums collaborating with Wikipedia in various forms is constantly growing, but there is not enough data on the impact of these collaborations (Villaespesa and Navarrete, 2019).

## Online social networks

Online social networks have become popular due to the numerous opportunities for interaction offered to users. More and more organizations and public figures use these platforms to promote their services and products, by establishing links with consumers and their target audience. Social networks allow communication in a more natural and less commercial way. A social networking site is a site that allows you to connect with people from the offline network, but also with people you know through online communities.

Users generating content implies that museum visitors will share their positive or negative experiences and opinions in the virtual environment. This way, hundreds, thousands or even millions of potential visitors will change their intention to visit a particular museum based on the recommendations posted on online social networks.

The general recommendations offered by Turner (2020b) for museums that are at the beginning of implementing a social media strategy are the following:

- Authenticity. The authenticity of the museum's voice must also consider the specifics of each platform.
- Involvement of the entire museum. Even if only one person is responsible for the posts, the rest of the museum staff should also be encouraged to come up with ideas about the content.
- Community involvement. This can be done through actions such as social media responsible for a day, interviews, public recognition of achievements of community members.
- Using eye-catching images.
- Following trends in the field and keywords with "viral" potential. Examples: well-being, sustainability, creativity, diversity, experimentation, impact, innovation, participation, etc.

According to the latest Statista reports (July 2020) and the data available on Wikipedia at the time of writing this section of the paper (July 2021), the top of online social networks by number of users is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. The main online social networks.**  
(Sources: Statista and Wikipedia for the launch dates)

<b>Online social network name</b>	<b>Launch days</b>	<b>Active users (millions - July 2020)</b>	<b>Active users (millions - July 2021)</b>
Facebook	2004	2.603	2.853
YouTube	2005	2.000	2.291
Instagram	2010	1.082	1.386
TikTok	2016	800	732
Reddit	2005	430	430
Snapchat	2011	397	514
Pinterest	2009	367	478
Twitter	2006	326	397

The Statista report, from which global user data is extracted, also includes data for Whatsapp - 2,000 million and Facebook Messenger - 1,300 million (both appear at the top of the list, but in my opinion these are messaging platforms, although they have common features with certain online social networks). WeChat also has a large number of users - 1,242 million, QQ - 606 million, Sina Weibo - 530 million, Douyin (a Chinese version of TikTok) - 600 million and Kuaishou - 481 million, all with the majority of users in China (data from July 2021). Like TripAdvisor and Yelp, Foursquare is more in the category of review websites, although reviews can also be created on Google and Facebook.

Next, a brief analysis of each of the above networks will be made from the perspective of their usage as a possible communication channel for museums.

## **Facebook**

Of all the online social networks, Facebook is the most used and powerful social platform and, at the same time, a powerful tool for promotion. Many organizations use this network as their main

means of online promotion, due to the high degree of engagement they get. A study conducted in May-June 2020 on a sample of 218 museums in Poland found that over 87% of museums used Facebook constantly or very often, while Instagram was at almost 28% and YouTube at 16.5% (Naramski, 2020).

In the museum field, Facebook is a very good tool for creating and maintaining relationships with visitors. It can be used as a tool to help increase the understanding of museum services by providing complementary information in a way that is specific to communicating on this network. Relational activities such as conversation and interaction with followers can become effective strategies for engaging with current and potential visitors outside the museum space itself (Camarero, Garrido and San Jose, 2018).

All the communication made through Facebook aims to provide the page's followers with information and/or entertainment. Some posts are oriented towards content offered in the form of text, images, videos or combinations thereof, and other posts are aimed at generating interaction (posts in the form of questions or online polls).

Gronemann, Kristiansen and Drotner (2015) consider that museums use Facebook as a panel for visual messages and schematic texts about the museum's offer in order to build and maintain a community of followers. They identified various features of communication through this platform: silence vs. communication activities, content delivery vs. invitations to dialogue, formal or informal tone of voice, addressing the entire public vs. more personal ways of addressing, invitations to share individual knowledge vs. strengthening the professional authority of the museum.

Events and groups are other promotional tools offered by Facebook pages. Every time you want to organize an event that aims to either strengthen the relationship with current visitors or attract potential visitors, Facebook allows the rapid promotion of events. They can be public, the page being accessible to all fans, or private, only the invited people having the opportunity to see the page.

Unlike a regular invitation, in the case of these events guests can leave comments on the page, and the organizers have different ways to customize the page to be as attractive as possible. Groups are an effective way to interact with visitors, as they tend to enter groups that reflect their concerns, so they will become a natural means of communication and obtaining opinions.

To measure the effectiveness of communication through Facebook, Camarero et al. (2018) propose the following analysis grids (table 3 and table 4).

**Table 3. Indicators regarding the analysis of Facebook pages.**

Concept	Analysis indicators	Measurement mode
Content strategy	Posts (posting)	Broadcasting (posts/day)
Relational strategy	Answers to followers	Answers to followers (% of participation)
Popularity	Followers	Number of likes
	Visitors	People who visited the page (check-in)
Generated content	Participants	People talking about it
Virality	Virality	Virality (viral audience/post)
Web traffic	Web traffic	Alexa Traffic Rank

**Table 4. Post analysis grid.**  
(adapted from Camarero et al., 2018)

Analysis indicators	Measurement mode
<b>Degree of engagement</b>	
Popularity	Number of likes
User-generated content	Number of comments
Virality	Number of shares
<b>Content strategy</b>	
Distance	The average number of days between posts
Post length	Number of rows of the post
Number of languages used	
Type of content	Informative / emotional
Presence of images	Yes / No
Relation with the museum's activity	Direct / Indirect
Link to a movie	Yes / No
Link to a news item	Yes / No
Link to own website	Yes / No
<b>Relational strategy</b>	

#### 4. Marketing communication from web 1.0 to web 4.0

Analysis indicators	Measurement mode
Average number of comments per post	
Average number of responses from the museum in the same post	
Question post	Yes / No
Invitation to participate in a contest/raffle/game	Yes / No
Invitation to share the post	Yes / No
Link to other web 2.0 content of the museum (blog, another social network)	Yes / No

It should be noted that the analysis grids of Facebook pages and posts proposed by Camarero et al. (2018) were made based on research conducted in January-March 2013 on a sample of 240 museums worldwide. Each museum can create its own analysis grid of its own posts and those of other museums that it considers as references in online communication, as well as the new features that the network has introduced or will introduce over time. These grids will differ depending on the specifics of the museums, as well as the objectives set out in the short- or medium-term communication strategy.

Another grid used to analyze the communication of museums on Facebook is the one proposed by Özdemir and Çelebi (2017) and used by them to analyze the Facebook pages of the 10 most visited museums in the world in 2014 (Table 5).

**Table 5. Analysis grid of the official Facebook pages of the museums.**  
(Source: Özdemir and Çelebi, 2017)

Contact information	Digital offers	Interactive discussions)
Integration of other social media tools	Updates related to the museum's activity	Messages about the daily routine
Posts related to special days	Video posts/ live broadcasts	Information about the museum's multimedia devices
Information about museum employees	Posting photos	Information about souvenirs offered by the museum shop
Detailed information about collections and artifacts	Posting audio files	Booking opportunities
Slogan	Posts about online games	Posts related to current exhibitions
Hashtag	Suggestions	Information on other museum facilities
The process of preparing the exhibitions	"Did you know...?"	Information about facilities for people with disabilities

<b>Contact information</b>	<b>Digital offers</b>	<b>Interactive discussions)</b>
Additional links	Invitations	Donation opportunities
Research, reports, projects	Educational posts	Competitions organized for visitors
Announcements	Suggestions and opinions of followers	

Communication through the Facebook network is part of the general marketing communication strategy of the museum, but intuitively it can be said that the ultimate goal of communication through this network must be to increase the interaction with the museum page, respectively with the posts on it. Increasing engagement is done both through the content strategy and through the relational strategy. There are no definitive recipes for an effective Facebook communication strategy, but it is clear that the following recommendations should be considered:

- The content must be varied.
- The frequency of posts must be sustained, but too high a frequency will also lead to a decrease in their efficiency.
- Different post formats must be alternated.
- The tone of the messages must match the museum’s brand personality. For example, research in the Malopolska Region in Poland resulted that by introducing humour messages in the museum narration can be a viable and beneficial approach (Najda-Janoszka & Sawczuk, 2020).
- Posts don't have to be long or contain many words. For cases where longer texts are required, a reference to an article on the museum blog is more appropriate.
- Creative posts based on a strong visual will be preferred to simple ones.

In the article *How Museums Can Use Social Media?*, museumnext.com (2019) proposes the following recommendations:

- Finding the right tone for the museum's voice on social media.

#### 4. Marketing communication from web 1.0 to web 4.0

- Social media should mean conversation, not just conveying the museum's message.
- Attracting influencers.
- Identifying the best hashtags.
- Using reports and social media analytics.

Particularly useful in communicating news and events to audiences made up of museum specialists are Facebook groups structured by professional interests. These groups can be public (joining the group does not require approval by one of the moderators) or private (membership to the online group needs approval). A group with quality content that addresses professionals in Romania is *Muzee & muzeografi* (Museums & Museographers). The group had about 5,600 members in August 2020 and 6,500 in April 2022, and member posts are frequent (5-10 posts/day) and diverse. Many of the ideas in this book were inspired by news and information distributed within this group. Among the themed Facebook groups that address museum specialists in the United States, I can recommend *Emerging Museum Professionals*, a group that had 15,300 members in April 2022 and that I discovered in April 2020 following the recommendation of Paul Bulencea, author of *Gamification in Tourism*.

Turner (2020b) proposes the following recommendations for effective communication of museums through the Facebook page:

- Create a business or brand page, not an individual profile or a community or public figure page.
- Personalize the page: the page name, using the logo as the profile picture, choosing and changing the cover photo in a creative way.
- Customize the page URL.
- Complete the About section with the most relevant information about the museum.

## **YouTube**

YouTube is the most popular platform when it comes to user-generated video content. The platform was created in 2005 and has become such a widely used social platform that it has set many trends through its videos. YouTube gives members the ability to upload videos or create their own favorite video channel (own TV). Its widespread use has made YouTube to be considered the second most used search engine after Google (Davies, 2021).

Activity on YouTube involves more than creating an account and simply posting videos. In order to turn a video into a promotional tool, the following aspects must be considered: scene preparation (account and channel personalization, expressive title, precise description of the video), inclusion of categories and tags, interaction with channel visitors, promotion to other communication channels.

Every museum should have a YouTube channel. Most often, these channels are used to archive various content, often videos that were created to attract visitors. To exemplify how a complete YouTube strategy should be built, the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam is a benchmark. Thus, the Dutch museum has three different YouTube channels, each of them having different content and targeting audiences with different interests.

Rijksmuseum is the main channel and had a number of 9,730 followers on August 11, 2020. The posts on this channel are made with a frequency of about one per week, and from a content standpoint it can be stated that the presentations that predominate are made by various curators on various topics, but related to the museum's collections.

