BUILDING DIGITAL LEADERSHIP AND RESILIENCE IN THE UK'S CULTURAL SECTOR

What qualities of leadership are needed to ensure the resilience of cultural organisations in the digital age?

By Dr Ceri Gorton

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The Clore Leadership Programme

Strengthening cultural leadership

Arts & Humanities Research Council

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INTRODUCTION

Summary

Through practice-based interviews with seven leaders, this research project explores the leadership skills, capabilities and approaches that enable innovative projects and use of technology to contribute to organisational resilience.

The 24 days of desk research, interviews and writing time afforded by this project comprised of three main elements: a review of existing theory, research and best practice in digital leadership; interviews with leaders in manufacturing, technology, and the arts; and analysis of interviews.

The project aims to provide new insights for cultural leaders to consider how they can approach the use of digital technology, to enhance the resilience of their organisations. This research highlights that the effective integration of digital technology owes as much to the context in which leadership takes place, as to the qualities of particular leaders themselves.

The scope of this research has determined its key outcomes and outputs;

- The identification of key characteristics and themes in the approaches of leaders and organisations recognised for their use or championing of digital technology. These are drawn directly from the research interviews.

- Recommendations for areas of further study that could be of use to the cultural sector.

- Transcripts and Trello mapping of interviews with seven digital and / or cultural leaders available to researchers to inform thinking and positive interventions for the benefit of digital leadership in the cultural sector.

Key findings centre around leadership structures and roles, organisational ways of working, and the digital tools that leaders found most useful for innovation and resilience. Characteristics emerging from the research include how leaders collaborate and innovate by learning from and with their users and networks, creating agile processes and ways of working, and drawing together diverse skills and teams.

Context

The 2015 Report by the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value dedicates a chapter to Digital Culture, and identifies cultural organisations themselves as one of the major challenges to fully utilising the opportunities offered by digital technologies. The Commission found that while 73% of 947 cultural organisations surveyed stated that "digital activities have had a major positive impact on their work", 70% of the same organisations identified "significant obstacles to developing robust digital structures." More than 30% feel they do not have "the in-house skills, IT systems or the necessary expert advice to meet their digital aspirations."[1] These findings suggest a lack of digital capacity in the sector – both in leadership and processes.

Digital leadership in the cultural sector tends to be considered in terms of standalone departments, staff with a specific digital remit (often around social media marketing), or connections with big tech companies (for example, the Google Cultural Institute Art Project, which provides an online platform for museums and galleries). Reacting to the opportunities and challenges posed by particular social media or software platforms is often the starting point for the sector, rather than the needs of the organisation in delivering its creative vision. While many of these digital departments, staff and connections can boost audience engagement and test new distribution models, they are akin to separate digital strategies in reinforcing a "perception that technology is just another department with its own goals, rather than an enabler for all."[2]

The transformative and lasting potential of technology to inform cultural sector marketing, fundraising and – to a more limited degree – programming, has been explored with support from funders including Arts Council England and Nesta. These useful funding interventions have predominantly been time-limited and output-focused. Conferences such as Future Everything, Digital Utopias, Future Fest and Remix share examples of projects that have used

1   *Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth,* The 2015 Report of the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value (The University of Warwick, 2015), p.59.
2   Julie Dodd, 'The New Reality', p16 www.thenewreality.info

particular technology to yield impressive results. More than 70% of cultural organisations who took part in the 2014 Digital Culture survey reported that digital technology was "helping them fulfil their missions more effectively."[3] Despite these positive developments, the cultural organisations surveyed recognised that there are "important barriers to achievement of their digital ambitions."[4] Nesta's report on the survey results notes that "in terms of barriers and skills…growing digital capacity remains an ongoing challenge for a majority of organisations."[5]. This capacity gap poses a significant challenge for cultural leaders.

Little consideration has been given to the skills, capabilities and approaches of leadership that enable innovative ways of working, digital projects, and use of technology to contribute to the resilience of cultural organisations. Without understanding the characteristics and impact of effective digital leadership, the cultural sector will be unable to benefit from the potential for technology to shape more resilient organisations.

Definitions

LEADERSHIP

This research considers leadership in the context of senior leadership within organisations and hierarchies, rather than leadership at every level with organisations or within microbusinesses and consultancies. This research has been developed in the context of – and as a response to – the findings of the Nesta Digital Survey and The New Reality report, which identified a lack of senior leadership capacity and expertise in digital as a key barrier facing organisations.

DIGITAL

In this report, I use the term digital in an organisational and applied, rather than specifically creative or theoretical, context. This is informed by the Nesta Digital Culture survey, which uses the term 'digital technologies' to refer to any technologies that enable information to be created, stored or shared in digital form. These technologies include hardware (e.g. a camera or laptop), software (e.g. video editing programmes, or apps), networks (e.g. the internet), websites and mobile devices.[6]

CULTURAL SECTOR

This research is focused on organisational approaches to digital that could enhance resilience, rather than the individual creativity of particular roles within the economy, and this report's use of 'cultural sector' will draw on DCMS Creative Industries data.

The Government's 2001 Creative Industries Mapping Document defined the Creative Industries as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property."[7]

DCMS defines the Creative Economy as "all the creative industries (including jobs in these industries which are not classified as creative occupations) and all creative jobs (including those which are not in creative industries),"[8] and the Creative Industries as "a subset of the Creative Economy which includes just

6   Nesta. 'New Survey Casts Light on the Use of Digital Technology in Arts and Culture Sector' (11 November 2013) http://www.nesta.org.uk/news/new-survey-casts-light-use-digital-technology-arts-and-culture-sector#sthash.Pr0JNEHu.dpuf

7   Gov.uk, 'Creative Industries Mapping' 2001. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-mapping-documents-2001

8   DCMS, 'Creative Industries: Focus on Employment' June 2015, p4 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439714/Annex_C_-_Creative_Industries_Focus_on_Employment_2015.pdf

3   Nesta, 'Digital Culture 2014: How arts and cultural organisations in England use technology', p29 http://artsdigitalrnd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Digital-Culture-2014-Research-Report2.pdf

4   'Digital Culture 2014', p35

5   'Digital Culture 2014', p37

those working in the Creative Industries irrespective of their occupation (they may either be in creative occupations or in other roles e.g. finance)."[9]

To provide more detailed statistical breakdowns of employment and demographics within the creative industries, DCMS then divides the creative sectors of the Creative Industries into nine groups:

- Advertising and marketing
- Architecture
- **Crafts**
- Design: product, graphic and fashion design
- Film, TV, video, radio and photography
- IT, software and computer services
- **Museums, galleries and libraries**
- **Music, performing and visual arts**
- Publishing

Of these nine groups, this report is aimed to be of primary interest to the three groups highlighted above – Museums, galleries and libraries; Music, performing and visual arts; and Crafts – and will use these as a working definition of the cultural sector.[10]

As these three groups are all fundable by Arts Council England, they are also most likely to make use of the findings of my interview with Arts Council England Creative Economy Director Dawn Ashman.

This working definition of the cultural sector is broadly in line with the sub-sectors found in Nesta's Digital Survey, which is open to all arts and cultural organisations to complete on a self-definition basis:

- Museums
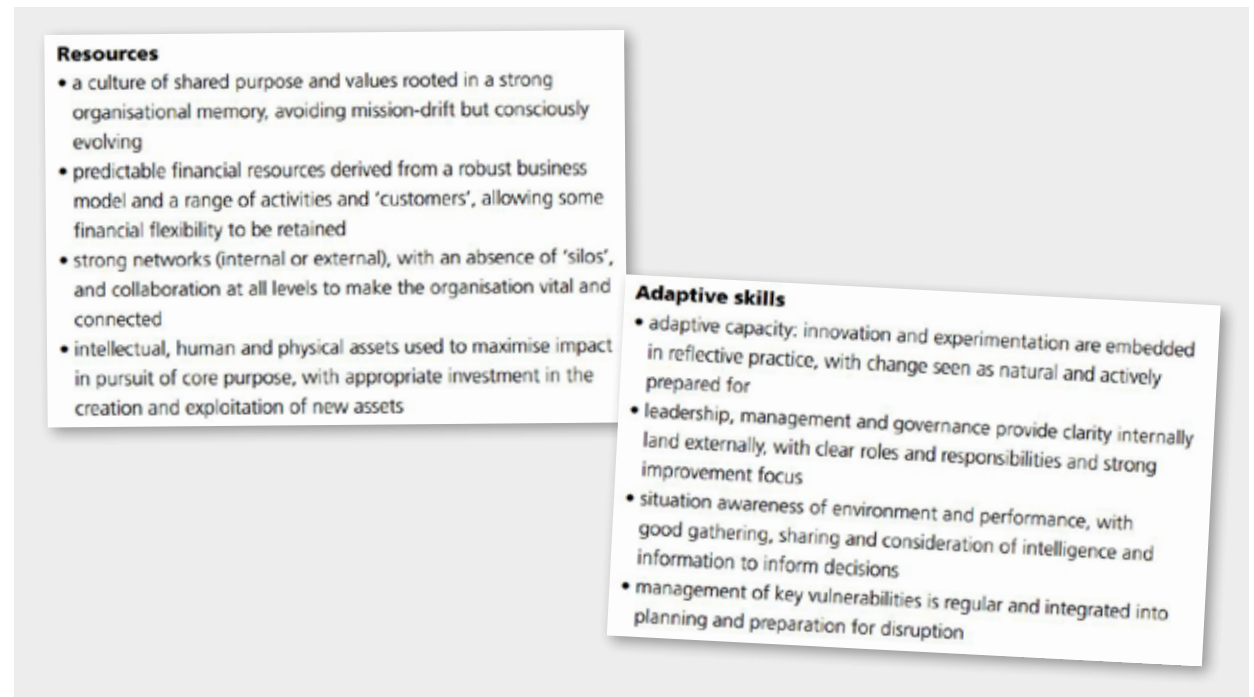- Galleries
- Performing Arts Venues
- Performing Groups
- Combined Arts Centres
- Festivals and events

RESILIENCE

This report draws on the Arts Council England definition of resilience, which characterises resilience in terms of "Resources" and "Adaptive Skills" and notes that organisations and sectors that consistently display these characteristics "tend to prove more resilient, be more productive and have more impact."[11]

Resources
- a culture of shared purpose and values rooted in a strong organisational memory, avoiding mission-drift but consciously evolving
- predictable financial resources derived from a robust business model and a range of activities and 'customers', allowing some financial flexibility to be retained
- strong networks (internal or external), with an absence of 'silos', and collaboration at all levels to make the organisation vital and connected
- intellectual, human and physical assets used to maximise impact in pursuit of core purpose, with appropriate investment in the creation and exploitation of new assets

Adaptive skills
- adaptive capacity: innovation and experimentation are embedded in reflective practice, with change seen as natural and actively prepared for
- leadership, management and governance provide clarity internally land externally, with clear roles and responsibilities and strong improvement focus
- situation awareness of environment and performance, with good gathering, sharing and consideration of intelligence and information to inform decisions
- management of key vulnerabilities is regular and integrated into planning and preparation for disruption

Arts Council England,
'Making Adaptive Resilience Real'

9   'Creative Industries: Focus on Employment' June 2015, p4

10   These groups include the top three 'creative intensities', according to DCMS. DCMS, 'Creative Industries: Focus on Employment' June 2015, p26-27

11   Mark Robinson, 'Making Adaptive Resilience Real', July 2010. p7 http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/making_adaptive_resilience_real.pdf

METHODOLOGY

Overview

1. I reviewed existing data and research on digital skills and barriers to enhancing use of digital technology in the cultural sector. This secondary research comprised; review of leadership and innovation theory, analysis of data relating to digital capacity and cultural sector leadership (including the Nesta Digital Survey results and Warwick Commission report), and review of existing case studies and interviews related to digital organisational models and digital projects in the arts.

