

COMUNICACIÓN 360 E INSTITUCIONES MUSEÍSTICAS: CASO DE ESTUDIO “EL PASEO DEL ARTE” EN MADRID

COMMUNICATION 360 AND MUSEUM INSTITUTIONS: CASE STUDY "PASEO DEL ARTE" IN MADRID

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RESUMEN

El desarrollo de las nuevas tecnologías de la comunicación y la información (TIC), ha transformado la forma de comunicarse en las sociedades actuales pasando de ser una comunicación unidireccional a bidireccional. Esto ha provocado que las organizaciones empresariales hayan tenido que adaptar su comunicación tanto en los procesos internos como en los externos. Las instituciones museísticas no han sido una excepción, su proceso de adaptación ha resultado fundamental para relacionarse con sus públicos y abrirse a un nuevo consumidor, que genera y comparte información, además de opinar y con ello influir en otros consumidores. Ante la necesidad de ofrecer una comunicación diferente, actualizada y en cierta manera nueva, los museos han incorporado las nuevas tecnologías en la estrategia comunicativa. Para analizar este paradigma en la gestión de la comunicación, y como reflejo de una nueva concepción de la misión de los museos, se ha realizado la presente investigación mediante una revisión de la literatura sobre las nuevas tecnologías empleadas en la comunicación de los museos y una investigación exploratoria, de los recursos digitales que están utilizando los principales museos de Madrid, que forman el “Paseo del Arte”, por tratarse de espacios muy visitados y el principal recurso turístico de la ciudad (Vacas, 2005).

PALABRAS CLAVE: museos; TIC; Comunicación; instituciones museológicas; nuevas tecnologías; comunicación digital; Web.

ABSTRACT

The development of new communication and information technologies (ICT) has transformed the way of communicating in today's societies from one-way to two-way communication. This has meant that business organisations have had to adapt their communication in both internal and external processes. Museum institutions have not been an exception, their adaptation process has been fundamental to relate to their audiences and open up to a new consumer, who generates and shares information, as well as expressing an opinion and thereby influencing other consumers. Faced with the need to offer a different, updated and somewhat new form of communication, museums have incorporated new technologies into their communication strategy. In order to analyse this paradigm in communication management, and as a reflection of a new conception of the mission of museums, this research has been carried out through a review of the literature on the new technologies used in museum communication and an exploratory investigation of the digital resources being used by

the main museums of Madrid, which form the “Paseo del Arte”, as they are highly visited spaces and the main tourist resource of the city (Vacas, 2005).

KEYWORDS: museums; ICT; Communication; museological institutions; new technologies; digital communication; Web.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are using new communication and information technologies as tools to connect with an increasingly hyperconnected society. The rise of digital technology, especially the internet, is bringing about significant changes in business organizations, transforming numerous communication processes. "The introduction of information technology into a company without organizational change exacerbates problems of bureaucratization and rigidity" (Castells, 2001, p. 223). Visitors to a museum have become advocates, influencing other potential visitors through qualitative and quantitative evaluations they make in virtual communities, social networks, blogs, etc. It is no longer just the institution that communicates. For this reason, it is essential for museums to be prepared to manage communication effectively using the tools that ICTs offer to engage with their audiences and to manage the information that they can provide.

There is evidence of communication among humans since ancient times, initially through images like cave paintings, followed by pictograms, and later manual writing. A significant change in the way of communicating occurred in 1440 with the invention of the printing press, and another major change came in 1835 with the telegraph and Morse code. With the advent of the telephone in 1876, communication could be directly transmitted in the form of voice from person to person. The first mass media communication began in 1901 with the first transatlantic radio signal and in 1927 with the first television broadcast. Finally, in 1969, the emergence of the internet, which started as a military network and later became the network we know today (Martínez, 2017). The true technological development occurred with the civilian population's access to the internet, leading to the development of devices such as computers, tablets, and smartphones, as well as tools for message delivery, such as websites, blogs, social networks, virtual communities, etc. All these changes, at each moment, brought about significant transformations and sparked interest in the scientific community.

The first communication studies conducted in Europe took place in Germany in 1690 when Tobias Peucer presented the first doctoral thesis in journalism at the University of Leipzig, and it was also when the first journalism schools emerged (Herrero, 2009).