RijksCreative was created on May 14, 2019 and is aimed at those who paint and want to learn the techniques of the great Dutch masters to apply them in their own paintings. The number of followers on August 11 was 10,500.

With 16,800 followers, RijksTube is the most popular channel of the famous museum in Amsterdam. The first post on this channel

was made on February 1, 2019, and the content was about the comparison between the posters created to promote Marvel movies and 17th century paintings. A total of 21 videos were posted, the last one on January 3, 2020, and their theme is extremely attractive to young people and other segments who are less familiar with high culture but who consume pop culture: monsters: from mythology to current movies, jokes hidden in works of art, an explanation from the perspective of art history about the interest shown by the general public to the Kardashian family or how McDonalds uses the creative principles used in famous paintings to create impactful posters.

Content that promotes museums on YouTube may be proprietary and uploaded to the official channel, or there may be videos uploaded to the pages of vloggers that may help promote collections or the big picture. For example, the most visited museum in Romania, Bran Castle, benefits both from the image created by videos present on its own channel and which have a large number of views, but the most relevant and captivating content can be found in vlogs made by various online influencers (Briciu and Briciu, 2020).

### **Instagram**

For many people, social media platforms like Instagram are nothing more than places where selfies are uploaded, but if they are used correctly, museums can discover real opportunities to connect and interact with their audience (Carlsson, 2020a). Selfies can have a negative impact as they can hamper an authentic interaction with the museum, but as this trend is unlikely to disappear in the near future, it is the museum's duty to engage with them in the same way they engage with other aspects of culture (Carlsson, 2020b). Piacantelli, Massi & Vocino (2020) considered selfies not to be a manifestation of narcissistic self-expression, but an empowering and democratizing means used by art consumers to develop narratives and identity projects and allowing for reducing the distance between art consumers and the elitist art world and suggested that future researches should start from the hypothesis that the selfie-based marketing communications are authentic.

With over one billion unique global users (1.14 million in Romania), Instagram is a tool that can be used to connect with young audiences. After Facebook and Twitter, starting in 2010, Instagram became a platform frequently used by marketers to interact with current or potential customers. Through Instagram, marketers have the opportunity to interact with followers by exchanging photos and videos. Comments can be added as a way to exchange information, and receiving comments is a way to get feedback from followers. In addition, the spread of Internet campaigns based on the #hashtag system benefits the use of Instagram.

The relationship between Instagram and museum communication has been a topic addressed by several researchers in academic articles such as Weilenmann, Hillman and Jungselius (2013), Lazaridou, Vrana and Paschaloudis (2017) or Amanatidis et al. (2020). There is an association between the number of followers and the number of visitors, but a good presence on Instagram does not automatically generate an increase in visitors. Museums should use the hashtag search to find visitor-generated content to use in communicating with Instagram account followers (Lazaridou, Vrana, & Paschaloudis, 2017). However, Instagram is used relatively little by museums in communicating with visitors or potential audiences, and an academic article published on May 30, 2020 showed that the Acropolis Museum in Athens was the only museum in Greece that had an Instagram account (Amanatidis et al., 2020). No data was found regarding Romania, but I suspect that Romanian museums are not very active on this platform either. It is a research topic that I will study in the future, and at the time of writing this paper four students from the first year of the Digital Media program are involved in creating and managing Instagram accounts for Weavers' Bastion and Olimpia - Museum of Sports and Mountain Tourism.

The platform has benefited from numerous changes and additions to the features it offers, especially after being bought by Facebook in 2012, such as the introduction of Stories (August 2016), the possibility of sharing live footage (Live - November 2016),

launching the IGTV video platform as a possible competitor for YouTube (June 2020) and Instagram Reels (July - August 2020) (Wikipedia, 2020). The latest change, launched in 50 countries, Reels, allows the editing of music-synchronized videos based on the TikTok model and aims to counteract the rise of the Chinese platform (AdAge, 2020).

Broudie (2020) recommends several tactics to increase visibility and attract an increased audience on Instagram in order to create a social community, given that Instagram has the ability to increase notoriety, reputation and credibility. These newer tactics are: 1. bringing a guest for live video sessions – this tactic being recommended for launches or fundraising events; 2. holding contests with prizes; 3. offering freebies (the author's example is more specific to companies, suggesting the offer to download a free catalog, but in museums this can be done with free tickets or small souvenirs); 4. allocating a budget for Instagram Ads – sponsored posts.

From the perspective of brand and organization communication, the differences between posting on the Instagram feed and creating Instagram Stories are shown in Table 6. It should be noted that Instagram also has the self-archiving function for stories, but the features highlighted in this table remain equally relevant.

**Table 6. Website analysis variables and sub-variables**

(Source: Hsiao J., 2019, <https://animoto.com/blog/video-marketing/instagram-feed-vs-stories>)

<b>Instagram Feed</b>	<b>Instagram Stories</b>
Posts remain permanently on the profile (or as decided by the page administrator).	Stories disappear after 24 hours.
Ideal for increasing the audience	Ideal for interaction
Posts can be discovered by new audiences.	It addresses the current audience, who interacts with the stories.
Most users skip posts with sound.	70% of <i>Instagram Stories</i> are viewed with sound.
Feed posts are most often scheduled.	They are created and shared spontaneously.
The feed represents the "face" of the brand.	They are intended for occasional interaction.
Posts are part of a content strategy.	Leave room for experimentation.

Turner (2020b) recommends that the settings of museums' Instagram pages be made in such a way as to allow sharing posted stories (Story Sharing), so that they become visible to other friends or even posted on their own accounts. Other recommendations of the author are to follow the Instagram accounts of similar museums, to analyze the list of those who follow the museum account to choose the relevant accounts to follow and to follow all the accounts of organizational partners, loyal members and other stakeholders.

Regarding the types of posts that museums have to make, I believe that there should be no recipe, but in a shorter or longer time, the person or persons who are responsible for the Instagram posts will find their own "voice", voice that must be the same as the one used on all online or even offline communication channels. The voice and tone of voice of online communication is synchronized with all types of organizational communication, both internal and external. The type of museum (more precisely, the characteristics of its audience) will influence this voice. For example, a museum that has a large audience of young people will have to adopt a more appropriate tone for this category, and a museum of victims of totalitarianism will not be able to have humorous posts. However, most of the Instagram pages of major museums find ways to stimulate interaction through creative, often funny posts. Other posts will be related to the presentation of an object from the collection, a recent or upcoming event or the presentation of professional achievements of the members of the institution. Ideally, all of these possible ideas or examples of online content that has generated results should be included in a guide or set of recommendations for online communication.

Obviously, the museum's posts will be related to its strategy, and strategic objectives at one time or another may be related to increasing the museum's notoriety, increasing the number of visitors or holders of loyalty cards (where applicable), objectives related to museum education and the promotion of its own collections or objects, the promotion of an event or partnership with certain actors of the economic or socio-cultural environment.

Chen (2018) recommends a business profile for the museum's Instagram account because it allows adding a description of the institution, a phone number, the official hashtag, access to features such as buttons for redirecting potential visitors, and access to analytics based on which they can think of targeted campaigns to well-defined audiences. Information on ticket prices and opening hours is also provided.

To establish the guide for communication through social media, Chen (2018) recommends the inclusion of recommendations on the quality of images that are posted, and because Instagram is a network built around images, these recommendations must be considered. The visual communication guide should answer questions such as:

- Will there be ultra-minimalist images or will they be more informal?
- Are there any images that should not be shared?
- What color/colors should be underlined?
- How will the subjects of the image be presented? For example, in the case of an art museum, will there be only paintings and drawings?
- Which angles are best? Will the objects be presented on a white background?
- If people appear in the photo, will their face have to be cropped? Will they have to look straight into the camera?
- What filters or edits are recommended?
- Will Instagram posts be organized in the form of a grid? Will themes be created out of three or more posts?

For a more detailed analysis of the way museums communicate via Instagram, it is necessary to identify those museums that have Instagram accounts, and this can only be done after searching for the Instagram button on their official websites. An initiative to gather as many of the museum's Instagram accounts as possible was launched by [museum140.com](http://museum140.com), but the activity stopped at the beginning of

2017. The list of registrations from 2014-2016 includes 2004 museums. Instead, the hashtag launched in this project is often used, especially by visitors and art lovers, so that on August 19, 2020 there were 260,564 posts containing #InstaMuseum, and exactly one year later, the number reached 301,362.

The ICOM Guide for Social Media (2019) draws attention to focus the main message in the first three lines of the post, even if the maximum number of characters for the text is 2,200. The possibility of the entire text being accessed also depends on these first three lines.

The Instagram posts of museum visitors are also important, and the recommendation is for museums to analyze those of the people they follow, of those who tag the museum in their posts or to follow the posts by relevant hashtags. Budge (2018) identified four major themes when it comes to museum visitors' Instagram posts: the visitor as a designer, sharing emotions, promoting the place and the self. Through their posts on this social network, museum visitors contribute to the creation of a sense of place and contribute to how the museum and city are perceived and imagined (Budge, 2020). Instagram images can be an important component for understanding what is occurring within and around the museum when people move to take photographs and share these experiences on Instagram and some researchers offered insights about how to interpret the results for planning activities of audience development (Rhee, Pianzola & Choi, 2021).

## **Twitter**

Twitter is a platform better known and used in other countries (especially in the Anglo-Saxon space) for news communication and political communication. Being a less visual platform than Instagram or Pinterest, the emphasis is on short texts (with a maximum of 280 characters) and on sharing links to other relevant sources (blog, own or partners' websites, news websites or content from the museum field).

Russo (2011) emphasized the importance of online social networks like Twitter for increasing notoriety and visitor loyalty. In the context of the communication of cultural institutions, Agostino, Arnaboldi and Calisano (2019) conducted a research based on the social network analysis of the Twitter account of Teatro alla Scala in Milan and the role of social media influencers and the type of influence they exerted through this network.

Turner (2020b) recommends that before a Twitter account is created for a museum, the person who is to manage it should create their own account if they do not have one already, in order to become familiar with the platform. Other recommendations of the author are: using a more informal tone in communication, using hashtags that are appropriate to the content of the post, managing comments, liking other posts, which is also a way to signal the existence of your own account, following the accounts that follow the museum's account, replying to direct messages and to comments, following the hashtag that is specific to the museum, using specific and relevant hashtags for various museum exhibitions or events.

An interesting case study of the power of Twitter in the communication of museums and cultural heritage is provided by St Paul's Cathedral in London (Belam, 2017). The Twitter "war" was initiated in early October 2017, on the occasion of World Architecture Day. The post on Twitter regarding the fact that this cathedral was voted as Great Britain's favorite building in 2015 was made with humor and by tagging the Twitter accounts of seven other famous cathedrals in Great Britain. This post generated a series of humorous tweets from cathedrals in England and Wales, which were tagged or not in the original post. This Twitter dialogue between cathedrals, initiated by Ed Holmes, the social media manager at St Paul's Cathedral, inspired a young man, Ben Brock, to launch the Twitter World Cup of Cathedrals, using the hashtag #cathedralworldcup, a competition that motivated a large audience to get involved in the conversation.