2. In depth case study interviews were undertaken with seven individuals from five organisations; the Royal Shakespeare Company, Arts Council England, MoMA, Vitsoe and Civil Service Learning.

3. Case study interview transcripts were then mapped into Trello, with findings grouped according to the key themes that emerged across all interviews.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

I applied to Warwick University's Biomedical and Scientific Research Ethics Committee for approval to undertake the research interviews. Approval for the study to proceed was granted on 16 October 2015. The data collected through the interviews will be made available to other researchers who wish to take forward the findings of the study. Interviewees were asked to sign consent forms to allow future access to and use of their interviews.

I interviewed seven leaders from five organisations recognised for the excellence of their use of digital technology to achieve their organisational goals.

Participants were identified and recruited as a result of my research into best practice in digital throughout my Clore Fellowship (2014-15) and through cultural, digital and academic networks.

Participants were provided with a Participant Information Leaflet and Consent Form detailing the process and their right to withdraw from the study and the implications of their informed consent.

Rationale for Case Studies

Organisations whose leaders I chose to interview are recognised for the excellence of their use of (and advocacy for) digital technology to support and deliver their objectives, and take an organisation-wide approach to digital.

Within the time constraints of the study, I focused on leaders who have not been interviewed specifically about their digital leadership role before, in order to create a new bank of research interviews for others to draw on.

I selected three case study types in order to maximise learning:

> **What can we learn from other sectors? (Vitsoe, Civil Service Learning)**
> Non cultural organisations with a track record of digital leadership, sustainability and reinvention
>
> **What can we learn from cultural organisations approaching digital from an organisation-wide perspective? (RSC, MoMA)**
> Cultural organisations developing a networked approach to digital across the organisation, rather than focused on standalone projects or single functions
>
> **What can we learn from funders? (ACE)**
> How funders think about digital leadership, support, resilience and opportunities

Interview methodology

My case study interviews drew on Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology in order to seek out the exceptional best of what is already happening in businesses' use of digital technology, how leaders capitalise on their successes, and to identify development possibilities for cultural sector organisations.

AI is a strengths-based approach, process and mode of inquiry most often used in organisational development.[12] I borrowed from this approach in

12   David Cooperrider, Diana Whitney and Jacqueline M. Stavros, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: For Leaders of Change, 2nd Edition* (Brunswick, Ohio: Crown Custom Publishing, 2008), p3-5

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designing my interviews because it is organisation-focused, success-led, future-looking, and aims to build confidence and collaboration. This is particularly appropriate given my interviews with leaders of digitally innovative organisations, the collaborative nature of the cultural sector, and the intended research outcomes of pragmatic, positive options for cultural leaders to act on.

The first of the four phases of an Appreciative Inquiry were used to shape the interview questions, as the purpose of the interviews was to identify what was working rather than co-create plans for the future:[13]

Discovery (Appreciating): This priority of this phase is "to identify and appreciate the best of 'what is'...focusing on 'peak times' or high point experiences of organizational excellence". The aim is "to understand the unique factors (e.g. leadership, relationships, technologies, core processes, structures, values, learning processes, external relationships, and planning methods) that made the high points possible."[14]

Informed by the impetus to identify and appreciate the best of what organisations were already doing, I took a semi-structured approach to the interviews and grouped questions around the three main themes of the study;

- Experience of digital innovation

- Organisational structures and processes
- Leadership skills and approaches

By being open in my use of terms like 'digital' and 'success', I sought to understand how the interviewees used these terms.

13 Phase 2 is Dream (Envisioning): The purpose of this phase "is to expand or extend people's sense of what is possible" and engage "stakeholders...in conversations about the organization's position and potential in the world." Phase 3 is Design (Co-constructing): This phase "involves the collective construction of positive images of the organization's future" through "generating provocative propositions". These are "a statement of the ideal organization as it relates to some important aspect or element of organizing: leadership, decision making, communication or customer service, and so on." Phase 4 is Destiny (Sustaining): This phase focuses on "continuous learning, adjustment and improvisation" as "individuals and groups discuss what they can and will do to contribute to the realization of the organizational dream." *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, pp44-47.

14 *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, p43

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Literature Review

Before I interviewed digital leaders, I researched innovation and leadership to provide context and insights.

This included sector and digital-focused research such as Nesta Arts Digital R&D case studies, reports from projects including Happenstance, Warwick Commission research, Arts Council policy and research, and blogs from cultural and digital leaders including Future Everything, Alyson Fielding, and Chris Unitt.

I also looked into non-cultural sector case studies of organisational approaches to the use of digital technology, including Spotify and Netflix.

Of this reading, the approach and conclusions of 'The New Reality' report, *Growth Champions*, and Nesta's Digital Culture Report, had the most impact on informing my interviews and analysis of the resulting case studies.

THE NEW REALITY

Published in June 2015, Julie Dodd's 'New Reality' study explores how digital technology will deliver the next step change in social impact. The starting point for the report is recognising that "the digital revolution has already happened, and we are living in the aftermath."[15]

Drawing on interviews with 50 leading experts from the charity, third sector, commercial, and digital technology worlds, the report identified six key themes to be addressed if a step change is to be made; Leadership, Culture, Infrastructure, Innovation, Funding, and Service Delivery.

From her research, Dodd offered 10 key insights for third sector organisations to consider, all of which apply to the cultural sector as much as they do to other charities and NGOs:

1. Digital services will deliver greater value than anyone can imagine (but first we need to address the culture and infrastructure issues that are standing in the way)

2. Until sector leadership stops delegating responsibility for digital we're not going to get very far
3. Major skills gaps need plugging
4. You don't need a digital strategy
5. The age of big, corporate IT is over
6. A tried and tested process for delivering transformation already exists - it's just not being used
7. Funders need to divert efforts towards supporting core costs to help organisations through this period of change
8. The next stage of digital for non-profits is not fundraising and marketing
9. Organisations need to implement and formalise R&D programmes
10. We need to think beyond web to a broad range of digital technologies to achieve maximum impact

Dodd's research identified four specific concerns around third sector leadership, which highlight the need for cultural leaders to be bold and imaginative.

> *"Sector leadership isn't currently demonstrating vision or bravery in digital transformation; Responsibility for the process has been delegated away from senior levels; Digital leaders and champions within the sector are often focused on delivery not strategy; Trustees are failing to support proactive change." **Julie Dodd, 'The New Reality'***

In Dodd's interviews with third sector leaders, "lack of engagement and buy-in from senior leadership" was the most frequently cited barrier to digital transformation.[16] Senior leaders are in a position to make better use of resources and networks to build digital capacity. As Ed Humphrey, Digital Director of the British Film Institute, puts it, "Your digital leader doesn't need to be a technologist. They just have to understand the scale of change and the necessary plan to get there."[17] There is a challenge here for cultural leaders to spend more time on strategy so their organisations are driven by a creative vision that can then be enabled by digital.

15 'The New Reality,' p2

16 'The New Reality,' p3
17 'The New Reality,' p14

20 WAYS TO ACHIEVE
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

MINDSET ▶

01 START WITH THE CORE MISSION
Don't start with the technology, think about the social value you're trying to deliver and then how technology might help you solve key challenges you face

02 FULLY COMMIT & ACCEPT THE PAIN
This is a change management process that will affect every area of your operation. Accept that some people will have to retrain or leave

03 SHOW DON'T TELL
Discussing transformation ideas is useful... but getting stuck in, and showing evidence quickly is the best way to find out what works and get buy-in

04 BE TRANSPARENT
Collective wisdom is essential. Be open about your successes and the failures. Share your code, share your plans, share your data, share everything

05 THINK BROADER THAN WEB & SOCIAL
An enabling technology could be anything from a wearable device to your internal finance system. Make sure you're considering all forms of digital technology

◀ PEOPLE

06 FIND SOMEONE TO GUIDE YOU
Look inside and outside your organisation for someone who can guide you. Consider appointing a fixed term Director of digital transformation

07 SACK THE 'NO' PERSON
A new breed of technologists and architects are showing that it is possible to have IT infrastructure that works. Don't trust anyone who says it's too difficult

08 REPLACE TRUSTEES
Make sure there's someone on your trustee board who really gets this, and educate those who don't. Seriously consider appointing someone under 30

09 BREAK DOWN SILOS
Share digital knowledge across your organisation by building cross discipline project teams, and seconding digital staff into other teams departments

10 GET SOME GOOD DATA PEOPLE
Every organisation can and should do more with the data they have. Bring in or train someone who can help you unleash and use it effectively

PROCESS ▶

11 KEEP YOUR HORIZONS SHORT
Focus on one thing at a time and work in small, iterative steps. Pick a problem and put enough effort into fixing that before moving on

12 FIND WAYS TO INNOVATE
If you're not trying to disrupt what you do then someone else is. Set up an in-house R&D lab, or find a partner that can help you develop future ideas

13 CO-DESIGN WITH YOUR AUDIENCE
It has never been more crucial to be audience-centric. Involve your beneficiaries and supporters in all new projects as closely as possible

14 COLLABORATE AND PARTNER
Don't recreate systems, products or ideas. Work with the people and companies who are already doing it well

15 IF IT ISN'T WORKING STOP DOING IT
Stop doing anything that isn't core to your mission and isn't working well. If it is core but isn't working then make it a priority

◀ TOOLS

16 ASSUME IT ALREADY EXISTS
There is a low-cost tool for almost any need or problem you have. From inventive uses for social media feeds to handy ways to enhance productivity

17 GO CLOUD-BASED
Improve efficiency, scalability, and collaboration whilst making it possible for your teams to work anywhere, not just the office

18 MODULAR NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL
Don't try to find a one-size fits all solution. Take best in class, independent tools that talk to each other and plug them together

19 TRACK LIVE PERFORMANCE
Help everyone to understand and monitor impact by putting a live dashboard of current performance up somewhere noticeable in the office

20 MAKE SURE IT'S SUSTAINABLE
Make sure you can afford to support and maintain the kit your use. Not just to implement it in the first place

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The New Reality includes resources (available under Creative Commons) which provide insights into how to achieve Digital Transformation in the context of these challenges.

