

# Digital Transformation in the Cultural Heritage Sector

Challenges to Marketing in the New Digital Era



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Tiziana Russo Spena • Francesco Bifulco Editors

# Digital Transformation in the Cultural Heritage Sector

Challenges to Marketing in the New Digital Era



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### **Foreword**

Changes in society, people, and technology all affect the world of museums. This consideration is further confirmed by what the ICOM Committee affirmed in the 2016 meeting to describe the three-year plan (2017–2019); i.e. museums operate in different and constantly evolving conditions because they are inserted in rapidly changing societies. As a result, museums are not only the essence of the ongoing changes in the art and culture business but are one of several ways in which changes in societies can be observed and have direct and indirect effects.

Museums are not just spaces that house works of art; they have long since changed their role in society. By the way, this role is not only based on culture, arts conservation, and heritage, but is a blend of multiple goals in a social context. Indeed, museums have been defined by ICOM as "democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue on the past and the future. [...] Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent and work in active collaboration with and for different communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and improve understanding of the world, with the aim of contributing to human dignity and social justice, global equality, and to planetary well-being".

I agree with the above definition, because a museum would not exist without people, the ones working behind the scenes, the ones providing the service to visitors, and visitors themselves. The pandemic we experienced in 2020 challenged museums as other firms, because we were unable to meet our visitors and offer what we set in the spaces we manage. These moments made me, my staff, and other colleagues further reflect on how to describe what we offer every day and I am even more convinced than in the past that its purpose is not just a visit, but is an experience, starting before the visit itself and continuing after it, due to the emotions, the knowledge, and the beauty we make available for our visitor.

The experience is the result of our efforts, as well as visitors' actions before, during, and after the visit, and this combination allows us to understand the changes I mentioned above: society is changing, technologies are being brought into play, and social interactions have been turned upside down in several ways. When I am asked about the target of the museum I am managing, I always answer "whoever". I am

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sure arts and museums are not something for small groups of people, since museums embed and transfer along time our history and represent a journey from the past to the future to be experienced in present time. Therefore, a museum may be seen as an instrument in the hands of a society to further knowledge, stimulate interests, to open mind, and set the ground for future generations willing experience arts and history.

Nowadays, all the tasks a museum can perform are activated through new technologies; this is due to how society has changed. Social media, real-time interactions, mobile technologies, robots, and artificial intelligence are permeating the life and the activities of people and businesses; consequently, museums cannot disregard the effects on society, since visitors are different than in the past, they can live their experience through technology, they want to share what they feel, and they are more and more attracted by the opportunities depending on new advanced tools.

Online exhibits are part of a museum offering and the integration between the physical realm and the digital world is a not-to-be-missed goal, while I have often heard comments about technologies as a dangerous enemy for physical offerings. On-site and online are two ingredients of the same recipe for success, since they both shape an experience, leading to services to be provided before, during, and after the visit. The fruitful combination of these two components of the experience may lead to empowered emotions, with positive effects on memorability, and word-of-mouth.

This book offers a fresh view on the changes I referred to above; thus, I am sure it can stimulate further debate among museum managers and curators, as well as clarify what is occurring around the world and offer interesting insights for the upcoming months.

I feel changes are just around the corner; thus, everyone should be as more aware as possible about what these changes can bring and how to get the best from them and improve the experience visitors would have in a museum. Anyway, this consideration should not limit how the changes may affect visitors also before and after the visit; this is particularly true with reference to online contexts and social media: these are the two key changes impacting museum lastly and they would most likely lead the way towards the museums of future.

Future is a word frequently used in this book; it is considered in almost every chapter, because of two reasons I am even more convinced about after reading it: the future is now for museums, and the future should be foreseen today to be ready to offer what visitors want. I made several efforts in predicting what the future will offer to museums and visitors; thus, I always considered communication and innovation as two pillars of a forward-looking strategy. I am glad to find wide evidence about these two elements in this book, with two lessons everyone should learn as soon as possible, namely that communication is the way to be in touch with visitors and to feed relationships, and innovation has reshaped museum as well as society.

Finally, I really feel the contributions proposed in this book can further advance the understanding of changing consumers in a changing society, leading us to pinpoint what museum managers and curators should do. Moreover, the combination of theoretical advances and practical observations in this book suggests that Foreword

academics and practitioners should continue working together and, whenever possible, try to merge their knowledge. This would be the most suitable way to anticipate change and be appealing for visitors, also in the future.

Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Naples, Italy September 2020 Paolo Giulierini













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### Tiziana Russo Spena and Francesco Bifulco

### 1 Digital Transformation and Cultural Heritage Challenges

Transformation in the science and technology field brings many changes; one of the biggest challenges is the interaction between multiple skills, tools, and competences. When we talk about the digital transformation, we know that it seeks to produce a better, faster, and more innovative way of pursuing business, social, and economic development (Brennen and Kreiss 2016; Mele et al. 2018; Matt et al. 2015; Russo Spena et al. 2017; Russo Spena et al. 2018).

Digital transformation impacts a considerable number of industries and covers various processes, evolutions, factors, and transactions within and outside the organizations.

In this book, we discuss how digital transformation is involved in—and changing—the cultural heritage sector.

The first Digital Agenda for Europe launched in March 2010, the new 2020 version (The European Union 2020) and the Challenge 8 "Digital Culture" of the EU's seventh Framework Research Programme (FP7), have been conceived to encourage research efforts and applications to make digitized cultural content an economic asset. In particular, as some scholars (Dulong de Rosnay and De Mati 2012) have remarked, the digitization of European cultural heritage is a key aspect of the recently implemented Digital Agenda for Europe. Since 2006, the Lisbon

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Agenda has presented culture as a strategic asset in terms of its potential to promote European growth and competitiveness. The "four-circle view" of the cultural sectors described by KEA (2006) and O'Connor (2007) broaden cultural industries to include, besides activities connected to heritage, literature, music, entertainment, the arts, and media, any related beneficiary sectors of cultural goods made available via ICTs, such as education and tourism. Culture is a tool for social integration and territorial cohesion in Europe, and technologies are seen as agents spurring the economic and social potential at the foundation of cultural industry development (Li 2020).

However, the effective use of technologies helps create a renewed, integrated, and sustainable approach to the cultural heritage sector. Its economic value, stemming from a variety of sectors and sub-sectors, ranging from the conservation and preservation of historic buildings to activities in the natural environment, is expected to increase due to the spillover contributions of technology in this sector (Katsoni et al. 2017).

On the one hand, technologies are seen as essential engines for combining cultural, aesthetic, symbolic, social, historical, and economic values. By providing different types of interaction with heritage material, technology applications promote an understanding of cultural heritage and encourage users to value and appreciate that heritage. This is ultimately the best long-term investment for the preservation and valorization of cultural heritage. On the other hand, the importance of culture in the recent uncertain times of crisis (i.e., the COVID pandemic era) is seeing unprecedented creative digital use and technology development with and through cultural heritage businesses throughout the world. In the actual pandemic era, digital cultural heritage is contributing to people's enjoyment and creativity more than ever. The customer and the audience are moving towards a new form of digital fruition, and many cultural organizations have quickly started responding to these unique needs (Baiyere et al. 2020; Devine and Tarr 2019).

Digital and new intelligent technologies are being used to document, conserve, and communicate with regard to cultural heritage. New technologies have also been demonstrated to augment cultural service quality, create new customer experiences, and improve the performance of cultural heritage sectors (Devine and Tarr 2019). Digital platforms enable interconnections involving more different actors; new smart devices and virtual reality within the new paradigm of the Future Internet are changing how heritage goods and services are being modelled and delivered. In much the same way that technologies have changed how actors communicate, several fruitful opportunities for cultural industries have emerged, including issues related to adoption and patterns of use, the effects of such tools on outcomes, and how these tools may change business and market relationships.

Some scholars have recently proposed a perspective on cultural heritage studies that considers, together, the new social and technology landscape (Devine and Tarr 2019; Bifulco and Russo Spena 2016). However, to address the challenges that new technologies pose, there is a need to go more in-depth to analyze these changes and depict the complex context in which the cultural heritage services are being innovated and differently proposed to the market (Baiyere et al. 2020; Bifulco and Russo Spena 2016).

The focus on new technologies implies not merely a matter of data digitization, storage, and use for the elaboration of a new digital strategy, but also how technologies are related to the transformation of cultural heritage sectors and market processes as a whole. There is a need to move to the forefront of cultural heritage efforts to understand and help firms and policymakers respond to the challenges of managing cultural heritage businesses in the new technology era.