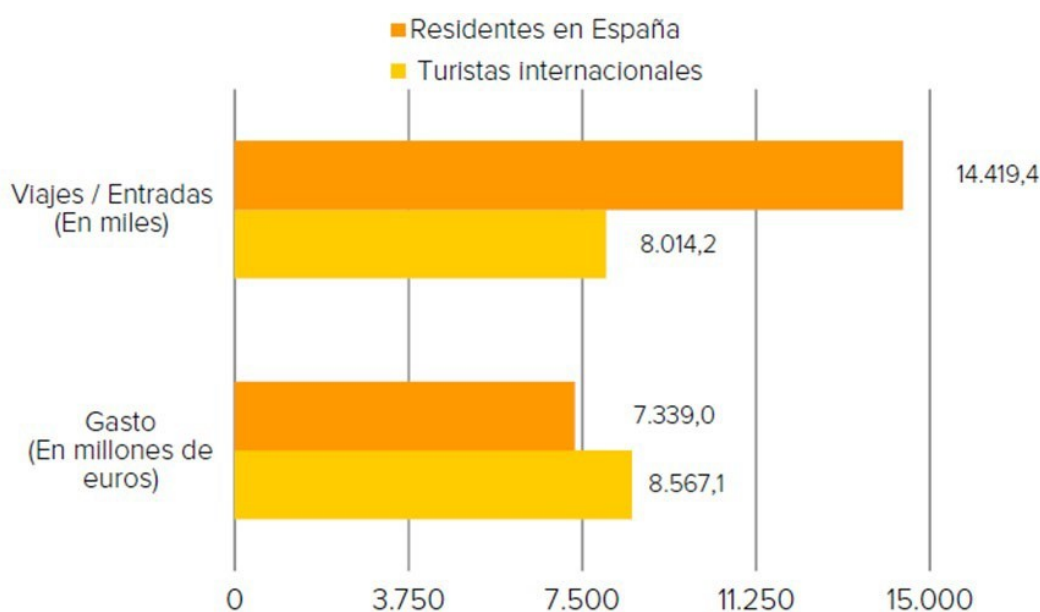
In the United States, communication studies developed in the 19th century. Mass media revolutionized communication and information in society at that time, leading numerous scholars to focus their research on information dissemination through these new media (Herrero, 2009). Various researchers have made significant contributions to the field of communication, including Harold Lasswell, Richard Braddock, and George Gerbner, who conducted research on propaganda during World War I based on Lasswell's studies, Shannon and Weaver's mathematical model applied to optimizing time, energy, and cost in communication channels, Wilbur Schramm's influence of media on public opinion, and Gerhard Maletzke's research on applied psychology in communication theory (García, 2015). In Spain, the study of journalism is associated with the founding of the School of Journalism at El Debate (1926-36).

Later, in 1940, the Official School of Journalism was established in Madrid, followed by the Institute of Journalism at the University of Navarra in 1958 and the creation of Information Faculties in Spain in 1971. Communication solidified its place in academic research from the mid-20th century onward (Herrero, 2009), bringing about significant transformations as a result of ICT development, particularly with the rise of the internet as a major channel in the 1990s. According to Castells (1986, p. 23), "new technologies encompass a series of applications of scientific discoveries whose core consists of an increasingly greater capacity for information processing." Present-day society has evolved rapidly compared to past societies, with changes being accepted more quickly, and research has not been able to answer all the questions or address the new scenarios that are emerging. Currently, organizations that do not integrate ICTs fail to capture the public's attention and fade into obscurity.

For museums, the advent of the internet brought about a transformation at all levels. They began integrating communication into their organizational structures and started implementing strategic communication (Chinchilla, 2006), using it as a management tool to fulfill the institution's mission and one of its main functions, which is dissemination (Cordón & González, 2015). From that moment on, museums embarked on a new path that led to increased presence in the media (Viñarás et al., 2010). They developed various communication plans to promote their activities related to the dissemination of the art they safeguard, becoming attractive places for the public and contributing to the development of cultural tourism. Museums have always had a conservative nature, which made them resistant to change (Forteza, 2012). However, the rapid acceptance of the internet by society has compelled them to adapt to a new, more participatory social reality. This reality demands the ability to interact, engage in dialogue, and be part of the day-to-day experiences of museum institutions.