## **Snapchat**

Many museums communicate on Facebook, YouTube and even Instagram, and in countries where Twitter is frequently used, this online social network is part of the museum's online communication mix. For communicating with young people, Facebook and Twitter are becoming less and less effective, so other networks need to be considered. One of these channels is Snapchat.

Snapchat was founded in 2012 by Evan Spiegel together with several colleagues from Stanford University as an application for the ephemeral sharing of photos and videos. Before sharing, the application also allows editing by including tags, video effects, drawings or text. One year after it was launched, Snapchat turned down a \$3 billion acquisition offer from Facebook (Belch and Belch, 2018). Snap Inc., the owner of Snapchat, is currently worth over \$30 billion.

Among the attributes that have made this application a success among millennials are the very good adaptability to smartphones and the vertical orientation of the videos, a feature that was also borrowed by other networks such as Instagram and Facebook. And the limited display time for Instagram and Facebook Stories was also borrowed from Snapchat. It is possible that this 24-hour ephemerality of public posts and the instant disappearance of those sent by private messaging may be the hallmark of this network's success. Villaespesa and Wowkowycz (2020) stated that social media was initially used as a personal archive in which users created albums or posted on their timelines, but a new wave of platforms went in the opposite direction by emphasizing the intangible and ephemeral nature of digital products. And Snapchat is the network that best illustrates this trend.

An example of the creative use of Snapchat is the one created by the Maak team for the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 2017. The challenge of developing this solution came from the need to find a bridge of communication between history teachers and the Dutch museum with teenagers on controversial topics such as colonialism

and slavery. Short videos were created in Snapchat format based on certain themes in order to provoke teenagers to create video content as well. The themes were formulated according to the standards of the school curriculum, but the way in which the students had to respond was fun and interactive. In order to increase the degree of involvement and attractiveness of the content, relevant influencers for the target group were also involved.

Snapchat can also be used in paid campaigns, and the advertising formats offered by Snapchat are: Snap ads, Lenses and Filters that use augmented reality or overlays, Story Ads (series of 3-20 images) and Commercial ads (video ads which can be skipped after 6 seconds of watching).

## **Pinterest**

Badiu (2019) considers that Pinterest is a visual search engine, not a social media channel because users do not use this platform in order to gain feedback from other users. On Pinterest one does not create content for other users, the content is used to create visual collections of ideas. Brands and content-creating organizations will help users discover ideas and make plans.

For museums, it is recommended to create a business profile. This will allow accessing profile data analytics and even designing possible sponsored promotion campaigns on this platform. When completing the profile, you will also need to fill in information such as the website address, the location of the museum and a short description.

Pinterest has also been used creatively to promote actions such as Selfie with the Walrus by the Horniman Museum in London (Natassia and Ramadhan, 2019). One museum that is very present on Pinterest is the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (22,000 followers in October 2020 and 30,300 at the beginning of April 2022).

## **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is a platform that was created in 2003 to facilitate the online social interaction between professionals in various fields. Although LinkedIn is used by individuals in order to share individual career achievements and keep the attention of recruiters and identify career opportunities, the platform also presents opportunities for organizations that choose this way of online communication. Companies and non-profit organizations can promote their products and services, identify opportunities for cooperation with other organizations or promote their open positions, and the ease of communication through the messaging service allows for a personal interaction.

For museums, LinkedIn could be an effective communication tool because through this online network new ways of collaborating with other organizations can be developed, best practices can be shared and kept in the attention of people who are active on this network.

The recommendations of Social Media Examiner specialists for optimizing communication through LinkedIn are the following (Jenkins, 2017):

- Upload the logo and top banner.
- Regularly posting content that is relevant to the audience of the page.
- Adapting the content to the needs and interests of the audience.
- Promoting the page to attract new followers.
- Update the profile and the cover to maintain relevance.
- Checking the links to the website.
- Visiting the profiles of the people or organizations that are connected with the page in order to remove connections that are not relevant.
- Creating posts to increase page visibility.

Turner (2020b) makes the following recommendations specifically for museums:

- Sharing content that is relevant to the activity of the museum, created by its own employees.
- Sharing content that mentions the museum.
- Interacting with people who are interested in the museum's activity.
- Identifying and connecting with potential partners (individuals or organizations).
- Identifying content that is on trend for your audience.
- Monitoring page performance with LinkedIn Analytics.

Given that the most famous museums in the world are very active in the online environment, I have made a brief analysis of their communication in mid-August 2020 to see specifically how they use this online platform. The results are presented in table 8. On LinkedIn there are 17,000 pages of museums or associations and organizations that have museum in their name. The first 22 results were of museums in the United States and for this reason I have chosen for analysis the first three American museums displayed (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art and Guggenheim Museum) and the first three museums outside the United States that appeared on the list (Victoria and Albert Museum, The British Museum and Museum of Contemporary Art Australia).

**Table 8. Presence of museums on LinkedIn**

<b>Museum name</b>	<b>Number of followers</b>	<b>Frequency of posts / Most recent post</b>	<b>Posted content / Other observations</b>
The Metropolitan Museum of Art (TheMet)	236,823	September 2019	Volunteer recruitment announcement
The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)	138,008	No posts	Although it has no posts, the page has a short description of the museum with a link to the website and a map.

<b>Museum name</b>	<b>Number of followers</b>	<b>Frequency of posts / Most recent post</b>	<b>Posted content / Other observations</b>
Guggenheim Museum	64,457	Last post was published 3 years ago	Internship announcements, marking the anniversaries of Monet or George Seurat
Victoria and Albert Museum	105,099	1-2 posts/month	Announcements about the opening of the museum after the period of forced closure. Reference to the blog post of the chief curator on the subject of Black Lives Matter and the implications for museums.
The British Museum	102,210	Last posts were published in March 2020	Job announcements
Museum of Contemporary Art Australia	30,104	Weekly posts	Own events Requesting donations or tax-deductible donations

LinkedIn allows you to view employees, former employees or volunteers who have the name of a specific organization on their profile. In the case of the MET, there are 1942 employees, and at the MoMA there are 1078. Among the first profiles suggested are those of directors, curators, human resources directors or communication directors.

LinkedIn is not used for the communication of museums in Romania, but in the analysis conducted in April 2022 I discovered the page of the Art Museum of Braşov, with relatively frequent posts (approximately one post per month) and 822 followers.

## **TikTok**

Although I addressed the topic of TikTok for museums at an online conference held in late June 2020 by Grupo Educacional UNIS in Brazil (Nechita, 2020), the first lines on this topic were written at a time when the topic of the second most downloaded application in

the second quarter of 2020 (The Economist, 2020) is discussed in light of the proposal to ban the application in the United States, a proposal launched by President Trump on July 31, 2020 (Watson, 2020). The proposal did not enter into force, and President Biden revoked the ban in June 2021 (BBC, 2021).

TikTok (known as Douyin in China) is an application for sharing user-generated music video content. The main audience consists of people aged 13-21, and the number of downloads reached 2 billion, of which 300 million in the second quarter of 2020, so that in the UK and the US it came to compete with YouTube and not just among young people (The Economist, 2020). Thus, at the end of 2021, TikTok exceeded 1 billion monthly active users, the ranking of the main online social networks in March 2022 by the number of monthly active users being the following: Facebook – 2.9B, YouTube – 2.2B, Instagram – 1.4B, TikTok – 1.0B, Snapchat – 500M, Pinterest – 480M, Twitter – 397M (Wallaroomedia, 2022).

The main content consists of funny short videos containing users dancing, singing or synchronizing their mimicry with music or movies. They have the ability to add tags and filters, and hashtags allow you to search for content by specific themes. Brands have noticed the potential of this emerging medium of communication through influencers.

TikTok offers users a unique way to share creative videos about themselves, the places they live in by adding external audio content. The resulting videos may contain overlapping text on a colored background, or a more complex combination that includes images, videos, and sounds, which can be edited using voice effects, filters, and other visual and editing effects. The maximum length of a video is 60 seconds, and it can be created by combining several such videos. Before they are posted, platform-specific hashtags can be added to the videos to describe their content and make them easier to classify.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) was one of the first museums to launch an official account on this application, as well as a competition to discover its exhibitions and collections (Richardson,

2019a). Thus, ever since April 25, 2019, the #SaluteToClassics challenge invited TikTok users from certain countries to exhibit their best imitations of art or characters from works of art, and the prize offered was a five-night trip to New York and the chance to be among the first visitors to the Camp: Notes on Fashion exhibition. A second challenge was launched with the hashtag #MetGalaStyle, inviting users to create original content inspired by The Met's fashion show at the museum's annual fundraising gala for The Costume Institute. The organizers of these two challenges highlighted the platform's potential to engage users to express their creativity, be connected to trends and embrace the diversity offered by this vibrant platform (Richardson, 2019a).

It seems that TikTok stars and surprises among museums were the smaller museums, and their secret seems surprising because it is not related to keeping up with the latest memes and trends (Ables, 2021). For example, content creators at the Sacramento History Museum or the Carnegie Museum of Natural History are far from the profile of regular users or creators. Tim Pearce's #MolluskMonday jokes seem to have nothing to do with Generation Z, but they garner tens of thousands of likes and hundreds of comments.

The TikTok platform, in turn, supports the promotion of content related to culture, there is information on their official website about the #MuseumMoment LIVE event that involved 23 museums from 12 countries around the world. In that same article, TikTok informs that the content with hashtags such as #FineArt, #ArtHistory and #ArtOnTikTok have garnered over 2 billion viewers globally and generated an increase of over 3000% compared to the previous year (TikTok, 2021).

A very good suggestion for using TikTok in order to generate engagement among Generation Z is provided by Mary McGillivray (Art History TikToker and Visual Culture Communicator) in the presentation she made in November 2021 for the MuseumNext Digital Marketing Summit. Her recommendations refer to how to go viral, hiring a creator, approaching new visitors and the importance

of authenticity. From this same presentation, what stuck in my mind are the examples of communication on this platform from the Sacramento History Museum, Black Country Living Museum and Carnegie Museum of Natural History, which are also mentioned in this book.

### **TripAdvisor, Yelp and Foursquare**

Platforms such as TripAdvisor, Yelp or Foursquare allow tourists who use them to exchange information, opinions and recommendations about the various destinations, products and services in these destinations, sharing their experience through longer or shorter texts, and through the available rating systems. User-generated content is a challenge for museums, as these opinions and comments are beyond the control of museums. A survey conducted by Alexander, Black and Hale (2018) based on 22,940 reviews made in 2014 among 88 London museums revealed that visitors pay special attention to aspects such as queues, costs, toilets, the museum restaurant and activities for children and make fewer comments about the cultural side of the visiting experience. The study concludes that for visitors who leave reviews on TripAdvisor, museums are part of the entertainment sector or industry.

