

Chapter 7

Digitalization of Culture and Arts Communication: A Study on Digital Databases and Digital Publics

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ABSTRACT

In today's world, it has become more significant to understand the effect of digital media on the communication of the contents about culture and arts, which are the common heritages of mankind. In this chapter, the concepts of digital communication, digital media, and digital publics which are the most concrete results of the digitalization process in communication was examined. Also, the digitalization of culture and arts communication was investigated in relation to the organizations working in the field of culture and arts and artists' adaptation to the digitalized communication processes; and the role of digital media was explored in connection with the communication process management of culture and arts contents. In research conducted as part of this study, the digitalization of culture and arts communication was evaluated by analyzing a sample application as a digital database and determining the perspectives of target audiences. According to the data obtained in the research, Google Arts & Culture, which has been investigated as part of the study as a sample application, should be benefitted from in the digital culture and arts communication thanks to the features it has. The application supports the accessibility of artworks and cultural products from any society for digital media users. As the data gathered during the interviews done to present target audiences' points of views about the digitalization of culture and arts communication indicate, digital communication offers important opportunities for target audiences in reaching arts and culture contents without time and place restrictions; and target audiences appreciate accessing to these contents free of charge.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital media, which has come into existence due to recent developments in information and communication technologies, has created revolutionary changes in the science of communication since the end of the 20th century. Having brought forth significant alterations in the ways people communicate, digital media has attracted the interests of the researchers and practitioners working in the area of communication, and digital media's effect on communication has been studied in connection with a series of areas that are related to the science of communication including journalism, public relations, brand management, advertising and so on. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the changes digitalization process has offered in the area of communication especially in relation to their effect on the communication process about the contents of culture and arts, which are regarded as the common heritage of mankind regardless of geographical differences.

As one of the most concrete results of the digitalization process in the science of communication, digital media or new media is noted for its ability to offer numerous opportunities in communication applications such as eliminating time and place differences, making it easier and faster to access to information, supporting communication process with its interactive and dialogue-based structure and enabling a less effortful way of data archiving. These aspects of digital media have aroused interest in communicating information about culture and arts for their capacity to make the contents of culture and arts in new communication mediums accessible to large target audiences.

New media, which includes contents created with computing technologies and digital codes (Manovich, 2006, p. 10), has offered digital mediums of communication, whose existence has resulted in the emergence of digital communication, to the service of its users. Nowadays, new mediums of communication such as cell phones, e-mail addresses, intranets, web sites and social media could be handled within the scope of digital media (Gershon & Bell, 2013, p. 259). Digital media, which encompasses communication mediums that bring forth radical changes in the ways people do business and communicate, has made the significant issue of the digitalization of communication a current topic.

Due to the opportunities it offers and its characteristics, digital media has resulted in changes in communication processes irrespective of their purposes and contents. Not only digitalization process' creation of new communication mediums, generally named as digital media, but also its role in the emergence of digital publics have made it a need to explore the effect of digital communication on communication applications with multiple perspectives.

It is significant to understand the effect of digital media on the communication of the contents about culture and arts, which are the common heritages of mankind, in the contemporary world where time and place differences have no importance, people could access to information easily and fast, and ordinary target audiences are transforming into digital publics as people are getting more and more interested in digital ways of communication.

Conducting culture and arts communication, which could be defined as the management of the communication process about culture and arts contents, via digital media with the use of some means such as cell phones, organizational web sites, social media accounts and e-mail addresses has become an important topic of discussion in today's world. In addition to these sources of digital media communication, offering the culture and arts contents to digital publics via forming digital data bases, which only consist of culture and arts contents, could be talked about with respect to the use of digital media in culture and arts communication.

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