Web 2.0 technologies that have a collaborative vocation enable the proliferation of new cultural goods and services, evolving towards an enriched range of actors involved in the cultural economy. New technologies can assist in the broader-based distributed generation of cultural content by a broad community of participants so that the generated products, services, and content, are no longer products in a traditional sense; they are always unfinished and continually under development (Filip et al. 2015). High-quality content can be re-used to create experience services, and digital resources facilitate the creation of new thematic content that takes account of the varied interests of users and encourages the development of innovative services delivered via mobile devices.

As a result, cultural industries, especially the heritage sector, are forced to work for stronger digital awareness and responses in their digital strategy in the future, including a new approach to renewing their business models and service processes (Parmentier and Gandia 2017).

In this book, the business approach and market methods in the cultural heritage sector have been questioned in light of the new challenges imposed by the recent digital transformation and how they should be renewed to consider the new future of the cultural heritage sector.

### 2 Novelty of the Book

The purpose of this book is to devise an alternative conceptual framework for understanding the digital transformation in the cultural heritage sector by taking seriously the role of technology in the strategic process of the modelling and development of cultural heritage services in the digital era.

The focus here is on how marketing activities and customer processes are being transformed by digital technologies to provide better interactions, improve communication, and create value with customers by involving multiple actors through an engaged and personalized approach.

Much of the digital debate in cultural heritage is still in its infancy. Some existing studies are anecdotal and often developed within the domain of established research streams, including the cultural and technological domains that address the topic partially and from the episodic and punctual perspective (Pok and Weihsin 2014). A great part of the debate focuses on digitization in heritage conservation or reproduction (i.e. digitalized) deals with how it has radically changed the promotion, communication, and distribution of cultural content. This also makes it necessary to modify methods of organizing and delivering cultural products to meet the needs of

new categories of users (Devine and Tarr 2019). Studies are intended to demonstrate how technologies can preserve cultural heritage and provide access to a wide range of historical and cultural resources in electronic format (Katsoni et al. 2017).

In the management domain, the recent service framework (Lusch and Vargo 2014) is useful for gathering the above-discussed reflections and summarizing the evolutionary dynamics of the concept of cultural goods, highlighting how it is welltuned to the systems view of the new digital era. The service framework advances the consideration of the dynamic and holistic dimension of cultural heritage services rather than the static and reductionist view of cultural goods. It addresses the conception of the enjoinment of cultural value as a service interaction that overcomes the traditional division between pure goods and pure service (Barile et al. 2012), therefore, centring the interpretative key role of cultural goods seen as a service for the benefit of others. Thus, cultural service is imbued with social value, from which the user recovers an active role in cultural value creation. Conservation and protection assume an integral role within the enjoyment of cultural service, as they are related not only to the consideration of the physical and material structure and artefact but also, and above all, to the effective expressive capacity of cultural value in various contexts of enjoyment (Golinelli 2015). In such a view, technology is seen as resources providing a new venue to extend both the user's involvement in terms of participation in the cultural value creation process and the potential for systemic integration in terms of the possibilities of interactiveness among multiple service providers (arts, ICT media industries, etc.) and market actors (public and individual actors). The cultural value proposition is stated to emerge from an ecosystem perspective (Barile and Saviano 2012; Bifulco and Russo Spena 2014; Bifulco and Russo Spena 2016), whereas the use of digital technology provides new value-creating and revenue-generating opportunities involving a multitude of business and social actors. This logic typically goes hand in hand with the adoption of a servitization strategy promoting a complete shift from a product-centric to a servicecentric business model and logic.

The number and diversity of more recent books (Giannini and Bowen 2020; Katsoni et al. 2017; Bifulco and Russo Spena 2016) underscore the importance and significance of technology and digital transformation in cultural heritage. Still, they show a limited recognition or incorporation of the key changes that have emerged in the cultural management landscape. Digital technologies and the internet create unprecedented opportunities to access cultural material for leisure, study and to reuse it to develop learning and educational content, or work, to reach out to broader audiences, to engage in new user experiences, documentaries, tourism applications, games, and other innovative applications (Li 2020). However, the focus is still on how to better approach the use of digital tools, pointing out the difficulties inherent in the type of digital objects, e.g. their complexity, their software-dependence, or the technological obsolescence of equipment for their reproduction.