Museum visitors arrive with expectations that are often built on the experiences of other people and TripAdvisor's high Google ranking can help museums to communicate effectively at this pre-visit stage. A basic TripAdvisor account can be set up for free, which means they can start listing a description of what they do, photos of exhibits, videos and other information right away (Bibby, 2019).

### **Airbnb**

Airbnb is an online platform that was established in 2008 and through which you can rent rooms, apartments or houses directly from their owners. The type of tourism facilitated by the Airbnb platform falls within the concept of sharing economy and can be

described by a new paradigm described by the 4Ts: Trust, Togetherness, Technology and Transformation (Cesarani and Nechita, 2017).

Launched in November 2016, Airbnb Experiences proposes to those who use the Airbnb platform to dive into the local experience through their passions. The hosts will provide visitors with knowledge and special activities that the latter would not have discovered on their own, all in order to create lasting connections and unforgettable memories. Airbnb's collaboration with museums is close, so among the first experiences suggested when accessing Airbnb Experiences is the suggestion related to the Louvre Museum, respectively the tour guided by Cedrik, art historian and stand-up comedy actor.

In fact, among the collaborations with impact in the media between the famous Parisian museum and Airbnb, the experience *A Night at the Louvre*, should be mentioned, which was launched on April 2, 2019 based on the same idea that the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam experimented with in 2017. The collaboration between Airbnb and museums in order to generate interaction with users and strengthen its image as a platform that offers experiences and not just accommodation can be exemplified by two other experiences: Halloween night at Bran Castle and accommodation in Van Gogh's apartment.

In early October 2016, Airbnb announced the listing of Bran Castle on its platform to accommodate a couple on Halloween night (October 31), and a worldwide competition was held to get to spend a night around Dracula (Meltzer, 2016). Another Airbnb experience realized together with a museum and intensely publicized was that with The Art Institute of Chicago. At the suggestion of the Leo Burnett advertising agency, partner of the Art Institute of Chicago, a replica of the bedroom captured on canvas by the artist from Arles was created and rented on Airbnb for \$10/night. Those who were not so lucky to be able to book the apartment that contained the replica of Van Gogh's room had the opportunity to visit a similar

replica in the art museum and admire 36 other masterpieces of the famous artist (Shropshire, 2016).

The Leo Burnett agency also had a lot to gain from the intensely mediated collaboration between Airbnb and the Art Institute of Chicago, as it was awarded the Grand Prize for Creative Efficiency at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity. The case study of this collaboration that led to the museum's most visited exhibition in the last 15 years is available on YouTube.

## **Games**

The rise in online connectivity of gaming environments, the high number of people allocating their leisure time for games, as well as the increasing technological opportunities for integrating ads in games have resulted in making marketers being more attracted by this medium. Cyberscapes have become the online equivalent of real spaces (Burlacu, 2014). The spaces offered by video games are part of the cyberscape, and advertising through video games attracts an audience of hundreds of millions of players. They offer a whole range of opportunities for product placement (placing the product brand inside the games). Unlike television, where people tolerate ads more easily as a way to get free content, when it comes to inserting ads into games, something has to be offered to players in return and the ads should not bother them.

Video games become channels through which museums can interact with visitors. Video games that are based on the discovery of history and historical heritage can be transformed into effective tools for increasing notoriety, without competing with the actual activity of visiting the museum. The advertising message becomes an integral part of the game. They are often used in combination with email campaigns or viral marketing campaigns. There are games inspired by history, natural sciences or archeological sites which have made participants become more eager to access digital archives or online museums (Hong et al., 2013). The DinoHunter project, implemented in 2003 at the Senckenberg Paleontological Museum in Germany, involved a combination of the actual visit and a virtual

tour of the museum's website, in which dinosaur skeletons were manipulated in order to help children better understand what they looked like (Sauer & Göbel, 2003). The experience of game developers can be also integrated into the activity of guiding museum visitors. Thus, in 2012 the Louvre Museum partnered with the video game developer and console maker Nintendo to create the official guide of the museum containing over 600 photographs, more than 30 hours of audio content and high resolution images and 3D models (Tieryas, 2015).

An example of using games to communicate with the audience is provided by the 2016 Museum of London project, which focused on the way this museum marked 350 years since the Great Fire that devastated London (Blair, 2016). The London Museum involved a team of Minecraft experts (also described as a virtual Lego) who created a virtual replica of London from before the 1666 fire, as well as later versions of the British capital. Connecting through the themed game also increased the attractiveness of the exhibition, which contained several exhibits related to the Great Fire.

Video games for museums are not only created to increase the interaction between visitors and museums. There are also video games designed to test and improve the managerial skills of museum employees, and the Mondo Museum developed by Kitfox Games is an example of this. Thus, players start with their own budget which they will use to test their skills in terms of exhibition design planning, souvenir shops and simulate various human resource schemes by hiring researchers, curators and museum staff (Dafoe, 2019).

The games are created in order to generate affective engagement which occurs when the experience is enjoyable. Game developers should aim to foster the curiosity and interest for visitor segments such as teenagers and children. One such example is *Intrigue* at the museum, game that was evaluated by unobtrusively observing 30 young visitors (Xhembulla et al., 2014). Even an emotionally challenging topic such as the Holocaust can be interpreted for schoolchildren by engaging them with a serious

game, and the questions about the outcome are related to the perception of the game (Moffat & Shapiro, 2015).

### **Mobile applications**

The Rembrandt Reality app allows users to assist the group of doctors in the famous painting "Anatomy lessons of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp", through a virtual immersion in the work of the famous Dutch painter exhibited at the Marithuis Museum in The Hague.

Applications that are developed to be downloaded inside the museum are not always the most appropriate solution, especially when they are aimed at children, teenagers or people who often do not have enough storage space on their smartphones. The alternative solution for these cases is to create a mobile website that has the features and design of an application, a solution also chosen by the Rijksmuseum when they created Snapguide (Scott, 2019).

A middle way to overcome the barrier of a possible lack of desire of the visitors to have a new application occupy storage space on their smartphones is to use pre-installed applications such as the chat application from Facebook Messenger. And in this case, Boiano and Gaia (2017) give the following five tips applied to a chatbot created for interacting with young people:

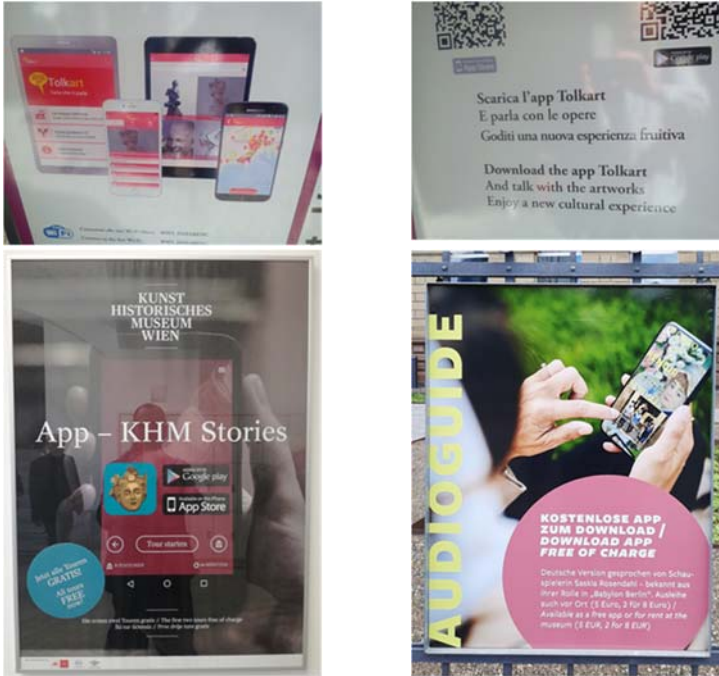
- Using the concept of Design Thinking, a creative concept developed by Stanford University and made famous by the IDEO design agency.
- Gamification by stimulating cooperation and/or competition between young people who will use the application.
- Studying real chat conversations in order to make them as real as possible by using specific language, rhythm and tone, including the usual abbreviations and emoticons.
- When creating applications for museums, objects that young visitors can see and interact with in real time must be used.

- The duration of the interaction through the application should not last more than 30-40 minutes.

The TolkArt application implemented by the The Monumental Complex of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples (fig. 21, above) was structured based on the following functionalities: displaying a list of art events; the user selects an exhibition and the application will display a short description of it; allowing users to access the museum network to facilitate communication; the application displaying an image of the nearest work of art; activating multimedia content presentation for the delivery of content that enhances the visiting experience (Piccialli and Chianese, 2017).

In turn, KHM Stories offers the opportunity to rediscover the diversity of the collections of the Museum of Art History (Kunsthistorisches Museum) in Vienna by facilitating interactive tours on topics such as love or magic. Thus, after downloading the free application, the smartphone becomes the owner's guide and offers him the possibility of unique interactions such as seeing from inside the work of art or exploring details of works of art that could only be seen with X-rays, all with the promise to create exciting bridges between the past and the present. The application is available in 4 languages, facilitating 9 different tours, and among them are those for children over 8 years old (fig. 21, bottom left).

#### 4. Marketing communication from web 1.0 to web 4.0



**Figure 21.** Applications used to facilitate the interaction between the visitor and the exhibits – TolkArt (San Domenico Maggiore, Naples, April 2017, KHM Stories (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, November 2019) and Städel Museum Frankfurt, May 2022).

(Photo: F. Nechita)

In turn, the free audioguide app from the Städel Museum in Frankfurt is presented to visitors as the ideal companion for the exhibition with audio tracks on selected artworks (fig. 21, bottom right).

## 5. MUSEUM MARKETING 5.0 – TRENDS AND CHALLENGES OF MUSEUM COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In the Romanian edition published in 2020, *Marketing 4.0* term used in the title of the last chapter was inspired by a synthesis between the title signed by the father of modern marketing, Philip Kotler, *Marketing 4.0* (Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan, 2016), and the inclusion of ideas regarding museum marketing taken from Rentschler (2002). The new version of Kotler et al. (2021) - *Marketing 5.0: technology for humanity* - made me update the name of this chapter.

According to Kotler et al. (2021), the evolution of the marketing philosophy went through the following stages:

- Marketing 1.0 - product-oriented marketing.
- Marketing 2.0 - consumer-centered marketing.
- Marketing 3.0 - human-centric marketing - where companies approach a marketing philosophy through which the products and/or services offered and the organizational culture reflect an authentic approach to human values.
- Marketing 4.0 - the approach that considers the convergence of online and offline worlds, both from a business and consumer perspective.
- Marketing 5.0 - the application of human-mimicking technologies (AI, NLP, sensors, robotics, augmented reality, virtual reality, IoT, and blockchain) to create, communicate, deliver, and enhance value across the customer journey.

In turn, Rentschler (2002) framed museum marketing from the perspective of practices, but especially of the topics on this subject present in academic publications, in three major periods:

- The Foundation period of museum marketing - 1975-1984.
- The Professionalization period - 1985-1994.
- The Discovery period - 1995-2002.

