



Culture/Museums

Digital Strategy for Museums in Salzburg

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Background

In 2020 the *Land* Salzburg (the province of Salzburg) started a process to strengthen the digitization of its museums. The aim is to improve the digitization of museums, to develop a common or coordinated objective and to define further procedural measures. Based on the respective planning and implementation situation of the museums, synergies are to be strengthened and used, current projects are to be further evolved and future projects planned.

The strategy was developed jointly by *Land* Salzburg as the initiator, and the technology and strategy consultancy eutema with the Salzburg museums DomQuartier Salzburg, the Haus der Natur (Natural History Museum), the Celtic Museum Hallein, the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, the Salzburg Museum, the Salzburg Freilichtmuseum (Heritage Museum) as well as the Mozart museums and the state rooms of the Old Residence and the Hohensalzburg Fortress. The document was developed with strategic support after taking stock in workshops, individual interviews and with written documents and strategic analysis. The digital strategy is co-ordinated with location strategies such as the Science and Innovation Strategy Salzburg 2025 and the master plans developed from it, as well as the cultural development plan of *Land* Salzburg. The Digital Strategy for Salzburg Museums was concluded on 16 March 2021 by the DomQuartier Salzburg, the Haus der Natur, the Celtic Museum Hallein, the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, the Salzburg Museum, the Salzburg Freilichtmuseum as well as the Mozart museums, the Old Residence and the Hohensalzburg Fortress as an important strategic instrument.

Digitization is not an end in itself, but an opportunity to rethink and further develop the concept of the museum, its organization and processes, focal points and the relationship with the public and partners. The holistic digital strategy aims to ensure that digital projects are carried out successfully. The strategy is understood as an iterative document that is to be regularly scrutinised and evolved further. It supports the individual museums in developing their own digital strategies and aims to ensure a coordinated approach.

Framework Analysis

Digitalization as a game changer - also in museums

The decisive feature of the post-digital society is the penetration of all areas of life, as well as culture and museums, with digital technologies to an extent that it no longer makes sense to separate digital and non-digital areas. Digitization is not merely a superficial process that just adds a new layer of access to information about familiar traditions, but results in profound changes. New communication technologies and digital reproduction and storage technologies cause, among other things:

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- a changing role of museums and their collections when parts of the collections are digitally preserved and made accessible;
- a change in the relationship between museums and society when new technologies enable topical contextualization of exhibitions and provide visitors with new forms of communication and content and thus create new contexts for artworks;
- a shift in the traditional concept of location when access to collections and libraries from anywhere becomes possible for many museums worldwide, and the museum expands into the digital space.

All in all, digitalization is changing fundamental concepts that affect the essence of museums and go far beyond questions of the reproducibility of objects and works of art. The concept of preservation is changing more and more towards the digital; access can also mean virtual access and a collection can refer to data collection much more than at present. Decisions about these concepts affect politics, values, and the culture of museums - and subsequently also their organization and thus the entire work in museums. They are cultural organizations that are shaped by society, but at the same time also shape society. For this reason alone, they not only reflect developments such as digital transformation, but intervene in them constructively to a greater or lesser extent.

Core tasks of the museums

Even if digitization changes many things, the central tasks of museums in a post-digital society remain intact. Above all, this includes:

- The selection, curation and interpretation of objects or collections and their contexts, their exploration, and preservation.
- The experience of the physical, authentic objects in the museum.
- The design of the museum as a place that brings people together to deal with culture, society, nature and history. To reflect on the present, and thereby as a social institution enabling education, experience and discourse.

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The benefits of digitization

In addition to these constants, digitization also introduces new things that are impossible or very difficult to do without digital technologies:

Digitization can empower visitors

Digital communication structures not only make it possible to integrate many people almost instantaneously into what is happening, but above all they allow the creation of content, participation in social processes and collective decisions. Target groups can play a creative role, participate in decision-making, pass on, evaluate, select and find.

Digitization can therefore empower visitors

- to expand their knowledge actively and be guided by interests;
- to contribute content and share personal perspectives and experiences with others;
- to give recommendations to other visitors;
- to make selection decisions individually or collectively
- and much more.

An important trend and new task for museums is the democratization of culture. New technologies question the role play of the knowledgeable (i.e. the museum) versus the less well informed (i.e. the visitor) and favour the process of knowledge sharing. Digital technologies expand the possibilities of access to the object far beyond its location and physical experience. In this way, new target groups and groups with special needs can be addressed in terms of broad inclusion.