A substantial body of models, methods, and data relevant to defining and conducting an in-depth investigation of cultural heritage sectors in the digital era and their potentialities for business is still missing (Minoska-Pavlovska 2019). Cultural heritage concerning value creation processes, users, and market actors'

interactions and new market issues remains partially recognized and not adequately defined or incorporated into an integrated framework to take together technology transformation and customer focus.

We must be thinking about the digitalization of value creation and marketing processes in cultural heritage because the digital contexts and the increased possibilities of interactions play an increasingly central role in the marketing debate that goes far beyond a simple communication or social marketing programme.

In this book, we convey a more inclusive perspective that addresses the marketing strategy in the digital era as a proactive, technology-enabled process by which firms collaborate with customers and other actors and jointly create, communicate, deliver, and sustain experience and value co-creation in an ecosystems view.

### 3 Table of Contents

This book presents the results of interdisciplinary projects developed at the Department of Economics, Management, Institutions of University of Naples Federico II. The projects—namely, REMIAM—are part of a bigger interdisciplinary research project on smart technologies for culture, called DATABENC (High-Technology District for Cultural Heritage). It is a project promoted by the national government to advance the development of the cultural services industry of the Campania region as a creative engine for the development and viability of local and regional innovation systems (EX PON03PE 00161). Specifically, the REMIAM project is designed to use the new technologies to design a new model of cultural heritage service provision, where art, technology, new interaction models, and innovative communication techniques are the direction of MUSEI 4.0. The goal is to provide a unique value proposition that can reach a higher differentiated segment of the cultural market by providing a more integrated approach with the local context. Interactive visits, gamification methodologies, new interaction models involving the technological tools that the REMIAM project develops also support quality production activities—both those already in existence and those being developed. Museums become a new space to co-create by involving local crafts and favouring new mechanisms of artistic production through the use of innovative technological tools such as modern 3D printers.

Based on this renewed idea of what the cultural heritage sector should be, this book provides the first outcome of the Project by offering a fresh view of how digital transformation is involved in the cultural heritage sector and changing its strategies and marketing approach.

The book includes nine contributions and one introductory chapter. The chapters offer original theoretical, empirical, and applied content. The new paradigm of digital transformation is also at the forefront of this book's efforts to understand and help firms and policymakers respond to the challenges posed by the new role and complexity of cultural heritage management.

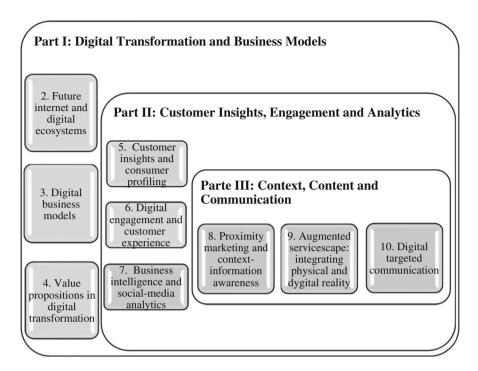


Fig. 1 The structure of the book

The nine chapters in the book are organized into three sections including concepts, practices, and illustrations (Fig. 1). Specifically, case studies referring to the national and international experience from leading cultural organizations underpin the discussion, demonstrating the clear and vital link between theory and practice (Table 1).

The first part—"Digital Transformation and Business Models"—provides theoretical and conceptual content about digital transformation in the cultural heritage sector with a focus on the renewed business models and new value propositions. More specifically, Chap. 2 goes in-depth into the analysis of the new phenomena labelled under the umbrella of "future Internet" and "digital ecosystem." The debate over the digital ecosystem as a new emerging concept represents a step towards the achievement of a better understanding of how cultural heritage services are being transformed. The chapter proposes a more detailed approach to digital ecosystems in business literature and how they are being shaped into practice, with particular reference to the cultural heritage context. Chap. 3 aims to explore conceptual and theoretical frameworks considered relevant to the subject of digital business transformation. Analysis and comparison of different concepts and tools of business models were conducted as a pathway for achieving and maintaining competitiveness for businesses as digital technologies continue to shape and transform the cultural business landscape. By adding a comprehensive analysis and examples to the body