We can discuss marketing 5.0 from the perspective of the parallel analysis of the five levels mentioned by Kotler et al. (2021) and the three periods proposed by Rentschler (2002), but the convergence of the online and offline worlds within the vast majority of museums and the usual day-to-day application of instruments based on AI, NLP, sensors, robotics, augmented reality, virtual reality, IoT, and blockchain is debatable.

Many museums are still in the early stages of digitization and professional use of digital communication. However, digital tools have much to offer to the field of arts and cultural heritage and to extend the traditional museum mandate toward the community. The museums started to play a vital part in society and promote democracy and transparency. For these reasons ICOM must broaden the concept of the museum (Quiñones Vilá, 2020).

Some previous transformations became accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as the trend of museums co-creating new museum products along with visitors, implying that users will become producers and consumers at the same time (Choi & Kim, 2021). Regarding the perception of the communication, the individuals will interact around a cultural theme and the museum will provide the content on which the interrelationship between individuals is based and the community manager will act as a curator (Más & Monfort, 2021).

The adoption by museums of marketing and marketing communication in its entirety is still limited, and the understanding of a holistic approach to these concepts has not yet passed the stage of using specific techniques to promote their services and collections. Thus, although the world's great museums have adopted and represent standards in the acquisition and use of tools that can be classified as specific to stages 4.0 and 5.0, the vast majority of them are still in the Discovery period. And if we speak strictly from a

communication perspective, then we can say that many of them are only in the early stages of professionalization.

Some ideas about the trends and challenges of museum communication will be structured in the following pages, although not all of them could be strictly framed in the topic of marketing communication. The first subchapter is about virtual reality and augmented reality. Are these marketing communication tools or are they inextricably linked to the museum product itself (a museum product of the future, to be precise)? Are VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality) ways to enrich the visiting experience or are they tools that should not be missing from the toolbox of communication managers in the coming years? Is storytelling just a trendy term or does it refer to a philosophy that must be found in communication campaigns? Or is it the principle based on which exhibitions should be organized?

Before analyzing the 5.0 marketing communication, topics such as the context or external factors of the marketing environment and the behavior of contemporary visitors should be addressed first. For example, in recent years there has been a major cultural shift in the way museum audiences interact with content, with visitors no longer willing to look at objects from a distance and wanting to become part of the overall museum-object-visitor model (Straughan, 2019). This desire for self-inclusion in the new museum-object-visitor model is done in many cases through social media, but the explanation may come from the current remix culture perspective (Lawrence, 2008).

How can we understand the people of our time and what the people of the future will be like? An experienced marketer does not always have to resort to expensive and sophisticated studies, but must look around, analyze trends, put information into context. Even a dictionary like the Oxford English Dictionary (with its Word of the Year launched in 2006) can draw attention to the concerns of our consumers (visitors). A history of the famous words in recent years can be consulted on Wikipedia, as well as the lists of the most searched words of Dictionary.com (since 2010) or Merriam-Webster (since 2003). I wonder what communicator or museum manager

would have imagined, 10 years ago, that the word of the year in 2013, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, would be one that would influence so many museum communication programs? The Oxford English Dictionary declared *selfie* as the word of the year in 2013. My first and only time I visited Florence was in October 2014 and although I was visually overwhelmed by the richness of the heritage I only knew from books, photos, and movies, I could not help but notice, and be confused by the existence of a very strange object at that time, called a selfie stick.

Selfies have become a ubiquitous form of expression in our century and social networks have helped them become popular. There is a widespread perception that the selfie is a symptom of a narcissistic society (Murray, 2018). What was the effect on museums? A visual response: figure 22.



**Figure 22.** *Narcissus* de Caravaggio exhibited in the Kunsthistorisches Museum and a poster of the Lyon Museum of Fine Arts.

(Photo: F. Nechita,

Vienna, Austria - November 2019 and Lyon, France - March 2018)

Museums have been quite slow in adopting a natural way of integrating social media in their communication and even visiting activity. Even the fact that most museums lifted the ban on

photographing objects or the fact that they stopped charging an additional fee for photography is the result of social media recognition as an indispensable part of the museum-visitor relationship. For this reason, initiatives such as MuseumSelfie or other campaigns that encourage posts accompanied by #museumname or #theme hashtags are popular and handy (Mardixon, 2014). Kozinets, Gretzel and Dinhopl (2017) consider that selfies can even be considered a complex, multidimensional and dynamic art form, and Stylianou-Lambert (2017) considers them to be a construction material for his own identity.

In fact, the specific term *artie* was created for selfies taken near an exhibit in art museums (Alves da Veiga, 2020).

And to close the open parenthesis on the subject of context, consumer behavior and the Oxford English Dictionary with a question, has the *youthquake* (the word of the year in 2017) sent its shock waves to the world of museums? This word, created by combining youth and earthquake, was first released in the public space by Diane Vreeland, who was a Vogue editor in 1965, and is roughly translated as a notable change in society in response to the activities and the tastes of the youngest members of a culture.

A topic related to marketing 4.0 and suggested by Valer Rus, the manager of the Casa Mureşenilor Museum in Braşov, is artificial intelligence. I am still not ready for this topic, but it helps me close the previous considerations written about selfie, with the help of an article I discovered in early 2020 about the Google Arts & Culture application and which can be interpreted as a bridge between online social media communication and artificial intelligence. The application allows, based on the facial recognition technique, to search the works of art database that it owns in partnership with many museums around the world and to identify the portrait that bears the closest resemblance to the selfie taken by the user of the application. Users share the selfie next to the work of art on social media, thus creating additional exposure on social networks, but also contributing to the desire of those who used the application to visit the museum that hosts their *doppelganger* (Styx, 2019).

Beyond these current yet somewhat frivolous topics, such as the one about the selfie addressed in the paragraphs above, it is worth reflecting on the following global trends in museums proposed by David Fleming (2019): Globalisation, Local identity and nationalism, Decolonisation, Urbanisation, Digitisation, Democratisation of knowledge, Inequality, Climate change, Human rights, Political interference, Reduction in public funding, Loss of expertise, Loss of trust in media, Increased permeability. There are themes or even macrotrends that can be transposed both in the content of museum marketing communication, but also in the tools used to make this communication effective and relevant.

### **5.1. VIRTUAL REALITY AND AUGMENTED REALITY**

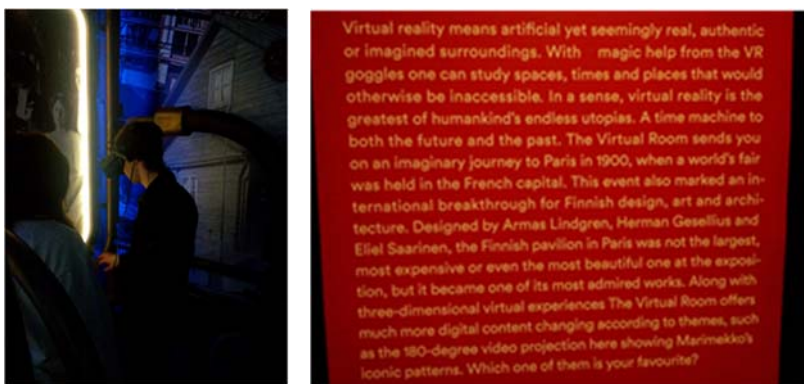
Augmented reality and virtual reality are used as communication tools by various industries such as the fashion industry, entertainment-related ones, but also in areas such as real estate or architecture. This kind of communication allows marketers to interact with their audience in an innovative way (Gleb).

Virtual reality is no longer a novelty in the museum field, but it can be considered as a tool that more and more museums use to enrich the experience of interacting with museums. Museums want to breathe new life into their collections, and virtual reality is a great tool for doing this. A meta-analysis published by Zhou, Chen and Wang (2022) revealed that AR and VR have been mostly used in science, arts, and history museums to support the learning and often used to add complementary materials, visualize complex phenomena in a dynamic way and simulate virtual exhibition and narrative scenarios.

Major museums around the world have launched projects that include virtual reality as part of the visiting experience, and more recent examples can be found at the Louvre, Smithsonian, National Museum of Finland, Tate, National Museum of Natural History in Paris (Coates, 2019). However, virtual reality and augmented reality are not just solutions for interpreting heritage that only large museums can afford. A well-known example from Braşov is the one

implemented since 2017 at the Casa Mureşenilor Museum in Braşov, and the results of the evaluation of the visiting experience of 400 young pupils and students indicated a positive influence on their perception (Coman et al., 2018; Nechita and Rezeanu, 2019).

I researched virtual reality and augmented reality in museums more thoroughly when I wrote an article (Nechita, 2014), but the first time I experienced virtual reality in a museum was in 2017, in Helsinki. In fact, I visited two museums, with a day or two between the visits: Helsinki City Museum and Design Museum (fig. 23). Then, in 2017, as a member of the *Virtual Reality – an innovative solution for heritage protection and promotion* project, I had the opportunity to observe and evaluate the positive impact of AR and VR technologies in increasing the visiting experience among young people.



**Figure 23. Implementation of virtual reality at two museums in Helsinki.**  
(Photo: F. Nechita - Helsinki City Museum (left), Design Museum (right),  
Helsinki, Finland - February 2017)

In our days, the existence of many smartphone applications or features offered by online social networks allow visitors to connect with museums or their exhibitions in many ways, and those that include augmented reality are very popular especially among young people. Tate Gallery in the UK used Facebook's AR platform Spark to give visitors the opportunity to access their virtual collection via their Instagram account. Virtual visitors had the opportunity to

insert themselves into eight different pieces of art, thus exploring the stories behind the images and being able to create their own emotional connections (Charr, 2019a).

## 5.2. CONTENT MARKETING

According to the Content Marketing Institute, content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and sharing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and, ultimately, to stimulate profitable customer action.

Generally speaking, content marketing involves providing useful information and solutions for using products on a website or microsite of the brand or, in the case of sponsored content marketing, this information and these solutions are offered on other websites (Clow and Baack, 2018). For brands that are owned by commercial organizations, content marketing has become a way for them to engage in dialogue with potential customers without being invasive and without trying to sell anything in the short term. The information provided through various communication tools is of interest to potential customers, and the solutions provided naturally include the proposal of the brand that uses this marketing strategy. There is talk of content marketing in the context of digital communication tools, but the first example provided by the Content Marketing Institute is *The Furrow* magazine edited by John Deere, the famous American manufacturer of tractors and agricultural machinery, who, in 1895, launched a magazine that was created in order to educate farmers, to present them with the latest news in the field of agriculture and to provide solutions to their problems. This is a great example to show that in content marketing, what matters most is ... the content. Before the message is represented in (social) media, the usefulness of what is published, for the target audience, is more than important.