- Special target groups: children, schoolchildren, teachers, in order to grasp the abstract in a concrete way
- Educationally disadvantaged groups who are looking for new experiences and knowledge
- Digital natives - millennials, people looking for values, content, and dreams
- People with special needs, such as people with restricted mobility or other restrictions

- People with a non-German mother tongue.

In addition, in a digital world, cultural heritage cannot simply be reduced to physical objects. Creation, history, and interpretation also take place digitally.

Digitization changes the collection

The museum's collection will continue to be defined primarily by the physical object and its documentation, research and preservation. However, digitization is changing the collection by making object-specific information and aspects available in digitized form. The task of collecting is thus expanded to include the preservation of adequate digital content as well as those objects that are by their nature digital (i.e. "digitally born"). Digital copies do not always come close to the real object, but they are more easily usable, reproducible, accessible, etc.

- The authorization of the visitors changes the collection through processes of co-creation (instead of consumption):
 - Visitors can actively contribute digital contributions to the collection (text, audio, video) instead of just "consuming" them.
 - Visitors can design virtual exhibitions or help to shape future ones.
 - Visitors can collect or document objects virtually (Citizen Science / Citizen Culture).
- Digitization can help to discover new connections and contexts.
- Digitization can facilitate sustainability, accessibility, relevance and research.

Smaller museums can also be intensive centres for knowledge, experience and learning. They have the opportunity - albeit on a small scale - to set priorities and use digital technologies to improve access to their treasures, which are sometimes difficult to see or are inaccessible.

Digitization improves the experience

Digitization can massively expand the experience of collected objects:

- New experiences
 - Experiences that the physical object does not allow (audio, video, information, contextualization, interaction)
 - Visitors can see parts of the collection that are physically inaccessible.
- Improved visitor journey: *before - on site - after the visit*
 - Prior knowledge improves the experience for visitors, all the more so if it is personalized.
 - In addition to the aura of the original, information quality, design, completeness, authority etc. are reasons for visiting a museum. Digitization allows the on-site visit to be individualized.
 - Knowledge can also be passed on and deepened digitally after the on-site visit and thus encourage recommendations for the next visit, for example.
- shopping experience
 - Moving away from mass-produced goods to individualized or museum-branded souvenirs, books, etc.
 - Online shopping, for example also to prepare and improve the visit.

The digital transfer of knowledge can take place inside and outside the museum and occur through apps, own devices (Internet on smartphones - BYOD) and on websites. Digital technologies support multilingualism in that texts are translated into several languages in a semi-automated manner or can even be read out aloud.

Digital technologies form the basis for improved connection and networking of places, objects, people and organizations, for example by means of social networks. They make it possible to react promptly to current developments. Digital media can also be used in conjunction with non-digital forms, e.g. by supporting or preserving guided tours and events with texts and publications. Some museums have also established "digital tours" that are conducted online.

Digital systems can facilitate the utilization of the museum's resources and strengthen the loyalty of guests and friends' associations to the museum. Ultimately digital systems often also lead to operational adjustments, for instance in the planning of resources. This may also include the strategic development of competence in the field of digital technologies.

Status quo

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The Salzburg museums have already set the tone for digitization. Some have digitized part of their collections, they maintain digital catalogues, and manage their libraries digitally. All museums have their own homepages, which are regularly updated and provide information about current exhibitions. Some museums offer their own web shops and provide the option of purchasing annual tickets or a ticket voucher online. Most museums are planning or implementing online ticketing. Different systems are in use, and in many cases the actual admission ticket must first be purchased at the museum cash desk. Individual entrances have not yet been implemented, i.e. this will sometimes require structural adaptations in buildings.

The Salzburg museums use digital tools in their communication work and are present on social media. Many different systems are in use here too, and the technology is developing very quickly. A few museums already use digital systems for content-related collaboration with the interested public. The first digital systems for measuring feedback from museum visits are in use or are currently being implemented. Previously, indicator systems for museums only covered a very small part of digitization (e.g. the website). Explicit strategic considerations regarding digitization are only available, for example, in mission statements, but so far not as a separate strategy document.

Risk assessment

Digitization offers many opportunities and advantages, but it also harbours risks. Museums are often referred to in a context of total profitability, meaning their influence on tourism, education, teaching, leisure, and a liveable environment. This is related to economic revenue, although mostly not directly for the museums. The location of the museum often plays an important role here, while the mission of the museums to preserve the cultural heritage is not actually location specific. But if small establishments put their few gems online, this could reduce their number of visitors. It is therefore necessary to use other success factors rather than only the number of visits to the museum. Digital technologies therefore also expand the definition and meaning of various success indicators. With a suitable definition, many of them can be automatically evaluated, and used for future planning (e.g. web access, content requests, user behaviour, etc.). The digitization of objects allows entire collections to be made virtually accessible. In doing so, however, the important commentary and contextualization function of the museum must not be overlooked. Individual and sometimes problematic collection objects can be taken out of context online and cause unwanted irritation. Examples are objects from the period under Nazi rule or objects that deal with minorities.