GROWTH CHAMPIONS

Growth Champions investigates how companies build and sustain growth. Drawing on interviews and case studies of twenty leading businesses, including LEGO, Apple, Shell, Amazon and Google, it outlines the key lessons for business leaders to innovate and secure future growth. Through these detailed case studies, eight key characteristics of Growth Champions are identified:

- Inspirational leadership
- Clarity of Ambition
- Shared Values
- Organisational Confidence
- Innovation
- Foresight and Insight
- Diversification
- Unifying culture and strategy

While there is useful learning in this analysis for businesses of all types and sectors – including cultural organisations – the exploration of innovation, foresight and insight is particularly relevant for organisations looking to make the best use of digital technology.

Growth Champions are organisations that "know what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how it will help make them a success in the broadest possible way."[18] For these organisations, innovation is considered "not only in terms of what they do, but also...how they are organised."[19] Innovation is motivated by "creating increased value for the businesses and their customers."[20]

An effective CEO is characterised as a "catalyst of change, the primary driver of the corporate ambition and its communication to all stakeholders, and a link between the history of the company and its future growth prospects."[21] Growth Champion leaders are "developed in tandem with their organisations," and "succession planning and continuity has been a top priority."[22]

Even Growth Champions, when faced with "reducing business performance," sometimes seek "operational improvements rather than recognise that the market or society has evolved."[23] In the context of cuts to government funding, cultural organisations also sometimes follow this pattern of cutting their capacity when funding reduces, rather addressing their core activity markets. This can mean that when "presented with an unexpected opportunity", companies can "fail to capitalise on it due to either lack of context or depth of understanding into the customer, technology, and market implications."

While it is not only cultural organisations, but also leading businesses, that miss opportunities, it is worth considering what the cultural sector can learn from those who manage to respond to unexpected opportunities, or deal with cuts by addressing factors beyond operational spend.

Many of the Growth Champions, for example, "have shown the ability to meet major challenges and exploit opportunities...because they have well developed foresight or deep insight."[24] Crucially, foresight and insight "are not hidden in some research group but are directly connected to decision making to enable strategic moves to be made ahead of the pack."[25] By valuing and resourcing foresight and insight, Growth Champions "have a clear view of the forces shaping their markets, the implications for their industry, and the opportunities and risks that arise."[26]

18   *Growth Champions: The Battle for Sustained Innovation Leadership*, Edited by Tim Jones, Dave McCormick and Caroline Dewing (Wiley, 2012), p275

19   *Growth Champions*, p276

20   *Growth Champions*, p276

21   *Growth Champions*, p267

22   *Growth Champions*, p268-9

23   *Growth Champions*, p281

24   *Growth Champions*, p281

25   *Growth Champions*, p281

26   *Growth Champions*, p282

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Digital is our 'new reality,' so thinking about the challenges and opportunities it offers the sector in future is a need, not a luxury, and building in foresight and insight is a key challenge for cultural organisations. A question that warrants further study is how the sector can cultivate leaders and decision makers with foresight and insight.[27]

NESTA DIGITAL CULTURE REPORT

Nesta's report indicates that the cultural organisations experiencing the highest level of impact from digital technology are more likely to be using digital for creative and distributive purposes, using data as part of their business processes, and employing user centred design.[28] These organisations also report fewer barriers to using digital technology, with only 13% of them citing a "lack of in-house confidence is holding them back," compared with 25% of the sector as a whole.[29]

Drawing on the results of their annual Digital Survey, Nesta also note that organisations expect digital technology to continue to grow in importance for business models. The three activities considered most likely to grow in the next year all relate to alternative revenue streams:

- 21% intend to start crowdfunding (18% are already using it)
- 19% plan to start accepting online donations
  (39% are currently doing so)
- 16% expect to be selling products or merchandise online for the first time (38% do so currently).[30]

27   Could a sector funder or innovator, for example, develop scenario planning for arts organisations to test changing audiences, artforms, venues, organisational structures/staffing, management?

28   34% say that they do this compared with 18% of the sector as a whole

29   Nesta, 'Digital Culture 2014: How arts and cultural organisations in England use technology,' p10 http://artsdigitalrnd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Digital-Culture-2014-Research-Report2.pdf

30   'Digital Culture 2014,' pp10-11

INTERVIEW CASE STUDIES

Civil Service Learning

Interviewed: John Fitzpatrick (Head of Digital), and David Mercer (User Experience Design/Research)

Civil Service Learning provides courses and resources for developing the skills of UK civil servants. Their learning and development is focused on leadership and management, capability priorities (digital, commercial and project delivery), and working in government (including policy and operational skills).[31]

MOTIVATION

John describes the original Civil Service Learning portal as "a new service that brought together all government departments" and "saved lots of money by corralling all of those contracts into one place." This engagement with digital to create a single service portal was motivated by the desire to ensure the best use is being made of public money, and that all services are accountable.

The approach taken by the Government Digital Service (GDS) was motivated by making sure services "met user needs," which led to GDS and Civil Service Learning appointing John as Head of Digital. John sees his role as turning "a service that isn't meeting Digital by Default Standards into one that does," and the first steps he took were to "fix things and make it look better and respond to the user demands."

"We're talking about a culture shift, but also where you're piggybacking on an approach and a value system that is already embedded in government. You know, accountability is something which has been talked about forever and it's part of why people often choose to work in the civil service - because they care about the accountability for public money and doing public good." John Fitzpatrick

SUCCESS

John and David talked about success in terms of changing the culture, transforming people, changing measurements of success to focus on the value to end user, pioneering relatively cheap programmes with an agile methodology, and the adoption of the GDS model in Canada and Australia.

Proof of concept can help to build momentum for digital transformation. John describes how, when people are engaged and products are seen "delivering value," they have been able to transform "the way that we work and the culture at the same time." John has found that "delivering a little bit of value early on, being very open and transparent about the way you do things, and leading by example" has helped them deliver digital transformation.

David highlighted another key factor in changing the culture. By "making changes in measuring success," the organisation is now focused on the "value to the end users" rather than things being finished. By "iterating it all the time," John says they are "continually improving the service." With 200 staff working in an agile way, David notes, "we don't spend millions of pounds on systems that ultimately don't work."

"For not very much money and a bit of time you can make radical differences and improve performance" John Fitzpatrick

31   Gov.uk 'Civil Service Learning' https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-service-learning

LEARNING

John's team works to an agile methodology, They have developed a Digital Academy model for digital skills development across the civil service, make incremental changes in response to feedback, and learning share by communicating in a people-first way – whether through open blogs or infographics.

'Fired up about Learning' infographic and 'Fail Fast' compost

David notes, "we have a term called Fail Fast in the Agile methodology which is exactly that." If you have proved something doesn't actually work, you get rid of it. This means that issues are dealt with at the earliest point in the process, so they can make "small changes, small improvements, all the time." The "traditional" approach of specifying everything first, building it, and "two years later you find out it's the wrong thing" is what the 'Fail Fast' approach helps them to avoid.

Learning from failure has enabled them to shift from relying on external delivery of skills development, and work more within the culture, to avoid expensive mistakes that can result from focusing on outputs.

The Digital Academy started as an 8-week full time programme, which David describes as "looking at all aspects of digital delivery from user centred designs to…user needs and the Agile methodology itself" and included delivery of a project. It is now taught over two weeks and focuses on "teaching people the core principles of digital delivery."[32] A thousand people are currently in the academy.

Having been an "inefficient, costly" contracted out service that was "reputationally quite damaging" as it didn't work well, John explains that now Civil Service Learning is delivered in-house, learning opportunities including the Digital Academy are prioritised around user needs.

WAYS OF WORKING

There is a flattened hierarchy across the team. All of the frameworks and toolkits for learning are shared online. Projects always start with user research and seek to build on the values of the organisational culture or insulate people from it in order to experiment. Starting with detailed user research, John described how the team then "play with, very cheaply, technology, build prototypes, paper prototypes, throw things away…test it out with users, see what they like."

Having learned from attempts at digital transformation that failed to change the culture of an organisation, John outlines how they created an incubator "where we've got people protected away from the culture…to be able to focus and prioritise and deliver items of value in a really short time."

John highlights 'show and tell' from previous sprints of work as a key aspect to helping "people see and be regularly reminded of the value in the approach," while the Digital by Default Service Standard and Digital Design Manual

32   There are blogs about the Digital Academy curriculum and process on the GDS pages: https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2015/09/18/learninganddoing-together/

are shared openly, and exemplar projects are used to evidence impact and motivate further change.

Even though everyone in the team has their own responsibilities, John has "kept a non-hierarchical structure" and makes it clear that while he is "ultimately accountable for what we deliver," anybody is "safe to talk about anything and we're quite supportive of each other."

LEADERS, STAFF, AND SKILLS

John and David need senior leaders to provide "cover" for risk taking, so they can deliver effectively. As Head of Digital for Civil Service Learning, John's work is focused on growing skills capability across the civil service in terms of leadership, project management, digital, and commercial skills.

"Leadership is the thing that basically binds everything else together." John Fitzpatrick

John and David work in a diverse multidisciplinary teams, informed by user-led decisions. Alpha is an unconstrained "multidisciplinary team to include people like developers, user researchers, user experience people, business analysts and delivery managers," with a service manager who prioritises what they work on next. They "depend on having a diverse team who's in an environment that's open and able to challenge each other."

This team needs to be resilient and adaptive, which John describes as members dealing with a "rapid pace of change" and being able to take "heavy criticism over a piece of work that you were really proud of a day ago and recover from that quite quickly."

John considers his role as being to make sure that anything the team is working on is "what our users are asking for" and to both "find the right solutions" and "manage the stakeholders and bring them on a bit of a journey." By focusing on the outcome they are trying to achieve, John then deploys "the expertise that's going to be able to do that."

"I'm senior in the hierarchy but...those that have got more experience than I have in a particular area, they're in control of their area" John Fitzpatrick

Key words and themes:
Agile, Learning, Users, Cover, Flatten hierarchy, Fail Fast, Diverse team

BUILDING DIGITAL LEADERSHIP AND RESILIENCE IN THE UK'S CULTURAL SECTOR

MoMA

**Interviewed: Fiona Romeo
(Director of Digital Content & Strategy)**

Founded in 1929, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City aims to help people "understand and enjoy the art of our time." MoMA's collection includes over 150,000 paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, architectural models and drawings, and design objects. MoMA also owns approximately 22,000 films and four million film stills, and holds over 300,000 books, artist books, and periodicals.[33]

MOTIVATION

Arts organisations have always been interested in reaching a broader audience for artists' work. Digital has become part of this narrative and the desire to unlock the collections was a key motivator for MoMA's investment in digital.