How could content marketing be applied in the museum field? Yin (2020) exemplifies the concept of content marketing in a museum context through two examples. The first example, already mentioned

in this book, refers to the famous program broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in 2010 - *A history of the world in 100 objects* - a program in which the charismatic director of the British Museum at the time, Neil McGregor, presented to the public the history of humanity through the prism of 100 objects from the museum's collection. The second example mentioned is the partnership between CCTV (China Central Television) and nine major museums in this country.

And now follows a new example from the Rijksmuseum, which fits to some extent with the joke I tell during the first meeting with the Communication and Public Relations students, namely that there is no PR, but only the first P from the marketing mix: the Product. Through this joke I tell on a more serious note, I want to convey to students that there is no communication in the absence of a product or service of a quality that is vouched for, and suitable for the segment or segments to which it is addressed. Thus, the product is practically the most important support and vector of its own communication. And because we are in the subchapter on content marketing, we must mention, in this context, the *Operation Night Watch* project of the famous museum in Amsterdam. When Rembrandt's famous painting required research operations in order to preserve it, the Rijksmuseum has decided to do things differently and left the painting hanging in place in the gallery and construct a glass box around it with all of the research equipment. This transparency allows museum visitors to see exactly what goes into a research operation like this one. But more so, this initiative has turned into an excellent opportunity for generating content that can be shared live to an international audience. Thus, an entire website and communication campaign were created, and they included a behind the scenes tour of the research process for adults, as well as a specialised one for children. They've also hosted live-stream videos of the research project to allow the public to see the process on an even more intimate level (Turner, 2019).

The person responsible for creating content is the marketing manager, but in some institutions, employees in other departments have access to social networks and, as agreed upon with the

marketing manager, they can publish curiosities and events of particular departments (Krajnović, Perković, & Rajko, 2020). Apart from the communication departments, which have traditionally been responsible for engaging with audiences, nowadays collections and research departments are also expected to engage more actively with the public (Wiedemann, Schmitt & Patzschke, 2019).

In my opinion, museographers have solutions and can give advice related to very diverse fields and topics: health, body care, diet, recipes, rules of good behavior in society, science and technology, tourism, travel and leisure. These tips can be offered on specialized websites and blogs or others created by the museum for this purpose, and the integration of the additional solution "you can find out more if you visit the exhibition X or access the website Y" comes naturally and with the potential to attract new visitors, who become loyal.

Museums can structure this content that is meant to attract the public to the museum by offering online courses in their field of competence. Thus, at the end of April 2022, 10 free courses were available on the MoMA website, through the Coursera platform, and those who registered could hear directly from artists and designers, look closely at works in our collection and exhibitions, and join a global community of learners unlike any other (MoMA, 2022).

### **5.3. DIGITAL STORYTELLING**

Storytelling can be defined as transmitting knowledge or information presented in a symbolic form, easy to remember and assimilate due to the adopted narrative thread. This process of transmitting events, information, and knowledge is done through words, images, and sounds, often with the help of improvisation or exaggeration.

The connection between storytelling and museums is natural by the very definition of the museum as a place where stories about objects, facts, places or people are told, and how the different stories in a museum are linked must lead to the generation of a larger story that make the visiting experience memorable. Cerquetti and Ferrara

(2018) emphasized the role of storytelling in the communication of heritage in general and museums in particular, emphasizing that technical language and formal style must be overcome, and innovation in communication must not only concern IT&C tools. Technology can make cultural heritage more accessible and attractive to museum visitors via digital storytelling (Perouli, 2021).

As cultural consumers, museum visitors want stories because life is about stories and people love them. That made museums become storytellers by adding storytelling and digital storytelling to their cultural products in order to make them more appealing and easier to understand (Sylaiou & Dafiotis, 2020).

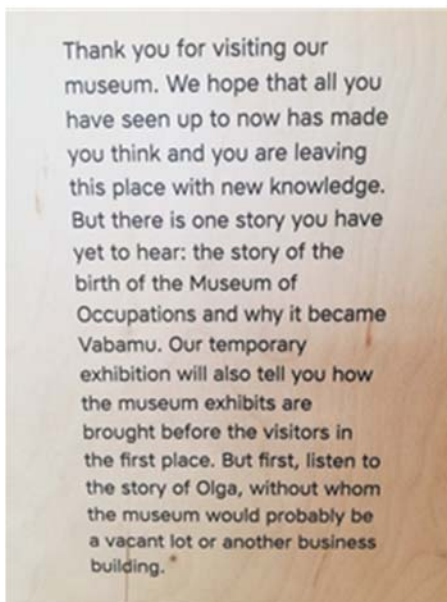
In order to effectively and correctly apply the storytelling process to the museum visiting experience, it is extremely important to understand the individual importance of each of these components, as well as how they interact with each other. According to the taxonomy provided by Nicolas Bernhardt Zeman, in his book *Storytelling for Interactive Digital Media and Video Games* (2017), he makes the classification based on the importance of that element in the effective development of the narrative thread and their preponderance in various narratives. Thus, he identifies three categories of elements: primary (all the elements that have a maximum importance on the development of the narrative thread, their absence leading to a lack of coherence), secondary (their presence is not always necessary but contributes to creating the narrative atmosphere) and tertiary (their presence is not a necessary element and their absence is not an impediment).

The primary elements are the characters, the narrative itself, the perspective and the order of the actions. The first element, and by far the one that has a massive impact on the consumers of a story is the character. Zeman (2017) defines the character as a participant in a story. The same author defines the narrative itself as being composed of the transformative events that take place throughout the story. An action in a narrative thread must have a transformative character, more precisely to achieve a change at the level of the character or the created world. The role of this component is an obvious one, of

developing characters and narrative themes, as well as creating suspense throughout the story. Perspective is the lens through which the events of the narrative are seen.

There are two main types of narrative perspective: first person point of view, in which a character expresses his own vision of the events, there is an overlap between the information that the character has and that the viewer has; and in the third person point of view, this involves a narrator who has more information than the characters in the whole narrative. These two types of narration are rarely used individually, with a significant number of combinations that dramatically change the narrative thread of the story. The central role of perspective is to help the content consumer understand a character's feelings and actions.

The examples in the subchapter on mobile applications showed how digital technologies can help guide visitors through the many stories tailored to their preferences, demographics, and interests. Even with a minimum of technology, museums tell memorable stories, especially when they manage to communicate with their audience in the most personal way possible. For example, at VABAMU – Museum of Occupation in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, the storyline of the exhibition on the horrors of communism and the Soviet occupation is intertwined with the story of Olga Kistler-Ritso, who contributed her donation to the museum (figure 24).



**Figure 24.** *Thank-you poster at the VABAMU - Museum of Occupation.*  
(Photo: F. Nechita , Tallinn, Estonia - August 2018)

The experience created through storytelling is specific to small and medium-sized museums that are organized around an artist or theme because the exhibits relate very well to the historical or environmental context, as well as the brand identity of the museum (Dal Falco and Vassos, 2017).

If the principles of storytelling must be used inside the museum, then all the more they must be applied in marketing communication. From a marketing perspective, stories can help museums raise funds, encourage visits and trigger sales (Faherty, 2019). Wyman et al. (2011) recommend that in order to create a successful story in a digital format: use a little technology well, not a lot of technology poorly. So more important than technology is clearly the story.

The connection between museums and the universe of stories (trans/digital) media is biunivocal. Museums must master communication techniques inspired by transmedia storytelling, but

the stories created in the media (digital and/or transmedia) have also inspired the creation of themed exhibitions in franchises such as Star Wars, Star Trek, Jurassic Park, The Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter or The Hunger Games in response to public interest in these transmedia worlds (Herrera and Keidl, 2018).

The main challenges regarding the introduction of a digital storytelling approach in museums are related to these three aspects involved: the museum topology, the museum objects, and the story concepts (Ioannidis et al., 2013). The same authors also considered that the content type and variety may depend on the needs of the narrative framework we want to achieve. One of the most common types of content required by such interactive virtual tours are the various sound effects that are commonly used to create the narrative atmosphere and to notify participants about the actions performed (e.g., using sounds specific to correct or incorrect answers). Another type of content often used is audio-visual material. It can be quite varied, starting from simple videos, to animations and interactive presentations. It is important to note that there is a preconception about image quality being more important than sound quality.

Rubino et al. (2013) presented how a location-based mobile game for a tablet was designed by using principles of storytelling and following the next six steps: 1) providing a back-story as a basis of the game tasks; 2) exploiting the role-playing to enhance visitors' emotional engagement; 3) providing contextual clues linked to specific places to better capitalize on the physical position of the user; 4) integrating a variety of microgames for challenging different visitors' skills; 5) integration of rewards for enhancing visitors' motivation; 6) balancing the two conflicting elements of competition and knowledge acquisition.

The storytelling principles are easier to apply for virtual museums. Virtual museums visitors can be empowered to collaboratively construct narratives and involving them in a knowledge-producing community (Sylaiou & Dafiotis, 2015).

#### **5.4. INFLUENCER MARKETING AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH BRANDS AND COMPANIES**

Why have I put influencers in the same basket as brands and companies? Because being seen at the museum is well-regarded. On the other hand, influencers post a lot of museum-related content and I think that, in most cases, they want to bring something extra to their image by associating with more serious institutions and activities. Companies and brands also want to benefit from the positive associations that museums have among people. I wonder if Facebook accidentally chose to include in the Meta rebranding communication campaign a group of young people who go to a museum, where they end up immersing themselves directly in the universe of the painting *Fight between a tiger and a buffalo* by the French painter Henri Rousseau, a painting that is found in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art (Beer, 2021).

Partnerships with influencers are not new, and this trend could have been addressed in the subchapter on online social networks, more precisely in the section dedicated to Instagram. Why Instagram? Although influencers are also present on other older social networks such as Twitter or Facebook and especially on emerging ones such as TikTok, the transmission of brand messages through opinion leaders who appeared practically overnight is still strongly linked to Instagram. This social network took the figure of the influencer to another level and created an entire industry behind sponsored content, Instagram presenting itself as a place where individuals can express themselves creatively and without fear, in a positive way.

And yet, can the Instagram culture influence museums in a positive way? Straughan (2019) answers this question with three examples coming from the Louvre, The Met and the Ruddington Village Museum in Nottingham. The author of the article states that the song *Apeshit* by pop stars Beyonce and Jay-Z is one of the explanations for the increase in the number of visitors to the famous Parisian museum, respectively by 25% in 2018 compared to 2017. It is

quite unlikely that an increase in the number of visitors by 25% compared to the previous year to be due only to the influence of this song released in mid-June 2018, but it certainly attracted many young fans of the couple of singers, who were in Paris and who did not have a visit to the Louvre on their list of priorities. The museum's press release on January 3, 2019 announced the record increase in the number of visitors and mentioned four explanations for this: the increase in the number of tourists in Paris, the Delacroix exhibition, the one-year anniversary of the opening of the Abu Dhabi branch and the broadcast of Apeshit.