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An important aspect of risk assessment is the work and personnel costs associated with digitization. Paradoxically, it can happen that this arises only after the end of a digitization project, e.g. if access to the digitized collection or a project in the field of citizen science is a great success. This can lead to many inquiries and high expectations on the part of users, which may not be easy to meet.

The use of digital technologies also requires special attention to special legal framework conditions, e.g. data protection, intellectual property rights, etc.

Digitization Strategy for Museums in Salzburg

Trends, Vision and Mission for the Digitization Strategy of Museums in Salzburg

Current trends

- Digitization is not an end in itself but should support the museums in Salzburg in taking important current trends into account in their planning. These include changes in the guest structure, the trend towards quality tourism and changed expectations and habits of museum visitors.
- **Quality tourism:** when the COVID crisis has been overcome, the trend towards quality tourism can be expected to continue. In the future this also means conveying content in high quality and with a focus on individual interests in a targeted manner. Locals and people from surrounding areas are becoming particularly important target audiences, and digital content can help improve quality.
- The generation of **millennials** represents an important, growing target group for museums. To a high degree this target group is technology-savvy, uses a wide variety of social networks with different objectives, and expects a strong and also digital service orientation. This generation offers the opportunity to serve as a multiplier, to deal with digital technologies on a large scale, and to generate content. But it also demands effortless interoperability and digital services.
- In addition to the millennials, the **baby boomers**, i.e. the baby boomers of the 1960s represent an important target group. They will retire in the mid-2020s and have enough free time to visit museums regularly or even frequently. Museums should therefore also understand the digital needs of this generation.
- The **digitization of society** will continue to increase. With the change in demographics, technical devices (such as smartphones) are no longer just basic equipment for younger generations. This requires new preferences for the presentation of content, new expectations of support services and an increasing willingness to use electronic forms of payment and for obtaining tickets.
- **Cooperation** with other organizations, especially with tourism providers, the education sector, and leisure activities will continue to grow. This also applies to aspects of digitization, e.g. in the area of sales, ticketing, or the exploitation of digital content.
- Due to **increased transparency requirements** and new digital possibilities, it is to be expected that museums will have to satisfy new or more extensive information needs. This applies to financial indicators, audits, as well as new indicators such as online visitors etc.

- There are currently two opposing trends in the field of IT systems. On the one hand, **outsourcing** (IT, security, cloud) is increasing, on the other hand, **insourcing** is occurring of services that were previously outsourced (e.g. CRM, social media).

Vision

The museums in Salzburg are places that enable an aesthetic experience of art, culture, nature, and science, and offer a modern educational and knowledge experience for everyone. Digitization should support this experience on site as well as location-independent, and enable open access without barriers for everyone. With the help of digital transformation, museums can continue to position themselves as spaces of innovation and creativity, experimentation, democratic participation in education, knowledge and critical reflection, and thus play an important role in society and for society.

The digitized Salzburg museums are places of exchange that are geared towards the needs of the growing target groups and also serve these needs with digital means. The Salzburg museums are committed to including increased digital technologies in their range of services or to use them for the provision of their services and to work together with one another and with other institutions for this purpose. The Salzburg museums aim to be actively involved in shaping this digitization.

Digital technologies should primarily be used where they represent an improvement in quality for visitors and the museum, i.e. for example in ticketing, in improving the museum experience before, during and after a visit. However, digitization should also be used to optimise fulfilling the museum's collection and research tasks.

The Salzburg museums have a fundamentally open and positive attitude towards new technologies and towards digitization. They follow the development with interest and are also inclined to use and influence this development in carrying out their tasks. Possible risks are recognized, actively addressed and managed.

Mission

Digitization is intended to support Salzburg's museums in their mission to preserve, research, and make Salzburg's natural and cultural heritage accessible. Digitization should be used to support museums in their educational tasks. However, it can also enable completely new missions, for example to move towards the democratization of museums, to reach target groups in a higher quality than before, to overcome barriers to museum visits, and to involve museum visitors in the creation of content and scientific work.