With MoMA's early digital experiments originating in the curatorial department, the role of Director of Digital Content and Strategy was introduced in 2014 "to recuperate digital at MoMA" and focus on content and engaging with audiences, having "drifted towards being maybe more of a marketing channel."

Despite being a visual arts organisation, much of MoMA's digital content had been text based, and there was a keen interest in producing more visual and video content. This has been reflected in "most of the energy" for content development in 2015 going into YouTube.

MoMA fulfils its role mainly through exhibitions, which Fiona describes as historically being "almost invisible online." Digital technology is providing them with the opportunity to archive all of the exhibitions, a process which will involve digitising 2,000 out of print exhibition catalogues and 30,000 images.

The recognition that "the collection was a core asset" that could be unlocked

has led to the launch of "a time machine" so audiences can "visit any of the exhibitions from 1929 through to now that MoMA has mounted" online.

MoMA Director Glenn Lowry "has a really strong vision for digital," and the organisation is motivated by the potential for digital to "get everyone working in a more aligned way and more collaborative way."

SUCCESS

As early adopters of the internet, MoMA has now "been on the web for 20 years." In that time, they have built "something like 200 sites," having started with an exhibition website hand-coded by curator Paola Antonelli. MoMA also made early use of social media, which empowered curators to develop their own "individual and independent voices" that weren't about marketing.

Fiona described how MoMA has always been interested in how they could use new technology to "reach a broader audience," as exemplified by their long history of experimenting with technology and broadcast, from opening on 53rd Street with a radio broadcast, to "TV programs in the 1950s which were targeting housewives" as a new audience.

By doing digital projects in house, MoMA are able to "iterate on and develop in more of a responsive and quick way." Fiona notes that, traditionally, MoMA has "been a little bit more about releasing the beautiful experimental perfect final product and then you don't touch it." In-house skills and the increasing interest in engaging audiences in a dialogue has informed a shift from this "publications model" to a more "agile model of MVPs," and enabled MoMA to redevelop "from scratch the whole website using an internal team" in just over a year.

Fiona's first steps included archiving and halting the proliferation of hundreds of microsites, retiring legacy software and starting to "focus on actually what our visitors want." This has led to content initiatives in response to user needs and interests, for example "developing content around our artist pages, because that's the entry point for most visitors," and publishing a full list of new acquisitions "within a week." Fiona describes this "internal transparency about [acquisitions] information" as a "really huge step," and a crucial one to enable MoMA to enter into "more of a conversation" with their users.

33 MoMA.org, "About MoMA" http://www.moma.org/about/index and "Museum History" http://www.moma.org/about/history. All further quotations in this case study are from Fiona Romeo.

BUILDING DIGITAL LEADERSHIP AND RESILIENCE IN THE UK'S CULTURAL SECTOR

While Fiona manages a team, digital roles are embedded across departments. The cross-departmental Digital Planning and Innovation group includes all staff with specifically digital responsibilities, and they have "five shared metrics...that the whole group contribute towards progressing." These shared metrics evolved out of Fiona's recognition that "ideas that cut across all of the departments" were otherwise "harder to move forward." Fiona notes that "getting agreement or buy-in isn't enough" and shared metrics and processes are needed for projects that work across the organisation to be delivered effectively.

LEARNING

Internal transparency and sharing of information has been key to developing innovation and "more rapid ways of working" at MoMA. Fiona describes how for each digital project, she wants there "to be something that is about improving how we work generally."

User insights inform new digital products and content. For example, "the Management Information team did some analysis of Trip Advisor and Yelp and found that one of the major causes of a sort of negative review is someone encountering an artwork that they really didn't understand...they almost feel like a joke is being played on them." As a result, the team developed a list of the ten artworks considered to be the most challenging by users and "decided to produce an extended interpretation of those works and probably also a tour."

One result of prioritising user needs and noticing how their users interact with them, has been a change to the MoMA app. While pioneering and successful in terms of downloads, Fiona notes that they "actually found recently that most of the usage of the app is just the audio and the map, the least innovative features". As a result, MoMA are considering "stripping the app right back to audio and map" and thinking about "the opportunity for innovation...more around developing more interesting content" than features.

WAYS OF WORKING

Starting with the collections and users, MoMA has redeveloped the website "using an agile methodology and based on our insights about how visitors were using the website" and considering "people's aspirations for digital

content rather than digital marketing." Taking an agile approach and piloting things "has become much more central," as reflected in the 'newsroom' meeting group, which develops content in response to what's happening at the museum in a rapid weekly format.

Digital platforms have enabled MoMA to draw on their core artistic and human resources to create content that reaches a wide range of different audiences, where they already are. A key part of engaging audiences has been weekly testing and user feedback through an Audience Advocates Group, so that digital platforms and content can be shaped in response to user needs and insights. Having started out using a platform called LiveStream, MoMA recently moved their video content to YouTube, because "40% of the internet is kind of YouTube, so the moment they introduced that to YouTube it just made a big difference in terms of visibility and finding an audience."

All digital projects and programmes follow the same process, starting with a presentation from the business owner, where a department will present their plans and challenges. This is followed by a context report, an external guest speaker, and a cross-departmental structured ideas workshop. Progress is then monitored at monthly meetings and via a project management dashboard.

LEADERS, STAFF AND SKILLS

"In digital maturity...you have everyone doing digital as part of their role and some leadership around strategy and development...but really it should just become a part of what everyone does." Fiona Romeo

Fiona describes the purpose of her role as "recuperating digital for content and curatorial. So not just seeing it as a marketing platform for what we were doing elsewhere, but seeing it as a platform in itself and a way of reaching an audience and delivering content and experiences."

To make her role effective, Fiona identifies the need for a ring-fenced discretionary innovation budget and the main production team reporting to her; "if you don't have a budget and you don't have a team, you can't really effect any change."

With her role functioning as a bridge, Fiona sets strategy and priorities, fosters

collaboration between departments, and educates the organisation about opportunities and different ways of working.

Key words / themes:

Culture Change, Mobile, Audience, Users, Internal Transparency, Agile, Metrics

BUILDING DIGITAL LEADERSHIP AND RESILIENCE IN THE UK'S CULTURAL SECTOR

Royal Shakespeare Company

Interviewed: Sarah Ellis, Head of Digital Development, and Catherine Mallyon, Executive Director

The Royal Shakespeare Company perform the work of Shakespeare, his contemporaries, and today's writers. Based in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, their theatres receive over 1 million visitors each year. The RSC is funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio organisation, and generates 75% of its income from other sources.[34]

MOTIVATION

"The RSC creates the best artistic work supported in the best way…and digital and those opportunities have to be part of that. I think that's absolutely the motivation." Catherine Mallyon

One of the RSC's first digital projects focused on engaging online communities. 'Such Tweet Sorrow' (2010), presented the story of Romeo and Juliet through Twitter, and Sarah identifies this as "a seminal moment in the company's thinking. It stretched, it pushed and it asked lots of questions." Starting with a key question to be explored, disrupter projects like this enable the company to try new things in a contained way, "getting us to think differently" and stress testing the organisation.

Other experiments have followed – increasing in scale and profile over the years – with the launch of the RSC's Online Exhibition with the Google Cultural Institute among the most recent of these. For Sarah, this track record indicates the company has "an interest and a curiosity both in its executive and artistic programme around digital."

For the RSC, digital provides tools for opportunities, described by Catherine as enabling the company to "do new things or do things differently." Considering

her role and the RSC's interest in digital, Sarah reflects, "We're doing it [digital work] because we're curious and we're interested, and we innovate everyday across our business." For a sector which is motivated by and relies on creative innovation, this idea that engaging with digital technology is a natural extension of a culture of curiosity is worth cultural leaders and funders considering in their development of and advocacy for digital skills.

The Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon

The RSC's motivation to engage with digital technology is rooted in providing value for audiences, engaging with the "feedback loop" they have from audiences. Expanding on the idea of 'audiences,' Catherine describes how the RSC uses the term "to cover pretty much everybody who comes into contact with us in the digital world – community is probably a better word."

This broadening of the concept of audience, to the more collaborative, relationship-reliant idea of communities, highlights the RSC's digital-enabled shift to an increasing dialogue with its audiences, stakeholders and other users. For Sarah, these communities are "mass groups of influencers online

34   RSC.org.uk 'Facts and Figures' https://www.rsc.org.uk/about-us/facts-and-figures/?from=mdd-au

that are mobilised, are self determined, that self regulate, that exist to share... that are kind of market places for online conversation or work." By engaging with these communities, Sarah looks to ensure that the RSC "doesn't work in isolation."

SUCCESS

From a motivation to engage with their communities, the RSC's starting point for digital has been in recognising and building on success in its existing ways of working. For example, Catherine notes that the company use advanced AV techniques within their productions "really very well, but we almost miss it." As theatre makers, Catherine suggests, "we're used to the fact we don't know what a stage production is going to look like. That doesn't faze anyone at all... because in their head they think they know the range of what that could be." Building on the culture of theatre makers understanding uncertainty and being comfortable with it in context of producing new work, the RSC's digital work has evolved as the team increasingly understand the range of possibilities and limitations for this type of work.

Providing proof of concept and delivering successful experiments has been crucial in getting staff buy-in to build digital skills and opportunities. For Sarah, the enormous reach of A Midsummer Night's Dreaming, which engaged with 30 million people on social media, highlighted to the RSC leadership the potential future capacity to reach people through digital. Sarah suggests that as arts organisations, "we are not landing points anymore, we are amplification points," and as a result can "reach way more people."

Disrupter projects such as A Midsummer Night's Dreaming and Live to Cinema have also been effective for the RSC, enabling them to experiment with artistic work online. Sarah describes them as "reaching a completely different audience, talking to our online communities in a completely different way." A key factor in growing the organisation's digital confidence has been Sarah's ability to fundraise externally for these digital projects separately from 'business-as-usual' budgets, thus minimising risk.

Catherine's aim is for the use of digital technology to become pervasive across the company, "making the term [digital] redundant as soon as we can, so

that people think of that as part of their daily work." For both Catherine and Sarah, normalising digital so that it's not 'other' means that everyone in the organisation will feel like they need it in their practice.

"We are working with the tools we have now, just as Shakespeare worked with the tools that he had in his time, whether that was candlelight or ships rigging...Those were tools that enabled those performances to happen and it strikes me as being no different in terms of digital thinking and leadership"
Sarah Ellis

A key step in this normalising process is the senior artistic leaders talking about "the most incredible advanced digital technologies in a quite relaxed way." For Catherine, the role for organisational leadership in relation to digital is "being confident about its importance. I think it's about creating... the environment for it to happen," whether through funding, organisational structures and processes, or advocacy.