2. CONTEXTUALIZATION

The development of ICT has been of great importance in the tourism sector, both from the supply and demand perspectives (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Museums are attractive cultural tourism resources that play an important role in increasing the number of tourists visiting a city, as shown by data published in the Annual Cultural Statistics of 2017 by the Ministry of Culture and Sport. Out of the total trips made by Spanish tourists, 16.8% were initiated for cultural reasons, amounting to 14.4 million trips. As for international tourists, 12.5% traveled for cultural reasons, resulting in 8 million trips. The expenditure made by tourists on these trips amounts to 7,339 million at the national level and 8,567.1 million at the international level.



Graph 1. Travel of national and international tourists for cultural reasons and expenditure made (2016).

Source: Cultural Statistics Yearbook of 2017.

33.2% of the population visited a museum in the last year. The attendance of women was higher at 34.2% compared to men at 32.3%. In terms of age groups, visitors aged 15-19 are the largest group at 47.5%, followed by the 20-24 age group at 39.2%, and the 35-44 and 45-54 age groups both at 38%. The museum-going public mainly consists of individuals with university education at 70.3%, and visits are mostly made on weekends at 91.8%. In terms of website availability and services provided, 86.1% of the museums that responded to the survey, 1,100 out of a total of 1,504, have a website and mainly provide basic information to visitors. These data show that there is still a long way to go in terms of the use of ICT and the possibilities they offer to museums.



Graph 2. Museums and Museographic Collections according to website availability and provided services, in percentage. (2016).

Source: Cultural Statistics Yearbook of 2017.

Initially, museum websites had an informative function, providing users with content related to the physical museum, such as location, hours, history, contact information, etc. With the progressive increase in multimedia content, facilitated by faster internet connections, new devices, and participation platforms such as Web 2.0, social media, blogs, etc., new unexplored possibilities have emerged (Carreras, Bàscones, & Berni, 2008), which not all museums have been able to develop.

Regarding the digitalization status, there are 3.42 billion internet users worldwide, representing a global penetration rate of 46%. As for social media, 2.31 billion users are active on at least one social network, indicating a penetration rate of 31%. In terms of device usage, the Digital 2016: Global Digital Overview report by Hootsuite in collaboration with We Are Social reveals that 56% access the internet through laptops, representing a 9% decrease compared to the previous year. Access via mobile phones is at 39%, showing a 21% increase, while access through tablets accounts for 5%, experiencing a 21% decrease. Spain ranks 13th out of 30 countries in terms of internet penetration. The mentioned study shows that 46 million people in Spain have internet access, which represents 80% of the population, with around 36 million active users and a penetration rate of 77%. The most commonly used mobile device is the mobile phone at 96%, followed by smartphones at 80%, laptops at 73%, and finally tablets at 38%. These data highlight the importance for museums to break the barriers of their conservative nature and open up to a world without limitations of space, geographical location, physical boundaries, or opening hours. The web provides an opportunity to connect with the world, offering museums a range of advantages.

In 1996, ICOM specified in its publication "The ICOM Guide to the Internet for Museums" areas of debate involving experts, news updates, catalogs, virtual exhibitions, directories of professionals and companies, information about products and services, announcements and notifications about activities, reference documents, books and periodicals, downloadable software, and gaining visibility to showcase the museum. On the other hand, Del Rio Castro (2009) establishes specific advantages of museums' online presence, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Advantages of websites for museums:

1. Disseminate museum collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring collections closer to the public. • Facilitate access to exclusive pieces or information. • Share through articles and digital magazines.
2. Reach broader audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility. • Attract younger age groups.
3. Foster learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-directed learning. • Engage visitors as active and collaborative learners. • Enable contextualization and decoding of artworks. • Promote multiple educational offerings for a diverse audience.
4. Foster learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the physical museum. • Expand the notion of the museum beyond the building. • Enhance the museum's image.
5. Enhance communication between museum professionals, the public, and the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen communication between the museum and visitors. • Provide information to the media.
6. Generate economic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote online paid services. • Attract economic resources: museum friends, volunteers, and sponsors. • Contribute to promoting cultural tourism in the area.

Source: del Rio Castro (2009).

The MINERVA¹ project is a European network that aims to discuss, correlate, and harmonize activities related to the digitization of cultural and scientific content in order to create a common European platform. "Since 2006, it has been renamed MinervaEC, NETwoRk for the Ministerial activities for valorization in digitization, eContent plus - Support to the European Digital Library" (Minerva EC, 2016). On its website, the project establishes 10 principles of quality (Table 2) for cultural websites, which should showcase European diversity and facilitate access to content for everyone.