It is easier to measure impact in another example reported by Straughan (2019), although the results were quantified in virtual visitors. Ruddington Village Museum in Nottingham (UK), a museum that has attracted 75,000 real visitors since its opening in 1968, managed to attract an audience of 434,000 viewers in one day through the virtual tour of Chinese "vlogger" Feixue Huangdu, a student at Nottingham Trent University in the Masters of Museum and Heritage Development, (Wright, 2019). The project was also reported by the BBC and major British newspapers.

Museums could reach a wider audience by using influencers who often have more followers than the museum itself. Moreover, the followers of these influences could have a different socio-demographic profile from that of most museum visitors and thus museums could reach new audiences.

Museums can convey their messages to new audiences not only by cooperating with influencers, but also by finding partnerships with recognized brands from which both parties can benefit. For example, Apple has created a five-hour film in partnership with the Hermitage Museum through which viewers can explore collections containing works by the famous Rembrandt, Raphael, Carravaggio, Canova, culminating in a 30-minute music and dance show. Everything was filmed with an iPhone 11 Pro device, with a single battery charge (Beer, 2020).

MuseumNext (2022) recommendations for approaching an influencer imply finding the best answers to the following questions:

- What is the influencer’s area of expertise?
- How does your institution align with the influencer’s audience and image?
- Does this influencer and their audience use the same channels and platforms as your audience?
- What does a typical follower of this influencer look like? Is this follower likely to be interested in your institution?
- What is this influencer’s reputation? Are they generally well-liked?

I admit that I did not think about the subject of co-branding from the perspective of museum marketing until the beginning of 2020, when I noticed the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) collection in a sportswear store in the center of Bologna (fig. 25). I am convinced that both Adidas and the famous museum in New York benefited from this partnership.



**Figure 25. Adidas-MoMA co-branding.**  
(Photo: F. Nechita , Bologna - January 2020)

Other examples of partnerships between major museums and fashion brands are the ones between the Louvre and the Milanese brand Off White, as well as the one between the Van Gogh Museum and the Dutch brand Daily Paper (Charr, 2020).

Michel and Wiling (2020) mentioned in the context of the brand-museum partnerships, the forms of co-branded products (Vans & Van Gogh Museum, Uniqlo & MoMA) and cross-sales promotions (Hotel Park Hyatt & MoMA, Bank of America & US Museums). Other partnerships may target cooperation in brand communication campaigns. An example of a win-win partnership is the one between the personal care brand Dove and the Museum of Art in Sao Paulo. According to representatives of the Brazilian Sao Paulo-based advertising agency Tech and Soul, the campaign consisted into a launch of a skincare line to empower women, the museum restored the cracked and wrinkled canvases of Brazilian masterworks, giving historic depictions of Brazilian women the same skin treatment. The results were excellent as the campaign reached 55 million through its digital components, including influencer partnerships, and video content received over 10 million views, while Dove more than tripled experienced sales in the market (Herren, 2021).

Still in the category of museum-brand partnerships created to support brand communication objectives or the launch of new products and services, it can be mentioned the collaboration between the American telecommunications service provider Verizon and the Metropolitan Museum of Art within the project "The Met Unframed". It made the museum' artwork more accessible during the pandemic and its website to be accessed through a smartphone with a fast internet connection. The experience included ways to interact with paintings, completing a minigame and unlocks an AR version of the artwork (Juang, 2021).

In the museum-brand equation we must not forget the museums created by companies or brands and through which they manage to make brand associations stick even better in the minds of the visitors, while offering them a brand experience. In the

Romanian edition of this book I have also used two photos taken by me at the Museo Gucci from Florence and the Citrus Museum in Chios (Greece), but I was stimulated to mention the idea of brand museums in this volume by the news about the opening of the World's Largest Chocolate Museum in Zurich by Lindt (Poitevien, 2020).

And because at the beginning of this subchapter I wrote that it is well-regarded for influencers and brands to be seen at the museum, I will end with an example in which museums reacted negatively to an unwanted association with a certain brand. A news item on the most important news portal watched by advertisers around the world, AdAge, published on July 19, 2021, signaled a new campaign of the adult content platform Pornhub, which created a virtual walking tour through museums including the Louvre, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Prado, featuring NSFW recreations of classic works of art, courtesy of amateur adult film performers (Diaz, 2021). The response of the museums did not take long to appear and the association with an adult platform was not appreciated by them even if the representatives of Pornhub stated that the project aims to encourage users to visit museums like The Louvre (France), The MET (New York City), The Prado (Spain), The Uffizi Gallery (Italy), and The National Gallery (U.K.). The Uffizi representative stated that "In Italy, the cultural heritage code provides that in order to use images of a museum, compressed works for commercial purposes, it is necessary to have the permission, which regulates the methods and sets the relative fee to be paid. All this obviously if the museum grants the authorization which, for example, would hardly have been issued in this case." (Li, 2021).

## **5.5. REAL-TIME MARKETING AND ACTIVISM**

Museum marketing communication requires sustained effort and the involvement of people with training in many areas. Communication means not only a good mastery of specific communication techniques and tools, related to the management of

the fourth P of the marketing mix (Promotion), but also a good understanding of the museum product (Product). Given that communication budgets in this area are small, it is creativity in communication that should balance out this disadvantage as much as possible. Guerrilla marketing techniques (chapter 3) must always be in the attention of the museum's communication responsables, and to identify the most creative solutions they will have to be up to date with new trends related to cultural consumption, to talk to visitors, to be up to date with the news in the museum field and to follow assiduously what other museums do, both the famous ones and those of similar size and profile in the country or abroad.

For museum communication managers, the handiest communication tools are online ones. In the field of online communication there is an incredible speed of change, and the biggest challenge for communicators is to keep up to date with the new features offered by online communication networks, the emergence of new applications and fairly common changes in media consumption behavior. In order to keep up with a rapidly changing world, marketers need to learn continuously, and the Internet is full of solutions for finding out what's new and for a proper approach to learning. Some of these solutions are available for free and offered by social networks. For example, Google offers numerous online courses and training modules in the field of online communication and in which one can learn the use of the main optimization and marketing tools provided by this search engine. The Google courses also offer certification. Facebook and associated platforms such as Instagram or Whatsapp also provide resources that explain communication features and specific tools. Guides to best practices in online communication are also provided by other social networks such as Twitter or Snapchat. Obviously, training communicators for communication in crisis situations must also be considered. They must also be prepared for the management of seemingly minor situations, but which can affect the image of the museum by the viralization of the messages (BBC, 2020).

But in order to be relevant and to be able to apply the principles of real-time marketing, some recommendations are offered by Chen (2018) for communication through social media:

- Unifying marketing activities. Communication must be uniform across all social media channels, and the website must be optimized and make references to all channels used. Images must be chosen according to the specifics of the network, and all social media content must be synchronized with what is happening in "real life" (museum events, exhibition launches, events in the life of the local, national or even international community).
- Highlighting and recognizing the activity of employees or volunteers through social media channels.
- Creating interaction on special occasions, for many of which special hashtags were created. The author gives the example of the Royal Ontario Museum which communicated about World Emoji Day. But this real-time communication must not be done without planning. Potential posts linking museum objects or activities to special days should be considered in advance.
- Engaging in conversation by providing relevant information. Every visit or social media mention of the name of the museum is an opportunity for conversation and a good opportunity to respond to the educational mission that museums have.
- Establishing partnerships with other museums. The author mentions the #MuseumInstaSwap initiative of 42 museums in New York. The initiative is presented in more detail by Frank (2017).
- Creating educational content.
- Conducting live interviews.

We must not forget that real-time marketing starts from the opportunities created by the audience of the organizations. All types of user-generated content are especially useful for learning more

about visitors. In tourism, the analysis of visitor-generated visual content (Nechita et al., 2019; Briciu et al., 2019) is very often used. Analyzing the content and hashtags used in visitors' posts will allow you to discover information about their favorite exhibits or what they want to know more about, allowing museum professionals to create more useful, enjoyable and relevant interpretive materials. Budge (2020) observed that museum visitors use geotags to a greater extent than hashtags as a way to identify the location related to the content posted on Instagram.

Another form of real-time marketing is the versatility of choosing communication channels and transforming any barriers or challenges in sending messages into PR opportunities. Thus, The Charles Dickens Museum, The Vagina Museum or the Vienna Tourism Board saw in TikTok censorship on the grounds of sexual content an impulse to open accounts on OnlyFans (Advisor, 2022).

Museums need to adapt their policies and programs to current social media communication behaviors in order to remain relevant to what and how content is being shared by current or potential visitors on social media. They must adopt a proactive behavior, become part of conversations in order to produce interpretive spaces and materials that generate interaction (Villaespesa and Wowkowych, 2020).

It is impossible for a paper written in 2020 and revised in 2021 and 2022 to not address in one way or another the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on its topic. Although it is obvious that the impact of the pandemic was primarily negative due to museums around the world being closed for long periods and the decrease in the number of tourists (the most important segment of visitors), I also referred to a positive outlook, namely the fact that it led to increased museum accessibility through virtual tours generously offered by the world's major museums in March and April. In the short term, the accessibility of museums has decreased because of their total closure, but the long-term effect will be shaped by an increase in accessibility by combining the access to the physical space of museums with increasingly sophisticated and immersive forms of

virtual access. As in many other areas, despite the disastrous short-term effects, accelerating digitization will mean the development of new bridges of communication between museums and their audiences. I think I am not overly optimistic if I say that, in the long run, the impact on visits to the physical space will be positive because moving many professional and leisure activities in the online space will create an intensification of the need to live authentic, offline experiences.

References to the influence of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on museum marketing and marketing communication have been made in the sections related to museum accessibility, website adaptation and creative communication messages, adapted to the pandemic context, but this topic also fits in the discussion related to real-time marketing.

Among the first reactions of museums after the declaration of the pandemic and the imposition of lockdown measures was to focus on online catalogs and make them available to their audiences (Christiansen, 2020). A study on the Twitter activity of 254 Spanish archaeological and open-air museums showed that COVID-19 has been in some instances a sort of catalyst for the action and these institutions not only have increased their activity but have also published content with greater educational value (Rivero et al., 2020).

Based on research conducted by Agostino, Arnaboldi and Lampis (2020) which investigated the largest state museums in Italy, they came to the following conclusions:

- museums have significantly increased their online activity;
- they changed the content shared through online channels;
- there was a transformation of social media tools from communication tools to knowledge dissemination tools;
- experts and representatives of the museum's management were involved in conducting guided online tours;
- 'playful' approaches such as virtual treasure hunts and quiz events have become more common.

I discovered the article by author Sarah Williamson (2020) about ArtActivistBarbie after sending the Romanian edition of this paper to print, but I kept it for later access. Rereading it in April 2022 and correlating part of the content of the BBC podcast *The Museums that make us* led me to change the title of this subchapter and add the keyword activism. Far be it from me to try to delve into this subject, which is very broad. But placed in the same subchapter, it can nuance and enrich what is stated in the previous paragraphs in the sense that real-time marketing can be perceived as a marketing technique or marketing communication that is opportunistic. Yes, it is true. Museum communication marketers need to be very agile, connected to everything that is happening in real life or online, and find inspiration and anchors for real-time content. However, this does not mean that the deeper issues that plague society should be ignored. On the contrary, the attitudes and positions expressed in museum communication can find inspiration in these themes. And although the article on ArtActivistBarbie is not about an association between the well-known toy manufacturer Mattel, the owner of the Barbie brand, and a certain museum, how Barbie communication evolved by adapting to various topics of debate in society could be a source of inspiration for other communicators.