For Catherine, success is people feeling "either connected with us digitally, or...excited by projects we're delivering," other organisations coming to them for "advice on how to develop digitally," and artistic projects with a digital core getting "the same artistic recognition as something that doesn't."

LEARNING

While A Midsummer Night's Dreaming was a successful project in terms of reach and profile, Sarah notes that there were also things that didn't work so well. These included trying to do too much, and underestimating the amount of time needed to create digital work. Sarah highlights this useful learning for the RSC and the sector in realising "it still needs a lot of time to process and create beautiful work" despite the reputation of digital work as "agile and speedy." This project also helped the RSC realise they needed more skills in-house to support and make digital projects.

Getting inspiration from partners and other sectors has been key in embedding learning and different ways of thinking across the organisation. Sarah suggests that "having someone from a different sector on the Board is really helpful," while working with the likes of Watershed, the BBC, The Space, Google and Nesta has enabled the RSC to build their in-house skills. Confidence, Sarah

notes, "is infectious and if you get that confident person in with those people that are less confident, it rouses them."

Building digital capacity by "putting the time into R&D" and "bringing in people from different departments" means that ownership of digital work is shared across the organisation and Sarah is "not the only person that knows about it." Sarah considers her role as a "conduit" to inspire the RSC team so they take ownership of their own digital learning and potential. For Sarah, the ownership of digital work across the organisation is not about people "necessarily having to know the answers, but knowing that they can find their answers somewhere" so "they will be enabled to make good decisions and choices."

As a digital leader within a large organisation, Sarah notes that she learns from working not only "with technology partners," but also with peers and colleagues across the cultural sector. By being in a "sharing economy with each other as arts organisations", there is more potential for the sector to thrive, "because one of us is going to have a solution...that we can share."

WAYS OF WORKING

For the RSC, digital is not primarily about problem solving. Sarah is quick to debunk the idea that there are digital solutions for every problem, suggesting instead that "failure is about not addressing what the real problem is." This failure to address the 'real problem' can result in large amounts of money being spent on digital projects that are meant to "be the solution to an analogue problem… [that] has been there for a while." Sarah's learning from observing this elsewhere has been to encourage cultural organisations not to ask the digital world for help. Instead, Sarah argues, "What arts organisations should be doing is saying we want to be a 21st century organisation; what *could* we do?"

The RSC looks at collaboration as a way to learn with partners. Sarah describes how experimenting with data-driven artworks has encouraged the organisation to shift from "looking at the technologist as a supportive role" to "looking at the technologist as a collaborator." Catherine describes bringing in specialists to see what potential there might be as a two-way process that can stimulate digital companies to create something new of their own. As

well as collaborating with tech companies, Sarah is keen to keep artists in the conversation around digital as there are "so many artists that are innovating all the time."

The Executive and the Board provide "the influence or steer" for the company's approach to digital, while ownership of delivering through digital is increasingly shared across the organisation. Sarah uses the example that "all departments own their areas on the [new] website, so they share their content, they upload their content, whereas before it may have come through one person." From starting with curiosity, and a range of digital projects, Sarah describes how the RSC has "iterated and built on that learning" so they now have informed strategies embedded across the whole organisation.

In terms of roles, there are KPIs and planning processes for the digital work. Catherine has "overall responsibility or accountability" for these, while people across departments are responsible for delivering. Sarah noted that much of the team's ability to deliver on these KPIs is about project management and using a system which has project sponsors.

LEADERS, STAFF, AND SKILLS

As Head of Digital Development, the introduction of Sarah's role marked a shift from digital being "mainly within the communications team and marketing teams." Her priority is to "get the organisation enabled," looking at "partnerships, artistic development, future thinking" and working with Catherine to align the whole organisation digitally. Sarah doesn't have a digital team. Instead she focuses on connecting, inspiring, and enabling departments across the RSC.

"You don't have an electricity department or a telephone department, do you?" Sarah Ellis

Sarah describes the RSC's digital work as being led through Gregory Doran (Artistic Director) and Catherine, with Greg leading "that artistic conversation...having an overview of the questions around it, and enabling a digital exploration creatively" and Catherine overseeing "the new skills that are coming through, the organisational structure...and making sure that all departments have access to digital." Sarah thinks it is crucial for the

organisation's leaders to be "driving the digital thinking rather than having digital thinking presented…as a solution." This doesn't mean they need to know all about digital, but they need an awareness and confidence in what the organisation is doing digitally. The Board's role around digital is particularly future facing. Sarah describes the strengths of the Board as thinking about the emerging markets, corporate and government investment, other economic and political shifts, and their impact on the RSC.

Most new roles in the organisation have a digital responsibility or require a level of digital understanding. Most teams now have a digitally focused role within them. External contractors are sometimes brought in to look at specific aspects of digital delivery such as user experience or search engine optimisation for the website.

Sarah describes key skills and behaviours as including curiosity, confidence, collaboration, matrix thinking and experience in "basic fundamental project management processes." There are social media people in most departments, a coder within the communications department, a digital artist within the marketing team, and video projection specialists in production. Some of this capacity is about new roles, but a lot of it is about training, enabling existing staff, and recruiting for these skills when people move on.

"Digital is about people…if I can't explain it clearly or someone can't explain it clearly, then that's not…good enough. We don't expect our audiences to come here and not know where to go. And in the organisation it's the same for digital. We mustn't ever make anyone feel excluded because then you've just created a new disenfranchised voice." **Sarah Ellis**

Key words and themes:
Communities, Demystify, Inspire, Culture Change, Partner, Disrupter projects

Vitsoe

Interviewed: Mark Adams (Managing Director)

Established in 1959, Vitsœ is a British furniture company that manufactures and retails furniture designed by Dieter Rams. Since 1995 the company's worldwide headquarters and production have been based in London. Vitsœ "stands for the inordinate power of good design in everything it does, both in its business and its furniture."[35]

MOTIVATION

Vitsoe's use of digital technology is motivated by a clear understanding of the functionality they need for the business, even when the technology doesn't yet exist, and building direct relationships with their customers.

Mark describes wanting to have a tool "in the crook of our arms that we would be able to plan shelving systems on…and then iPhones and iPads and the like have come along." Having "realised that we were in danger of becoming an IT business," however, they decided not to create customer planning apps in the early days, and "closed down multimillion euro business…to get ourselves to the point where we are direct to the end user." They have focused on building and using technology that "allows us to be direct to the customer, which give us the intimacy of a relationship with the customer."

SUCCESS

Vitsoe's pervasive use of digital technology means they have been agile enough to recognise and respond to wider economic and political changes. For example, "in 2007…we were 20% export, 80% UK." Seeing the early signs of the economic crash, they shifted their business model and are now "65% export, 35% UK". Mark notes that they "could not have done that without the planning tool and the Cloudbased backups." Since 2013, they have been "100% direct with all of our customers worldwide. And that's very rare for a business doing what we do, that we have no third parties, retailers, agents, distributors, nothing like that between us and the customer."

Defining success beyond purely financial terms, Mark describes "making a profit" as "absolutely the by-product of us behaving in the right way." Part of this values-led approach is seen in their prioritising of people and community.

Early adopters of the Cloud, and email, Mark Adams describes Vitsoe as "a digitally driven business" that hugely values digital, "but not to the extent where it bypasses human beings, meeting, talking." This is reflected in their internal sharing of success; "We can all feel, on a daily basis, how successful or otherwise we are being, because…everybody in the company receives the customer feedback emails every day."

LEARNING

Mark highlights the necessity of learning from failure, whether from being too led by technology, or by external consultants, or relying on processes that weren't agile enough. He describes how "expensive, bad experiences with outsiders coming in and lording it over us and it not actually working" underpin "a very strong sense in Vitsoe of us trying to grow those skills and experience more within the business".

Having set out "the brief for an interactive website" in 1998, Mark recognised that they "wasted a lot of money trying to make that happen, frankly, too early." They "paid the price for trying to be ahead of the curve" in technology, which is worth cultural organisations really considering in the face of temptation to focus on new technology over the priorities of the business. For Vitsoe, digital "only has to facilitate what you need to do, it can't drive," and they consciously try to "make sure that those big decisions stay right above technology."

In making the transition to a new server, they "went through a long time with… consultants worth £1,000 a day and all of that, and got it ready for the live date, and built everything up. And then we went live. And then for the next six weeks, the business stopped, the business fell over." Having relied on external expertise that didn't use an agile process, they now focus on developing the skills they need in-house, and using an agile approach to developing new projects.

WAYS OF WORKING

Vitsoe has a relatively flat organisational structure, which relies on people taking leadership for the areas in which they have expertise. Mark describes how "it's very important at Vitsoe that leadership is something that comes and goes. There are certain rooms, certain situations where I'm in, in this business, where I stay right back, leave it alone to other people. There are other times where I step forward...So there's a much more fluid method by which we take the grown-up decisions."

This is reflected in the design of their new Leamington Spa building, which sites different expertise and teams in shared tent spaces in an attempt to "break up the upstairs/downstairs, clean/dirty, white collar/blue collar, you name it — and put everybody in the same space."

LEADERS, STAFF, AND SKILLS

This global business runs on a team of 5 technologists, integrates technology across all levels and areas of the business, invests in learning through networks and travel, and relies on its leadership to be tenacious and empathetic.

Vitsoe's key technologist Ceri Robson "travels a lot. He will go to New York, Germany, Denmark, whatever, to see the various teams, sit with them for two or three days. And they all know him well, so you will see, he has chat windows open at any time...And so, they know they can rely on him, so he's a really good fulcrum in the business." People skills and empathy are recognised as being as important in the technologist's role as their tech knowledge.

Mark argues that unless everybody is using digital comfortably, it isn't going to work, "however much effort you put into the technology." This is why, he says, they "do quite a bit of plane tickets and beer money...to make technology work." In the new building, the technology team are going to be "right out in the middle of that space... because that's where the technology team can bring the greatest benefits to the business."

When recruiting, Mark looks for "people who are utterly comfortable and savvy in any areas of the business with the technology." While Vitsoe has "very, very few technology Luddites," they have developed software "to replicate where

[people] had been happy with a ring binder, and tabs." Across all levels of technological expertise, Mark recognises that "there's a real natural hunger in people at Vitsoe to try and want to use these tools to make it work better."