 Table 1
 Case studies and descriptive elements

	apter Cases/main issues	I	I
2	Linked heritage (content generation, collabo- ration, digital tools)	Christa project (innovation, cooperation, digital tools)	Databenc (community building; knowledge combination; digital tools) Athena Europe (B2B relationships; resource integration; digital tools)
3	Foxfire museum (partners collaboration, actors' integration, working team) Tate Museum (digital contents, digitalised archives, social online col- lections, digital platforms)	British music experience (value propositions, experience propositions, visual experience, learning programme) The Van Abbemuseum (personas and crowd actors, game masters) MoMA (New York) (social CRM, salesforces dashboard, data integration)	MANN (omnichannel strategy, mobile apps, game tools) Museum of Contemporary as Querétaro (economic social and cultura outcomes, cultural infrastructure, social themes, local art ists, local community)
4	Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian design museum (immersive visitor experi- ence, digital pen, gesture match experience, immersion room)	The American Museum of Natural History (innovative apps; digital totem, digital project)	The British museum (virtual tours, ask A curator project; Soundcloud initiatives)
5	The Metropolitan Museum of art (profiling, users' needs and expectations, user experience, google analytics)	HI. Stories (profiling, personalization, narratives, data analytics, google play)	American Museum of Nature History (profiling, personalization, comments, online rereview) The National Gallery of London (profiling, personali zation, comments, online rereview)
6	Louvre museum (information, exhibitions, events, learning art, video and tales for children, audio guide)	Museum del Prado (interactive itinerary, online tickets mobile apps, inter- active guide)	Rijksmuseum (digitalized collection, onlin tickets, digital game, mobile app, interactive guide)
7	Norman Rockwell Museum (big data, analytics, data- based decision-making pro- cess) The Museum of Fine Arts (data-based decision-making process, scenarios simulation)	La Sagrada Familia (data-based decision- making process, data-based service design process)	Museum of Modern art (social media analytics, data based content development) Museum of London (social media analytics, data based content development) San Francisco Museum of Modern art (social media analytics, data based content development)

(continued)

Table 1	(continued)
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Ch	Chapter Cases/main issues				
8	Palazzo Farnese (visitor experience, personal- ization, proximity marketing)	MUSE (visitor experience, beacons, 3D images, proximity marketing)	ARTLENS gallery (interactive visitor experi- ence, digital wall, proximity marketing, museum app)		
9	British museum (digital discovery Centre, social media, interactive touchpad, VR headset, VR Google cultural	Casa Battlò (digital exhibition, employees' engagement, social media, virtual tour online, mobile app)	La Cité du vin (social media, digital apps, interactive and digital games)		

of the existing business models, the chapter provides a framework to address a new base for future researchers on this important topic. Chap. 4 explores the role of digital technology in shaping the value propositions of cultural heritage organizations. In a technologies-based context, value propositions are formed through the mutual exchange of knowledge between multiple actors who integrate resources to the value creation process in a digital realm. On the one hand, the technologies help service providers better integrate their understanding of the offered service and what the customers can do; on the other hand, the customers are supported and perform activities that increase the market value of service offerings. Technologies have amplified the way value proposition contributes to both providers' and customers' co-creation.

The second part—"Customer Insights, Engagement and Analytics"—is based on three chapters and deals with the big questions of how to catch and integrate data from multiple touchpoints to profile customers and connect to the customer to provide an engaging and personalized experience. It also includes the analysis of business intelligence and social analytics tools to support marketing processes. More in detail, Chap. 5 addresses the analysis of the new approach to segmentation and consumer profiling. The growing use of analytics means that companies are getting better at knowing what consumers want (and do not want) and are adapting their operations and offerings to respond accordingly. Depending on the degree of personalization offered, dynamic data and analytics tools are critical in matching the right consumer to the right outcomes. True personalization requires cultural businesses to rethink their consumer insights process as well as their analysis and segmentation approaches. Chap. 6 aims to analyze the impact of digital technologies on the customer engagement strategy, namely visitor engagement, proposed by cultural heritage organizations. The analysis of customer engagement and digital technologies highlights the contribution of new forms of touchpoints and engagement strategies reached through interactive websites, new guide devices, mobile apps, and social media. In particular, the analysis of different case studies helps identify the different impacts of digital technologies along the customer journey, namely, digital engagement before, during, and after the visit. Thus, in chap. 7, business intelligence and social media analytics (SMA) are brought into focus to address the strategies, methods, and technologies for managing the data analysis

processes. The overall goal is to identify differences in categories, tools, and techniques concerning the development of various analytics processes as well as their application and obtained results in cultural heritage businesses.