¹ <http://www.minervaeurope.org/>

Table 2. Principles of quality for cultural websites:

1.- Be transparent by conveying the identity and purpose of the website, as well as that of the responsible organization.
2.- Select, digitize, create, present, and validate content to make the website useful for users.
3.- Adopt mechanisms to ensure service quality and adequate maintenance and updating of the website.
4.- Be accessible to all types of users, regardless of the technology they use or any disabilities they may have, including interactive navigation elements and content.
5.- Be user-centered, considering their needs and opinions to ensure the website's interest and ease of use.
6.- Be responsive, allowing users to contact the web team and receive appropriate responses. When relevant, encourage dialogue and information exchange among users.
7.- Be aware of the importance of multilingualism by providing a minimum level of access in more than one language.
8.- Recognize the importance of interoperability among cultural networks to facilitate easy locating of content and services that meet users' needs.
9.- Respect legal issues such as intellectual property rights and privacy, clearly stating the terms and conditions of website use and its content.
10.- Adopt strategies and standards for long-term preservation of the website and its content.

Source: 2003-2004 Minerva Project.

It is evident that museums today must have a website that goes beyond being a mere digital information board. The use of Web 2.0 platforms and tools can allow them to play a significant role in today's society (Schwibenz, 2011). Museums that want to make their digital communication participatory and interactive should adapt their websites to Web 2.0 by following the following strategies proposed by Sokolowicz (2009):

- Utilize new channels of information.
- Design a dynamic and open website.
- Include multimedia content.
- Enable subscription to syndicated content channels (RSS).
- Be present on social media.
- Subscribe to online media outlets.
- Allow user-generated content.
- Encourage user-museum interaction.
- Create collaborative systems among users.
- Consider applications for mobile devices.
- Use interactive guides.

In his essay "Le Musée imaginaire" (1947), André Malraux proposed that museums should be an "institution open to society" and that their influence should not be limited to the location where the object is but should extend beyond the physical space of the building. Nowadays, this is starting to become a reality as the "virtual audience" can access museums at any time and from anywhere in the world. Through mobile devices and Web 2.0 tools, they can share and disseminate information while influencing other audiences, whether they are digital or physical. Through mobile devices and Web

2.0 tools, they can share and disseminate information while influencing other audiences, whether they are digital or physical. To achieve this, Web 2.0 tools such as social networks, subscriptions to syndicated content channels, and blogs are very useful due to their widespread acceptance and utilization by users. In addition to these digital tools, virtual communities such as TripAdvisor can be added, where users share information and help others minimize the risk of purchasing an intangible product (Cerezo and Guevara, 2015), such as buying museum tickets. Apps allow visitors to preselect and download only the resources they consider necessary, such as language options, audio recordings, images, infographics, subtitles, sign language videos, audio descriptions for visually impaired individuals, specific tours for different audiences, etc. They can modify their selection at any time (Ramírez and Domínguez, 2015). Thanks to the development of the Internet, Web 2.0, ICT, and the digitization of heritage, cultural institutions have the opportunity to develop multimedia content that allows them to disseminate their collections without limitations and provide information to their audiences while interacting with them and getting to know them better.

3. OBJECTIVES

This study focuses on the particular examination of the museum organizations along the *Paseo del Arte* (art walk) in Madrid (Guerrero-Vacas, 2005) and how they utilize new communication and information technologies to engage in effective and targeted communication with their various stakeholders.

Firstly, a comprehensive examination will be conducted on the various websites and technological tools (social networks, blogs, newsletters, and apps) used by different types of organizations, thereby exploring the different forms of visitor participation that the museum offers. Secondly, the consequences of the museums' commitment to visitor participation will be analyzed in relation to public feedback, as reflected in the virtual community of TripAdvisor. This virtual tourism community has been selected for analysis as it has been previously studied in various research studies to assess visitor satisfaction levels and their overall experiences (O'Connor, 2008; Jeacle and Carter, 2011; Owens, 2012; Ferguson, Piche, and Walby, 2015).

4. METHODOLOGY

This research is based on a review of existing academic literature on museums, communication, and new technologies. Professional literature, including various studies published by organizations related to the topic, as well as annual reports or memoranda from the three analyzed museums, have also been reviewed. The approach of this applied research involves studying the three museums along the so-called *Paseo del Arte*: the Prado Museum, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, and the Reina Sofia Museum.