Mark Adam's Munich Sketch of the new Lemington Spa building layout
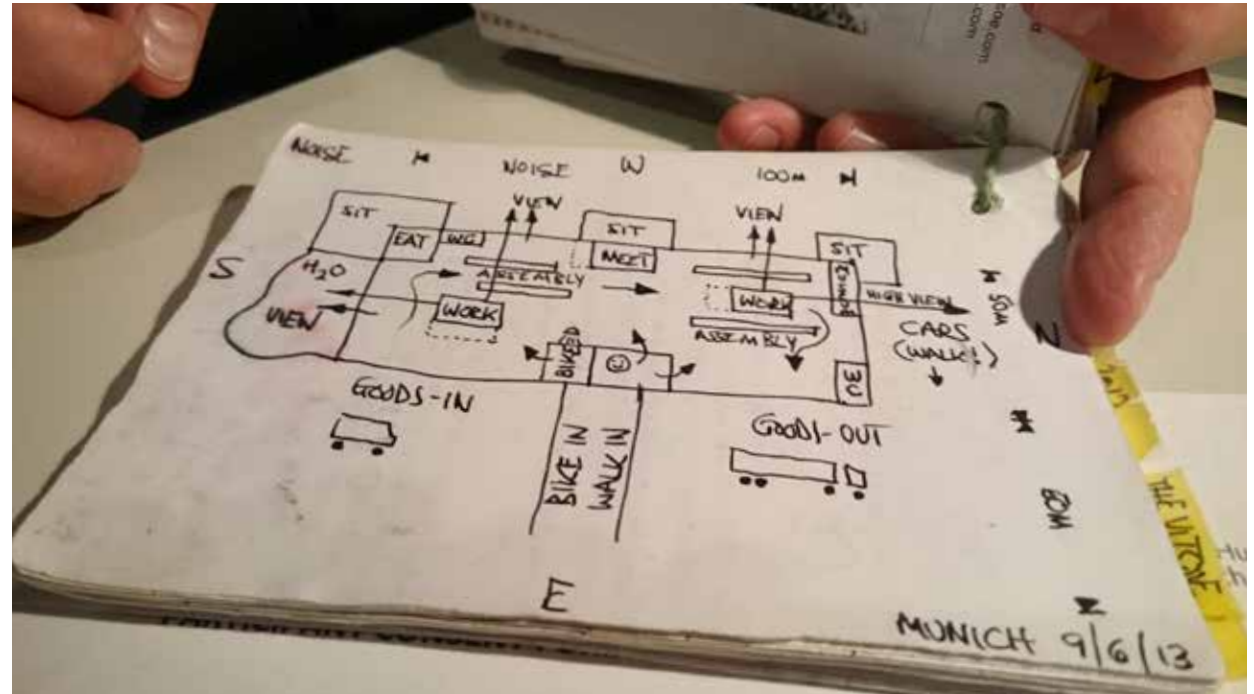
Key words and themes:
Early Adopters, Adaptive, Learning, Values-led, Flat structure, People first

Arts Council England

Interviewed: Dawn Ashman (Director of Creative Industries)[36]

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national funding and development agency for the arts in England, distributing public money from the government and the National Lottery. Its staff comprises of 442 full time posts across 5 regional areas.[37] The agency provides core funding to 663 National Portfolio Organisations and 21 Major Partner Museums.

ACE's Creative Media policy aims include supporting "more artists to create new work for audiences using digital tools and platforms," new partnership approaches to "generate new expertise, investment and sponsorship," and "new learning in relation to reaching new audiences, markets and developing business models."[38]

MOTIVATION

The opportunity to improve business processes, save money, ensure the relevance of their programmes, maximise regional representation and impact, and enhance the resilience of funded organisations through testing new ideas, has motivated ACE to engage with digital technology. Dawn describes another key motivator for engaging with digital as realising that both ACE "and the sector were way behind where we thought users were and other partners were."

The ACE website and grant application system are both being redeveloped, which Dawn notes as "very business orientated process driven." Recognising that big expensive bespoke systems aren't always necessary, the new

application system – Grantium – is built using an off the shelf package and is described by Dawn as marking a shift towards more a user-owned process of applying for and receiving funding. With fewer staff and increasing competition for funds, it is unsurprising to see the application process, which Dawn describes as "obviously the biggest part of what Arts Council does," becoming increasingly self-managed, with spot checks replacing previously paper and human resource-heavy processes.

Dawn notes that ACE's increasing use of social media "shows that we're relevant...proactive" and helps to provide "a new type of transparency," which is so crucial for publicly-funded bodies.

The driver behind strategic funds is often to "test something new, to add to your business model, or ...be more resilient within what you do." Dawn identified the Digital R&D fund, which started ten years ago, as "the very first time we started to have specific funds available [for digital]."

SUCCESS

The shift to user-owned processes of grant applications, from the old ACE-owned processes of paper applications, has the potential to streamline a core business process. It could also make the process more transparent for users, who are increasingly accustomed to being able to manage their own accounts online.

For ACE, success is in part measured by the extent to which it has the "ability and the flexibility to respond quickly enough," the ability to turn failures into learning, and being good at working in partnership. Dawn highlights the success of two particular programmes, focusing on responsiveness and partnerships; the Momentum Music Fund, and the Arts and Technology Pilot Programme with Innovate UK.

Momentum was a pilot small grants scheme, in partnership with the PRS for Music Foundation, for early to mid-career musicians in the contemporary popular music sector of the music industry. The Arts and Technology Pilot aims to enhance innovation in business and arts practice and encourage more interaction between the arts and technology, through funding projects in Nottingham, Manchester and London.

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36   This interview took place in January 2016, before the new Grantium system was launched.

37   Arts Council England, "New Organisational Structure" http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/who-we-are/transparency/human-resources/organisation-review/

38   Arts Council England, *Creative Media Policy* (July 2012), p4-5 http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/creative_media_policy_final.pdf

Momentum aimed to fill a gap in funding between commercial and other public funders, while the Arts and Technology Pilot is investing in cross-sector skills and business development. Both of these examples of success are informed by partnerships and designed to be responsive to sector and user needs and insights, highlighting some of ACE's perceptions of the opportunities afforded by digital technology.

LEARNING

Like the RSC and Vitsoe, ACE learns from failure and iteration. The Space "really pushed our learning" and the shift from the original "platformbased approach" to its new incarnation as a commissioner, evidences this. Dawn notes, "The Space was a big one for us to not get right. Because it was our first real big program on digital." As well as informing the reinvention of The Space, realising that they needed to "test things out a bit longer" also informed the development of the Arts and Technology Pilot. This programme is going through "piloting and testing" in an "open-ended" way so that learning can be integrated while the pilot is still in progress.

The public failure of technology is recognised as contributing to nervousness in the sector; "No matter how well run or how high tech [an event] is, there's always some glitch." While glitches are acceptable for most, instances where the technology "completely stops everything" can undermine confidence and motivation within ACE and the sector to make more pervasive use of technology.

The shift in the roles of Relationship Managers to being increasingly "out and about" has led to more organisational learning from these members of staff as they gather intelligence and ideas from the sector and share this internally. Dawn suggests that this has helped ACE to increasingly become "a listening organisation" and build stronger networks to that they can ask or find out about "the next new thing."

With regards to staff digital skills, Dawn highlights the internal IT newsletter as helping everyone to use technology better within the organisation. ACE are also looking to do internal profile raising and advocacy for innovative funded work to boost motivation and engagement with the development of digital and creative industries. This is notable for more 'light touch' approach to digital capacity building than Civil Service learning.

WAYS OF WORKING

In terms of processes and systems, and becoming a more "resilient organisation," digital technology has "changed a lot" of what ACE does. As well as the shift to a more user-owned process around making grant applications "a bit like your banking account" online, ACE has looked at its own "back office" and resource sharing. They have changed from a "clunky bespoke internal One Place type system where we all communicate, to something much more sophisticated" with video and text interaction. Dawn notes, "I think that's cut things like emails…so that internal communication online is much better."

Digital is recognised as being "connected to all sorts of things," and present in "all of the five goals."[39] Dawn describes the role of ACE in supporting organisations around digital as helping them "to be more resilient," to be "more efficient" on a business process level, "to meet your aims and objectives and be sustainable" and to use digital to help "develop an artistic idea."

LEADERS, STAFF, AND SKILLS

While digital is embedded across all five goals that inform ACE's organisational structure, the Creative Media team are the key brokers of knowledge and insight into digital art and tools within the organisation. There is a Director of Creative Media, Gill Johnson, and a team of Relationship Managers across the country.

"We always lead from a senior team, so new systems and processes have come in. It will be the senior team that gets trained first" **Dawn Ashman**

ACE thinks about digital confidence and capability "not just in our [funded] organisations as a whole, but…in certain parts of organisations," recognising that marketing and communications departments and staff are often more confident with social media, for example, than other parts of the business. Dawn suggests that "smaller organisations in some ways are much more comfortable" with digital and can be more adaptive, while larger organisations and bureaucracies may have to knit together different levels of digital skills

39   Arts Council England's five goals can be found in their Mission
      Statement: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/mission/

across departments.

As ACE has "become comfortable with technology," staff are increasingly trusted in their use of social media. With regards to the development of particular skills and confidence, Dawn notes that "digital will always be part of that conversation."

There is some concern that, because of a long standing pay freeze, ACE salaries are "not quite competitive to draw people in from that more savvy commercial digital side."

ACE uses external consultants "where we don't think we have the capacity or expertise," and Dawn notes how the Chair, Sir Peter Bazalgette, has "basically transformed and supported us as an organisation in how we think about creative media and digital and broadcast...A lot of that is how we bring those external experts in to talk to us. So that we're not inward looking...I think we've certainly learnt from Baz about building on and drawing on those different skills."

User-owned Process, Resilience, R&D, Relevance, Partnership, Gaps

BUILDING DIGITAL LEADERSHIP AND RESILIENCE IN THE UK'S CULTURAL SECTOR

CHARACTERISTICS AND THEMES

While some of these characteristics and themes of leadership and ways of working are specific to the use of digital technology, many of the characteristics of leadership and approaches to robust and accountable project management could have been found in organisations prior to the emergence of digital technology. As Sarah Ellis put it, "Are these characteristics of organisations that use digital technology well, or just well-run organisations?"

DEFINING USERS

While most cultural organisations tend to use the terms 'audience' or 'participant' to describe their users, I collated the terms used by all of the leaders I interviewed.

Yellow = Vitsoe, Green = RSC, Blue = MoMA, Pink = ACE, Orange = Civil Service Learning

The variety of language used to describe the people who they aim to engage, highlights the purpose of these relationships and the intention of the organisation in relation to them.[40] For example, the RSC's language of "communities" reflects their interest in increasing dialogue with users, rather than only 'delivering to' an audience. The range of terms used by the RSC to consider their users also reflects what Sarah Ellis calls the "pathways" to and from this range of users, which she believes can only be built by making sure

40   The debate among tech companies about whether to call people "users", "customers" or some other term is a live one, as the response to Jack Dorsey's decision to drop the term "user" in 2012 highlighted: http://www.forbes.com/sites/katelee/2012/10/18/user-vs-customer-does-it-matter/#626072ab3055

digital is "at the heart of the organisation." Vitsoe talk about their "customers," highlighting the transaction-related nature of these relationships, although they also identified "stakeholders" and "makers" as key groups to engage with, reflecting their values-led ethos and interest in connecting with communities.