The third part—"Context, Content and Communication"—includes three chapters and analyses in depth: (1) proximity marketing and the role of contextinformation awareness as a new operative marketing approach to actualize personalized experience (2) how the effective design of the cultural heritage servicescape can enable more immersive and interactive service experiences; (3) the role of digital and targeting communication content. Chap. 8 investigates the role of new digital devices in marketing initiatives to provide personalized offerings thanks to contextaware information. Despite scholars' suggestion to create a two-way relationship between provider and user to achieve mutual benefits, the technological tools are used mainly to spread information (i.e. points of interest, opening hours, and other practical information) from an existing database. Some solid evidence related to proximity marketing initiatives in the cultural heritage sector has been further explored. An integrative framework is advanced, by identifying the key elements of museums' proximity initiatives, i.e. people, process, and context. Chap. 9 goes in-depth in the analysis of the museum servicescape in a new combination of physical and virtual contexts including multiple dimensions of visitors' interactions. The chapter proposes a conceptual model to analyze how companies face the increasing complexity in managing the customer experience in the heritage sector by integrating multi-sided aspects of the virtual and physical context. Finally, the increasing amount of content created on social media platforms is calling for sophisticated analysis that separates relevant from non-relevant content and data. Indeed, chap. 10 deals with digital communication by addressing how, through its infrastructure, it multiplies opportunities for customer participation, exchange, or accessibility. The new cultural heritage audiences grow up through new communication strategies aimed at producing different kinds of digital content (e.g. blog posts, videos, photos, etc.). These create the ability to share and reproduce collections and atmosphere across digital and physical spaces with high and active customer participation. New forms of personalized and targeted communication have moved from businesses "pushing" content towards consumers to consumers "pulling" content.

A summary of practical challenges and a snapshot of the lessons learned are presented at the beginning and end of each chapter. The aim is to arouse the audience's interest and improve the readability of the chapters.

The book explores novel topics and is aimed at both graduate and master student audiences. It also provides a knowledge resource for managers, decision-makers, and other practitioners interested in exploring digital marketing in the main cultural heritage business.

### 4 Where Are we Now?

At the end of each research project, much exciting work remains to be done to link the experience of the researchers who took part in the project to the experience of the reader interested in deepening this book. We must continue questioning the more significant implications of our story, the next steps to be taken, and the lessons we have learned from what we have already researched.

To appreciate in-depth the opportunities and threats of digital transformation, some key aspects of digital marketing in the cultural heritage sector must be clearly assumed.

As the first point, there is a common agreement that technology alone cannot produce "magical results" (Hammer et al. 2016) and that the reality depends on how people use it—mainly, if they can use it to amplify longstanding skills and expertise. Also, the faith in the power of technology does not mean that spending money and time on projects could be enough; the focus will be on how to combine the technology, organizational, and human sides of the new digital era. Driving digital transformation does not imply replacing old business assets and capabilities. However, like any significant building addition, doing it well requires modifying the business process and organization. Technology is taken less as a mere tool or technique and more as a new "mindset" necessary for viewing the market and society differently. The lack of strategic vision or priorities, the lack of knowledge about digital challenges, the reliance on under-empowered human capabilities, and the lack of collaborative and organizational culture can be seen as the soft mechanisms that hinder digital transformation in all industries. The cultural heritage sector is no exception.

Second, there is an awareness that a new form of competition arises thanks to the new technologies. The higher competition is expected, especially by newcomers, and will not be confined to the cultural heritage sector. The rise of new media companies, i.e. Amazon Video, Netflix, and YouTube, prompts the evolution towards a new form of cultural offering. Here, the focus on products and services starts to disappear in favour of the new "content," including stories, videos, books, and more. This new content is intended to connect with and engage new and different customers rather than to pitch a product or service. However, the main scope of the cultural heritage sector is to preserve treasures and deliver "wonder." Many museums embrace these challenges by breaking down their physical spaces and actively expanding exhibitions, activities, and resources through different digital touchpoints. We are witnessing the development of value propositions by companies that, alongside the support and enhancement of products and services, are substantiated in systematic structures for creating, editing, and distributing new content (narrations, storytelling, experiences) conveyed through different channels made available by digital technologies. Cultural heritage organizations directly offer not products and services but, rather, meanings and experiential content. But this content does not fall into a specific form defined and pre-packaged by the organizations in response to the characteristics of each customer; instead, they acquire sense and