Table 3. Annual visitors to museums along the *Paseo del Arte*.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Museum Prado Museum	2.835.073	2.406.170	2.536.844	2.696.666	3.033.754
Reina Sofia Museum	2.572.414	3.185.413	2.677.166	3.257.044	3.744.722
Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum	1.256.209	944.827	998.992	967.908	1.064.835

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports.

The study involved observing whether the museums have their own website, which social media platforms they are present on and their level of activity in communication, whether they have a blog, whether they have a newsletter, and finally, whether they are present on the virtual community TripAdvisor and the ratings they have received in that community.

Table 4. Digital medias used by the museums along the *Paseo del Arte*

	Web	Newsletter	Blog	Social Networks	App	RSS
Prado Museum	X	X		X	X	
Reina Sofía Museum	X	X	X	X	X	X
Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum	X	X	X	X	X	

Source: own elaboration.

All three museums have their own dynamic websites that include images, videos, information about their collections, visits, shops, etc. They have newsletters and are present on social media, primarily on Facebook and Twitter. All three museums have apps to facilitate museum visits and provide information, but not all of them have a blog or RSS feed. In the case of the Prado Museum, access to social media is not visible on the main page. For accessing the newsletter, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum has the link on the main page. The Reina Sofia Museum has a link to RSS feeds on its main page. None of the three museums have a link to the virtual community TripAdvisor, but they are present on the platform.

Table 5. TripAdvisor ratings and opinions for museums along the *Paseo del Arte*

		Tripadvisor 2016	
		Nº Opinions	Rating
Museums	Prado Museum	46.949	4,5
	Reina Sofia Museum	13.469	4,5
	Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum	13.839	4,5

Source: own elaboration.

All three museums have a rating of 4.5 out of 5, indicating a high level of engagement and participation with the public. This is reflected in the data in Table 1, which shows the increasing number of annual visitors to the three museums year after year. The museums leave visitors highly satisfied, resulting in positive recommendations.

5. RESULTS

Various studies have shown that museums have been immersed in an intense process of digitization around new technologies and the benefits they can bring to the museum. Therefore, the main objective of this research has been defined as the analysis of the digital resources being used by the major museums in Madrid, which make up the *Paseo del Arte* (Art Walk).

Following the quality principles discussed earlier in the MinervaEC project, all three museums provide transparency on their websites, offer useful content, regularly update their websites, and ensure accessibility. However, it is not clearly visible on all museum websites which social media platforms they have profiles on, and the access to the blog is not clearly indicated. E-commerce is observed to be developed, particularly on the websites of the Prado Museum and the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, where visitors can access the online store and make purchases through it. Contacting the museum is also made possible, and all three museums offer website navigation in two languages: English and Spanish. Additionally, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum provides navigation in Chinese. The three museums demonstrate good interoperability and provide information on legal matters. However, it is not clear whether there is a clear option to access the information archive, although current and future exhibition information is displayed prominently

6. CONCLUSIONS

A museum visitor should be able to approach an exhibition with a different perspective than before. The websites of cultural institutions should allow access to their collections and holdings from anywhere, offering information and content that cannot be obtained through a physical visit. Websites enable the inclusion of resources that are difficult to incorporate in a traditional exhibition, such as specialized texts, complementary graphic illustrations, virtual reality, links to internet resources for expanded content, glossaries, bibliographies, games, etc.

Websites and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) should not be mere displays of modernity without substance. The use of ICT should not be driven by societal pressure but rather adapted to specific needs. A museum's website should be a dynamic element. It should serve as a tool that not only provides basic information but also stimulates users to engage with it and return to it. In recent years, many studies have been published on the new paradigm of the information society. Currently, there are no standardized and accredited criteria for evaluating websites, although there are initiatives that provide some criteria, as mentioned earlier.

By evaluating only the explicit references on the website, the aim was to determine whether the technologies and their contents are considered relevant to the audiences of each analyzed museum. This study reflects that all three museums have a strong commitment to their users and are well evaluated and rated by visitors. Therefore, it can be concluded that they receive positive feedback for their efforts to digitize and engage with society.

In a future study, the appropriateness of the content and its assistance in enhancing the physical visit will be analyzed through a case study based on a survey of visitors to the three museums. Alongside these future lines of research, it is considered relevant to conduct an investigation with professionals in the sector to understand their thoughts and the value they see in the use of ICT in their institutions, as well as the barriers they encounter.

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