LEADERSHIP

Boards and senior leadership

For those organisations with Boards, their primary purpose in supporting the integration of digital technology was considered to be in developing high level relationships. Other roles identified for boards included future profiling and planning in relation to wider economic, political and social trends that could have a bearing on the organisation's resilience and use of digital.

The role of senior leaders in supporting digital integration was described in terms of enabling people, through securing resources and either protecting or embedding digital within the organisational culture. In keeping with other interviewees, Catherine Mallyon of the RSC described her role as making "sure there is the resource, people and money to make things happen, and I think it is about encouraging the organisation to share what we do and learn from other places."

The motivation for senior leadership to support and engage with digital was found in the potential for digital to enable the core business purpose to be realised in the most efficient, innovative and relevant way possible.

Mark Adams at Vitsoe highlighted another key role for senior leaders – that of sharing leadership to ensure that people with knowledge are enabled to take the lead, rather than those with the most senior job title.

Digital leaders

The digital leaders I interviewed within organisations considered the purpose of their role to be enabling, empowering and inspiring staff across the organisation, connecting departments and other sectors to broker partnerships for new delivery, and being accountable.

Many of the leaders interviewed noted the need to be comfortable with sharing power and working in non-hierarchical teams. At Civil Service Learning, for

example, digital leaders used their role and expertise to create hypotheses to test rather than determining an end product for a team to create.

DIVERSE TEAM STRUCTURES AND SKILLS

Digital as pervasive, not other

Instead of being considered or delivered in isolation, organisations need to normalise digital into their everyday thinking and decision making.

Mark Adams at Vitsoe described how digital "is utterly pervasive in the business, utterly pervasive, for everybody." Ultimately, the term 'digital' should become redundant and technology be understood as an enabler for fulfilling the organisation's potential.

> *"Digital has to knit itself into the psychology of an organisation. It can't be the shiny solution and it can't be other."* **Sarah Ellis, RSC**

This principle is reflected in the structural and staffing approaches organisations have taken to integrate digital capacity into their businesses. For the RSC and MoMA, there is no single, separate digital team where all the staff with digital technology functions are sited. At the RSC, Sarah Ellis as Head of Digital Development does not have her own team. Instead she works across the organisation as a "conduit" for innovation. Fiona Romeo at MoMA does manage the production team, but leads on digital content across the organisation through working groups with shared metrics.

At Vitsoe, the technology team is central to the business and use of digital technology is pervasive across the company. At ACE, while Dawn Ashman noted that there is digital expertise and purpose across all of their organisational goals, the most dedicated resource in terms of digital skills can be found in the Creative Media and IT teams. Civil Service Learning is aiming to make digital delivery ubiquitous across the civil service, and the Digital team that John Fitzpatrick leads relies on multidisciplinary expertise to make this possible.

Diversity

The Law of Requisite Variety says that *"the more diverse a network, the greater its ability to respond to change."*[41] This supports the idea that diversity within organisations could help them respond to digital change. Organisations taking action to enhance the diversity of their workforce, outputs and audiences can be more adaptable, and in turn better able to experiment with new and different creative ideas and digital technologies.

Civil Service Learning relies on and delivers for diverse teams and skills in creating and testing its products. For MoMA, the internal transparency required to make the most of digital technology enables them to bring multiple voices into the conversation about their work. This highlights how the ways of working necessary to make best use of digital technology can contribute to diversity, as well as drawing on it.

ACE's Creative Case for Diversity argues that "embracing diversity can help build adaptive resilience," while recognising how "continued risk-taking and innovation is essential to future viability."[42] The Creative Case also notes that "Diversity has the greatest impact when it is actively structured into the culture at all levels."[43]

This whole organisation approach to diversity could yield real benefits to organisations' ability to adapt to change, and not only in technology. As the case study interviews highlight, an infrastructure and organisational culture that embraces diversity could help organisations make the most of digital. A diverse range of skills and approaches could power a culture shift to organisations that test, learn and embed great digital ideas.

The pluralistic use of digital by artists indicates that organisations – and their leaders – could draw on similarly diverse approaches and teams to make the

41   Patti Anklam, *Net Work: A practical guide to creating and sustaining networks at work and in the world* (Elsevier, 2007)

42   Tony Nwachukwu & Mark Robinson, 'The Role of Diversity in Building Adaptive Resilience' (Arts Council England, May 2011), p7

43   Nwachukwu & Robinson, p6

most of digital technology. Peta Murphy-Burke of Arts Council England notes, "artists use digital technologies…to interact with a diverse range of audiences, engage cultural consumers, open out processes, reach out beyond live events and bring the human element to digital spaces."[44] All of these ways of using digital technologies could help organisations connect with and be informed by their users.

Skills

The RSC is committed to building in-house digital skills and Sarah Ellis' role is in part to share her own expertise generously to empower others. For the RSC and ACE, external skills are brought in to inspire teams and for specific projects.

One benefit of investing in in-house skills as well as developing processes for collaboration across the organisation was noted by Fiona Romeo, as people at MOMA increasingly respect "the expertise of the in-house digital media team to translate their requirements."

Vitsoe focuses on growing digital skills and experience internally, supported by a technologist who serves a "fulcrum" role of helping others to learn while also delivering their core job. This approach builds on the principle that making technology work is about people making connections with each other.

The Digital Academy led by Civil Service Learning offers a tested model of hothousing the development of digital skills. It would be interesting to see if cultural sector funders and leaders could test a bespoke skills development offer building on this model.

PROCESSES AND WAYS OF WORKING

Agile

Agile is a project management approach that aims to match the capacity and capabilities of the business to goals and objectives. It evolved in the

44   Peta Murphy Burke, 'Why is ACE supporting GalleryCamp14?' Sept 16, 2014 http://polaroidsandpolarbears.co.uk/gallerycamp-ace-supporting-gallerycamp14/ (30.11.15)

software sector to support project management, time management and team performance. Vitsoe, the RSC, MoMA, and Civil Service Learning all noted the benefits of an agile approach. In discussing ACE's use of technology, Dawn Ashman noted responsiveness and adaptiveness as two key traits for effective organisations. An agile approach can make this achievable.

The Agile manifesto outlines the original thinking behind Agile development, and the 12 principles. Agile can help projects and organisations to:

- Engage with their users

- Understand and collaborate with their users

- Respond to change

- Learn quickly about what works and doesn't work

- Empower teams

Improving the internal transparency of discussions, decisions and delivery can enable organisations to be more open in their external communications, and develop a reputation for leading and sharing best practice among professional peers, while building connections with new audiences.

Agile is a flexible working structure that uses 'Lean' management and coaching techniques to visualise your work in real time and improve everything from planning and prioritisation to responsiveness and motivation.

Practically, Agile uses a system of 'boards' to manage individual's workflow, with notes for particular tasks that get moved through the 'board' as work progresses. Project teams break work into 'sprints' of activity over periods of weeks, with regular (often daily) 'stand-up' meetings to share progress and ideas. These sprints and stand-ups are all action-focused and replace longer, discursive meetings.

Organisations including Adobe, Motorola, Expedia, and the Government Digital Service use agile techniques and approaches. Spotify has been similarly open about their transition to agile and the lessons they have learnt in shaping their workspaces for projects, along with their team ethos, and engineering culture.

MoMA has started using agile methodology to manage some projects. Their

increased internal transparency and pace have been reflected in their sharing of internal conversations publicly through the Inside Out blog, online learning modules with Coursera, and streaming and recording their events for their own YouTube channel.

Fiona Romeo described how MoMA's use of agile has gathered momentum; "When people see that [Agile] works, when they see a site come out in a few months when they would've been used to waiting a year of two, when all of those teams get hold of information that's really important and makes their work easier that they were used to waiting for, it just really starts to develop some momentum."

Using agile can mark a shift from hierarchical, project driven ways of working to being strategic, enabling, and able to deliver quickly in response to feedback and change. It often relies on a flatter team or organisational structure, and both Civil Service Learning and Vitsoe highlighted their flatter structure as key to making the best use of their teams and expertise.

Processes for genuine collaborative working

Most of the organisations interviewed talked about working collaboratively in order to make best use of their staff skills and knowledge, digital technology, and to best achieve their business objectives.

Key factors identified as necessary to make collaborative working possible included leadership mandate and autonomy, protection or insulation of teams from organisational culture and tasks not directly related to the project, and the creation of shared metrics. At MoMA for example, senior staff across the organisation signed up to the objectives for the new website build and then gave the mandate to the delivery team to shape and iterate the website, without then micromanaging the process.

Proof of concept

Making pragmatic use of your projects to test and develop questions, ideas, and skills around digital can inform longer term organisational strategy, and secure the ongoing support of senior leaders, board members and funders. At MoMA, Fiona found that doing something once wasn't enough to embed new ways of working and thinking, and multiple projects were needed to

"normalise" it.

The RSC highlighted successful 'disrupter' or test projects that had showed them what was possible and could then be scaled up. Sarah Ellis described how disrupter projects allow the organisation "to understand why we are doing it [digital]." Sarah found it helpful, in terms of building internal relationships, to fundraise separately for these projects so that the risk to the core business was mitigated and the organisation was able to test new ideas and ways of working.

"For digital to justify itself within this organisation…it needs to pull its weight. It needs to work effectively. It needs to make sense to your organisation."
Sarah Ellis

LEARNING

From Failure

A key theme from the interviews was the importance of learning from failure and getting comfortable with uncertainty.

For John at Civil Service Learning, there was an awareness that early versions of their learning portal "had not been designed strategically around needs and understanding what people needed from the service," and people had "seen lots of failed IT projects" and were sceptical about future plans. Learning from this informed their agile approach and a user-led service.

Sarah at the RSC indicated the importance of becoming comfortable with uncertainty, as working in an agile way in response to a key question or issue, rather than a determined output, is essential to deliver effective digital projects and services. For the RSC, learning from disrupter projects that experimented with digital, has helped the organisation get used to this way of working with uncertainty.

From/With Users

Fiona at MoMA described how technology has enabled the organisation to draw on user feedback to iterate its products and projects. For Fiona, digital is less about flashy projects, and more about redirecting the way the organisation works so it's focused on its users and visitors.

Digital makes more visible the gaps or strengths of a business when it comes to user or customer engagement. For Vitsoe, user insight and user experience focus has long informed the development of their business as well as their products. Technology has facilitated Vitsoe's understanding of their customers across the business. By sharing all customer feedback emails with everyone, Vitsoe's commitment to internal transparency creates a direct link between their customers and staff.

The Civil Service Learning team always start with user research and user need. John describes their first steps as making something that feels better for users, so they can then "think more deeply and strategically about…the things that… could make a massive difference." By transforming people so they prioritise user needs and start with the question to be addressed, rather than the product they think they want, John and his team use their expertise to create hypotheses which are then tested with users.

