Chapter 3
More Than Words:
Evaluating iWareBatik Digital Technologies in the Perspective of Heritage Tourism

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ABSTRACT

iWareBatik is two digital tools (a website and a mobile app) designed and developed to communicate the value of Indonesian Batik, a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage in 2009. Such tools have been evaluated through a panel of 997 bachelor students recruited in 33 Indonesian universities. They have been involved in a process that encompassed user testing activities, filling in a survey related to them, participating in a focus group, and writing a short essay. 156 of them later on took part in hackathon type of competition, aimed at suggesting possible improvements to the iWareBatik set of tools. This paper outlines the overall design of the evaluation activities, and presents in detail the results of the user testing and the related survey, highlighting positive elements and dimensions to be improved. Such evaluation exercise is not only for the set of digital tools at stake, but can provide a relevant model for all those projects aiming at using digital media in the field of intangible cultural heritage, helping to fill-in the gap between design, development, and evaluation.

Figure 1. iWareBatik website (www.iwarebatik.org) and iWareBatik mobile app
Source: iWareBatik, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and ICH valorisation incite new opportunities for the creative industry to flourish and provide opportunities for locals to foster their socio-economic development (Tan et al., 2020; UNWTO, 2020). As one of the top 5 main contributors to the GDP, Indonesian Batik as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage (ICH) since 2009 has been a major case study in the context of the Indonesian creative economy, especially in promoting rural tourism (MTEC, 2021b).

Despite positive growth derived from the Batik textile valorisation, there is an increasing concern on how to balance the economic goals to sustain education to strengthen the safeguarding practice. This paper presents the evaluation of the iWareBatik digital platforms in order to measure the user experience (UX) of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the framework of heritage safeguarding and tourism education. A series of UX workshops were conducted by involving 997 bachelor students and 50 lecturers in collaboration with 33 higher education institutions, including tourism schools, in 15 Indonesian regions nationwide. This activity aims to evaluate user experience and satisfaction with iWareBatik digital platforms and assess to which extent the users would advocate and adopt iWareBatik in their cultural/educational activities. iWareBatik was developed based on the Online Communication Model (OCM) and Analysis Web App Requirement (AWARe) model (Bolchini, 2003, Permatasari & Cantoni, 2021) as a digital solution to facilitate knowledge sharing and cultural dissemination of Indonesian textile heritage. This digital solution aims to facilitate knowledge sharing and provide users with a new experience to better understand the exceptional cultural values of Indonesian Batik textile heritage. iWareBatik is presented in the form of a website (www.iwarebatik.org) and a mobile app, available on Android and iOs platforms. In addition to bilingual features (English and Bahasa Indonesia), iWareBatik offers eight interactive audiovisual features such as the contents covering philosophical meanings of 124 Indonesian Batik motifs, 129 natural/cultural tourism and UNESCO sites in 34 regions nationwide, interactive maps, spinning wheel to access a random region, 1-minute videos for each region, Batik evolution timeline, and an Artificial Intelligence(AI)-powered Batik recognition tool that helps users recognize Batik patterns according to 8 motif classes.

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