Thus, the ArtActivistBarbie project, created by Professor Sarah Williamson from the University of Huddersfield, involved a group of students who were given the mission to take a Barbie doll with them and hack the gallery by intervening and posing their doll with commentary on a placard with the purpose of drawing attention to serious gender issues in a way that was both humorous and thought provoking. National Gallery from London addressed the current situation that 2,300 of their works were done by men and 21 works by women and explaining in a video posted on their YouTube channel.

An example that can be framed both as real-time marketing and as a form of activism by supporting the vaccination campaign in Romania was the idea of Bran Castle, known as Dracula's Castle, to organize a vaccination point every weekend in May 2021 and

provide free access to the exhibition with medieval torture tools. Other similar initiatives among museums were at Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey, the American Museum of Natural History (Pietsch, 2021).

In its BBC Radio 4 production released on March 2022, *The Museums That Make Us*, the former British Museum and National Gallery director MacGregor explore the role that museums play in communities, and their response to the evolving social and cultural landscapes. For example, at Bristol's M Shed museum the story addressed the issue of racial discrimination by focusing on the Lodekka Buses and Bristol Bus boycott of 1963 caused by the Bristol Omnibus Company to employ black or Asian bus drivers. Similarly, a museum that was given as an example many times in this book, namely Rijksmuseum from Amsterdam, addressed the challenges around the subject of slave trade into an exhibition launched around the intensified activism under the banner of #BlackLivesMatter (Zaayman, 2021). The story of the exhibition is structured around ten stories of people involved in the slave trade in the Dutch Golden Age and also involves the perspectives of enslaved people. As the museum product - the exhibition - reacts to the themes and debates in society (although in the case of the Slavery exhibition at the Rijksmuseum, the training took four years), museum communication sometimes has to react in real time. And the strategy of avoiding sensitive debate topics in communication is not a solution for communicators.

Although outside the subject of marketing communication, but with some connection to the above topic, the solutions chosen by museums can sometimes be unfortunate. Anyway you look at the solution chosen by the Art Institute of Chicago to lay off 150 white volunteers and replacing them in order to prioritize 'equity and diversity', I find it to be unfortunate, to say the least (Lepore, 2021).

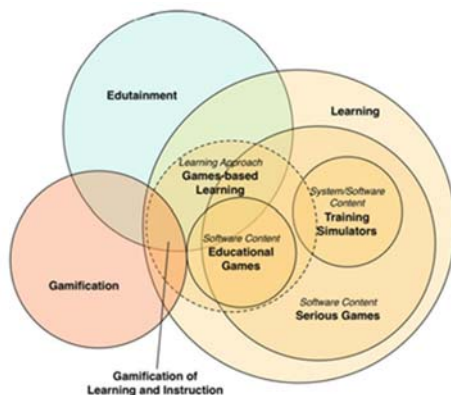
And to try to make a conclusion on the subject of activism, I looked for ideas about marketing/brand/corporate activism in the book *Marketing 5.0: technology for humanity* by Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan (2021) from which I took, in full, the following passage:

*The role of business in improving society is critical. But even if most companies have invested their resources and put corporate activism at the heart of their strategies, the impact may not be adequate to change the world. Concerted actions are required to ensure synergistic outcomes. A global partnership platform involving governments, civil societies, and businesses will enable visionary companies to find like-minded organizations to collaborate with across the globe.*

You can replace business/companies/corporate with museum(s) and I believe this quote makes just as much sense. A concerted action by including in the actions of museums, therefore in their communication as well, current themes that can lead to the improvement of the society we live in, a participation in the debates regarding how to build a sustainable future for all humanity should be on the permanent agenda of any museum.

## **5.6. THE GAMIFIED MUSEUM**

The title of this subchapter is identical to the title of a paper by Kristina Maria Madsen (2020) from Aalborg University, Centre for Interactive Digital Media and Experience Design. In the 17 pages of the paper (including the 2.5 pages of the bibliography), the author manages to make an excellent synthesis of the subject of gamification in a museum context starting from 1,381 publications, of which 64 seem to be relevant, and after reading them 26 to prove to be truly relevant. Thus, through this extremely focused literature review on the subject of gamification for museums I discovered the work of Martens and Müller (2017), a paper that graphically clarifies the differences and areas of interference of concepts that are often confused: gamification, serious games, educational games and game-based learning. Alke Martens and Wolfgang Müller make these clarifications in a suggestive graphic form (fig. 26).



**Figure 26.** *The relation between edutainment, gamification and learning.*  
(Martens & Müller, 2017, p. 918)

The figure proposed by Martens & Müller (2017) and adapted from Tang, S., Hanneghan, M., & El Rhalibi (2009, pp. 1-17) brings important clarifications, but not all authors have the same point of view. For example, Kontogianni and Georgopoulos (2015) considered that serious games and gamification are the same concepts and make the equivalence between them. However, Maroney (2001) considers that games are forms of plays with goals and structure. To make things seem even more complicated, Nicholson (2012) also presents the formula  $BLAP \text{ Gamification} = \text{Goals} + \text{Structure} = \text{Game} - \text{Play}$ , where BLAP is the acronym for Badges, Levels and Leaderboards, Achievements and Points. Games are providing limits for play through rules.

The concept of gamification is applicable in various fields, and the discovery of heritage based on this approach has more and more followers. In short, gamification involves developing and stimulating people's motivation and engagement in non-game contexts, using techniques borrowed from video games (Deterding et al., 2011; Bulencea and Egger, 2015). Deterding et al. (2011) stated that the term gamification was first documented in 2008, but 2010 can be considered the year when it started to be adopted on a larger scale.

Designers of meaningful gamification activities will start with creating play elements aligned with the non-game context of the museum and acknowledging that some users will engage with the gamification and others only partially or not engaging at all (Nicholson, 2012). Nicholson (2015) considered that six elements are the ingredients of the recipe for a meaningful gamification: 1. Play by facilitating the freedom to explore and fail; 2. Exposition (generation of stories integrated with the realworld setting and allowing participants to create their own story); 3. Choice (by systems empowering the participants); 4. Information (concepts allowing participants to learn more about the real-world context); 5. Engagement (encouraging participants to discover and learn from others interested in the real-world setting); 6. Reflection. When reordered, these six elements form the mnemonic RECIPE.

I think that the best conclusion for this subchapter about gamified museums are the proposals and recommendations made by the graduate of the second generation of the Digital Media program of the Faculty of Sociology and Communication, Bogdan-Ionuț Rotaru, at the end of his bachelor's thesis *Enhancing visitors experience through storytelling and gamification*, for which he received a well-deserved grade of 10 (Rotaru, 2022).

Gamified museum environments are currently a novelty in the field of visiting experiences. Therefore, the amount of literature and implementation models whose effectiveness has been tested is extremely low. Therefore, in this chapter I will present a series of proposals and general recommendations that resulted both from the process of gathering theoretical information and from the application and analysis of various research tools previously used. These proposals and recommendations are intended to help those who want to implement such a system within their institution.

First, the activities of such a system must have a medium level of difficulty. They must be sufficiently demanding to induce a state of satisfaction when the visitor manages to identify the complete solution, but not overly complex, so that they become impossible to complete in a timely manner. Also, many visitors are not familiar

with the latest technology trends. Therefore, if the gamified tour includes digital devices or elements, it is necessary to add tutorials that present these functions in a concise and easy to understand way.

Second, users prefer an experience that offers a significant degree of freedom. Thus, if the system allows the elimination of the order of activities of a tour section or even of the complete tour, it is recommended to opt for this option. For users who want a more linear visiting experience, implementing a system that indicates its current purpose can be an effective alternative to meet the specific exploration need of some visitors and the need for control of others.

Also, another element that any gamified tour implementation must consider is the tendency of visitors to experience a tour together with other individuals. Therefore, any activity should be designed in such a way that it can be completed and experienced both individually and by several people at the same time.

Last but not least, it is important to consider the ability of the visitor to absorb new information. Visitor want the information presented to be internalized by the end of their visit. The presentation of a large amount of information only leads to the boredom of the visitor, which generates dissatisfaction. To combat this, it is necessary to develop a well-structured plan that contains all the important information that the institution wants the visitors to internalize.

## CONCLUSIONS

I always find it difficult to write the conclusions of a paper. If I could have explained the essential in a few pages, why did I write the other pages? Also, the approached subject could easily be developed in at least the double or triple number of pages. Therefore, I will conclude in the same style I did for the Romanian edition, namely with a text that could be the beginning of a new edition or a book with a new structure about the challenges of museum marketing communication in the digital age. While for the end of the subchapter about gamified museum Bogdan-Ionuț Rotaru's bachelor's thesis came to my aid and I took his proposals and recommendations, what helped me for the final conclusions of the book was a request I received from a museum in Brașov. Just one day before I wrote these final lines, I was asked for my opinion on a job description for the marketing specialist position. I will leave below the duties of the position, as well as the qualities required of the person who will occupy it. I just have to add that I had no major objections to the proposal received from the museum, and my contribution to its final form is a maximum of 15-20%.

Required activities for a museum marketing specialist:

- promoting the institution's activity in a professional manner;
- efficiently managing the relationship with mass media and online media;
- managing the image of the institution in relation to the various audiences of the museum;
- managing pages and accounts on various online social networks and creating content (text, photo, video or graphic) relevant to them;

- promoting cultural projects, events, and actions carried out by the museum and, where appropriate, those in which the museum is a partner;
- managing the relationship with the beneficiaries of the institution's activities;
- participating in actions to get to know the categories of beneficiaries and investigating the target audience;
- efficient and prompt communication with local, national and international partners;
- preparing reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of the promotion activities carried out by the museum.

Required skills, qualities, and aptitudes:

- Communication skills for talking with the press, but also with the other stakeholders of the museum;
- Skills for activities with the public of various age categories, gender, and socio-professional status;
- Good knowledge of digital platforms and networks used for conveying communication messages;
- Imagination and creativity in the field of cultural communication;
- Efficient and prompt communication;
- Ability to analyze and synthesize information;
- Social listening skills and the ability to moderate online discussions;
- Ability to solve problems efficiently;
- Ability to assume responsibility;
- Ability to self-improve and capitalize on the experience gained;
- Initiative spirit;
- Ability to plan and organize working time;
- Ability to work independently;

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- Ability to work in a team;
- Ability to efficiently manage allocated resources;
- Ability to build relationships;
- Moral integrity and professional ethics;
- Planning, organizational, coordination skills;
- Taking responsibility.

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