From/With Networks

Both the RSC and ACE highlighted that cultural organisations best learn from each other as well as other sectors when they recognise what Sarah Ellis calls "the expertise that we have to share," as well as what they need to learn. In order to demystify the term 'digital', the RSC brings in collaborators and works with people "that are different to us in order for us to recognise our strengths as a company…that other people see as something outstanding, and vice versa."

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Principles

For most of the organisations interviewed, their use of digital technology started with the business need. John Fitzpatrick warned against starting with the technology "or the shiny thing that you want," and instead urged cultural leaders to start with the question or issue to be solved for the user. Mark Adams was similarly conscious of not using technology for its own sake, but ensuring that everything is driven by the business need. For Vitsoe, this included identifying the business need even before the technology exists.

With digital considered as a tool to deliver on decisions, rather than the driver of decision making, Vitsoe and Civil Service Learning were both keen to point out that the best use of technology is not necessarily about being "ahead of the curve" or an early adopter, but instead recognising when and what technology can help with your core business.

Tools and Platforms

The RSC uses Twitter, Flickr, eBay, Google Cultural Institute, Basecamp and Slack. MoMA has a Modern Art and Ideas series on YouTube and MOOCs on Coursera, and uses Slack, Wikipedia (for basic introductions to artists), and live streaming, which Fiona Romeo found "really amplifies what is happening at the museum in a very cost effective way."

Vitsoe focused its strategic investment in the core business need and the Java app planning tool "developed from scratch" and live since 2003. Crucially this "heart of the business" can "run off relatively low specification Macs….connected via the Cloud." They then use relatively cheap or free software elsewhere, relying on Trello, Google Docs and Gmail, Eventbrite and Salesforce. In terms of hardware, they are early adopters and "deployed iPhones to 20 people within 12 months of the iPhone coming out."

In stark contrast to these cultural and design organisations, at ACE, "everybody has a mobile phone now, unless you're admin staff," everybody has a laptop, and staff can choose their own phone. With regard to tablets such as iPads, Dawn Ashman noted that "Only one or two senior staff in the organisation in terms of executive board get tablets, but we are looking at that." They also "can't use Skype."

At Civil Service Learning, the team all use Google Docs, Google Drive, Trello, Slack, Prezi, YouTube, blogs, and Twitter to manage and communicate their work. This use of free, existing platforms and software is key to the team's ability to respond to user need and create products that their users will engage with.

"You wouldn't go on, you know, a government version of Twitter, you'd go on Twitter. You wouldn't go on to a government version of LinkedIn, you'd go on LinkedIn. So you use the things that are there already. People, users, don't go for a watered down version." John Fitzpatrick

FUTURE TRENDS & PLANS

Mobile

Mark Adams at Vitsoe defined future success in relation to customer relationships enabled by mobile; "that will be the success...when we know that people finding us this way can then go forward and spend...with us online from their phone."

Sarah Ellis at the RSC also focused on short form and mobile as an emerging priority that could change the way they work, "we need to look at shorter form, form that can be accessible to a broad range of audiences."

User-owned processes and personalisation

Mark Adams at Vitsoe identified that releasing software such as their shelving planning tool in a new version "so that customers can be planning their own shelving systems and chairs...around the world," could be the "real release point, ignition point for our business."

While developments around mobile for Vitsoe and the RSC were discussed in terms of inculcating a closer, user-defined relationship with the organisation, even those without a specific mobile agenda highlighted user-owned processes and personalisation of products and services as an emerging priority.

Dawn Ashman at ACE described how "the Innovate UK [Arts and Technology Pilot] programme is looking at the qualities and characteristics...to enable... something that is on a national level, but more bespoke to people's needs."

John Fitzpatrick at Civil Service Learning was clear that they are focusing on increased personalisation in response to user expectations. They are looking at "trying to personalise learning," because "user research tells us that people want to go to one place for their learning."

Learning to inform future planning

For the RSC, Sarah Ellis is committed to reflecting on learning in order to iterate projects and partnerships, noting that they are going to "make sure that we're looking back on what we've done and helping that inform who we work with."

Dawn Ashman indicated that ACE are considering the potential for a futures unit or capacity within the agency to consider future opportunities and challenges for the sector. This internal thinking runs in parallel to their intention to "challenge organisations to think about those futures and to prepare" over the coming years.

Reflecting on Vitsoe's decades of making and the increasingly close relationship with customers, the company is now "making the transition to employee ownership," building on the "cultural change" they have already made in order to now "make the legal change." The company is also planning to relocate to a new building in Leamington Spa that Mark Adams describes as "celebrating the act of making." This decision to move to Leamington came about because "we were, first and foremost, looking for a community," and they have identified an attitude in the town "of valuing of industrial creativity."

Collaborating with other sectors

Instead of learning primarily *from* other sectors or perceived experts, ACE are interested in learning with other sectors. They are interested in collaborations which could enable them to "discover the new together," so that instead of "trying to catch up," the cultural sector can work with others to create "what the next new digital is going to be, or how it's going to be used or how it's going to be perceived." This is also reflected in their plans for developing their Grants for the Arts programme, which involves, "looking at where some of the gaps are around applicants applying for digital, commercial, creative industries."

For ACE in particular, future plans include more open sharing of learning, profile raising of investment, challenging organisations on futures, collaborating more to discover the new together, and focusing investment around gaps.

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CONCLUSION

Key findings

FROM LEADERS TO STRUCTURES, WAYS OF WORKING, AND TOOLS

As I researched and interviewed leaders about their use of digital technology and the ways this informed their organisations, it became increasingly clear that the effective integration of digital technology owes as much to the context in which leadership takes place, as to the qualities of particular leaders.

Key findings centred around leadership structures and roles, organisational ways of working, and the digital tools that leaders found most useful for innovation and resilience. In response to these findings, future research could usefully be developed to explore what leadership structures and roles, ways of working, and digital tools, contribute to the resilience of cultural organisations in the digital age.

In terms of leadership structures and roles, being given a mandate and a budget by senior leaders and boards to experiment with digital appears to be essential. The role of digital leaders in this context is to connect, inspire, and enable people across the organisation to engage with digital. These digital leaders aren't necessarily technologists; they are translators of digital opportunities, experts in both strategy and delivering practical results through teams.

The most popular digital tools and platforms among the organisations I researched are those that are also most popular and pervasive generally; Google Docs, Gmail, Trello, Slack, YouTube, and Twitter. These often free universal platforms are more familiar to the teams using them – mirroring the systems they use in their personal digital lives – and easy to integrate with websites, and other software.

For cultural organisations and leaders, this should help debunk the idea that expensive, bespoke digital software and technology is needed in order to enhance organisational resilience in the digital age. The expensive part of digital transformation is investing in people, not technology. It's this investment which enables the development of digital skills and capacity, and provides the time needed to test and shape digital projects.

Ways of working that make best use of digital technology are informed by several factors: learning from failure, understanding the importance of user needs, experience and insights, and delivering tangible results from new experiments.

Most of the organisations I studied use an agile methodology to manage and deliver their work, including, but not limited to, their digital projects. While agile project management originated in the software sector (and online tools for its use are popular), agile itself is not inherently 'digital.' An iterative approach and open sharing of progress and process, however, can enable organisations to work in particularly adaptive ways and respond to the challenges and opportunities of the digital age.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Individual and organisational leadership remains, of course, a crucial factor in digital transformation.

Key characteristics of effective leadership identifiable from the interviews include:

- Developing digital skills and staff across organisation, not within a separate department or group of people
- Instead of a digital strategy, consider a statement of purpose about integration of digital technologies within business and artistic strategies
- Providing digital delivery leaders with a mandate – and sufficient budget – to support and test the use of technology
- Starting all digital programmes, projects or processes with user research, iterating in response to user needs and feedback
- Taking a 'people first,' networked approach to digital across whole organisations
- Recognising that digital is not always about scale or flashy projects, it's about transforming people and ways of working
- Inspiring teams and organisational leaders about digital with tangible proof of concept, even if the successful experiments are small in scale

OPPORTUNITIES

For all the barriers facing cultural leaders looking to make the most of digital, a range of research, resources, and free digital tools are available for organisations looking to develop their digital expertise, capacity and resilience. 'The New Reality' report, for example, identifies 20 ways for organisations to achieve digital transformation, Nesta has just published learning from its Digital R&D Fund for the Arts, and free, agile project management tools such as Trello are becoming more widely used.

Funders are increasingly recognising the need for long-term, ongoing learning around digital technologies, as indicated by The Space's prioritising of their mission to "help us to learn" and Nesta's Geoff Mulgan noting that "capacities can't be built in a linear way – delivered to passive recipients. Like so much learning they are better thought of as being like muscles, that are built up through exercise, repetition and coaching."[45] Leadership development programmes for cultural leaders could benefit from increased focus on digital leadership capacity.

The emergence of Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) providers such as Coursera and Future Learn offering free, digital-focused courses, is complemented by practice-based learning initiatives such as the "Tech City's free pop-up university" City UnrulyUniversity, Many & Varied Salons, Open Studio Fridays at Watershed, National Digital Learning Council in Wales, Martha Lane Fox's Go On UK Digital Skills charity, and DotEveryone. As a result, there are free or subsidised digital learning opportunities available to cultural leaders.

45   Anthony Lilley, 'The Space: Great Art Digitally' http://www.thespace.org/news/view/the-space-great-art-digitally (17.7.15). Geoff Mulgan, 'Capacity Building, Gyms and Just Doing It' (Nesta.org.uk, 26.5.15) http://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/capacity-building-gyms-and-just-doing-it#sthash.p5s5ucY0.dpuf

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Integrate learning from cross-sector funders (eg. Nesta) in order to develop specific recommendations for cultural leaders to test within their organisations, and a support toolkit to embed the learning from this testing.
2. Research opportunities and potential for cultural funding programmes that support new processes and outcomes, rather than focusing on outputs.
3. Analyse how commercial creative industries and media organisations integrate tech and use agile approaches to enable their resilience (for example Spotify, Netflix, The Guardian's Project 2021 team), and draw on learning to inform design of leadership development programmes, capacity building workshops for cultural professionals and skills development activity for students interested in cultural careers.
4. Develop, test and iterate practice-based digital learning programme for cultural leaders, working with academic and cross-sector partners to maximise the scope and impact of learning. Use this programme to explore how leaders of arts organisations and museums can practically develop their digital skills and confidence to improve the adaptability and resilience of their organisations.

DISSEMINATION AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

I have identified a number of areas for further study, which I hope will inspire cultural researchers and funders to develop further research and test initiatives to enhance digital leadership across the sector. I used Trello to map my interviews and themes, and will make this board available to researchers who wish to build on my research. Interviewees signed release forms so interview transcripts can be made available to other researchers in future.

I am committed to developing the findings from this research into practical interventions to support the development of digital skills and capacity in the cultural sector.

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