Principles for the use of digital technologies

- Digital technologies should be used in a demand-oriented manner and based on feedback from the public. This use should be quality-oriented, sustainable (e.g. taking into account robustness and maintainability) and with attention to the topicality of the content. When designing and using digital technologies, employees must be involved, taking their needs into account.
- Digitization should offer clear added value. Digitization is not about digital activism, but about the future-oriented use of the possibilities of digital technology.
- Digitization should be entrepreneurial and innovative - with regard to new offers - and used in partnership (e.g. with other museums and institutions in the province).
- Museums strive to understand digitization holistically, i.e. digitization covers the entire organization (such as maintaining and extending the collection, research work, the visiting experience, communication and support functions such as ticketing and financial management) and not just marketing.
- During implementation, the aspect of sustainability in accordance with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations - especially in the area of communication - must be taken into account. Value is placed on the careful use of resources and long-term solutions as well as continued use.

Strategic fields of action

The implementation of the digital strategy improves access to a larger and more diverse public, and for science and research, regardless of time and place. It strengthens bonds with the public through a more individual approach, experience options, and the presentation of new educational content. Likewise, synergies are achieved through accelerated processes that free up work resources for creativity and innovation. The digital strategy is an essential factor for the resilience of museums and for strengthening the cultural region of Salzburg. An innovation culture, support structure, and flexible methods are implemented, thereby facilitating the successful implementation of digital projects. Areas of action and goals can be divided into the following five areas:

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1. Enhancing the museum experience
2. Achieving higher numbers of visitors
3. Making museums more democratic - encouraging visitor participation
4. Developing collections digitally
5. Optimising organization

Impact goals

1. Enhancing the museum experience

Museums reach their visitors through objects and stories (as well as through events, publications, etc.) In the past this interaction was limited primarily to the location of the museum and publications. Digitization has the potential to change this: from the collection to the location of the museum to (virtual) interaction with objects.

- Setting up a portal through which all museums in the province of Salzburg can be reached.
- Producing a real electronic ticket that makes it easier to enter the museum.
- Better control of visitor flows if necessary (time slots, locations).
- Create prior knowledge, prepare for the visit and facilitate access. This can include devising stories about current exhibitions and making the collection available online in several formats (including social media) and languages.
- Improve leadership: individual, multilingual, location-based and autonomous.
- Digital content should be offered in such a way that it supports museum visitors as independently and individually as possible. This means making content available, for example, on the museum's website and via the museum's internet (WiFi-service) so that they can be used before, during and after a visit if necessary. Apps and audio guides can supplement the offer but should no longer be the only focus.
- Creating an experience: making what is invisible and inaccessible tangible via the senses.
- Enabling follow-up support: deepening knowledge, motivating people to return, generating enthusiasm and making recommendations to potential visitors.
- Making additional information about exhibits available online (audio, video, interactive formats - e.g. rotating objects, making the backs visible).

2. Achieving higher numbers of visitors

First of all, this means reaching new target groups. This includes, for example, people with special needs or those with a lack of education. However, it also means reaching out differently depending on the target group, e.g. addressing schools specifically and supporting them with online materials:

- Reach visitors in various languages
- Reach children and adolescents even better than before (e.g. also through the Education Directorate)

Salzburg's museums are located in historical buildings - or they are historical buildings themselves. Museums are traditional buildings or at least - as in the case of the open-air museum and the

outdoor areas of art museums - defined, delineated locations. Digital collections allow access regardless of location and without drastic interventions in the physical infrastructure. The distinction between location-based and location-independence requires fundamentally new concepts and decisions.

- Improve information about visitors for the museum organization and create the basis for marketing measures, content adjustments or organizational changes. This includes access statistics, online surveys, new indicators, and automated evaluations.
- Differentiate information on exhibits according to target groups.
- Select highlights for the online presentation, define highlights for the on-site presentation.
- Set up or improve web shops.
- Combined tickets or marketing cooperation to motivate visitors to plan their next museum visit.

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3. Encouraging visitor participation

Museums present objects. In the past this presentation was primarily of a unidirectional character: from the museum to the visitor. Digital forms of communication are bidirectional. They support interaction, commenting and selection by visitors.

- Citizen Science, Citizen Culture and other forms of crowdsourcing can improve the visit, and also make important contributions to research work. These approaches should undergo further experimentation because they mean real participation in the museum.
- Use Creative Commons licenses as far as possible, e.g. for images of the objects in the collection.
- Enable co-creation: visitors create content (experiences, stories, exhibitions, objects, connections, corrections).

Examples

- Citizen Science: Collection of evidence for the distribution of animal species in the province of Salzburg
- Citizen Culture: Documentation of selected Salzburg cultural assets by the population
- User Stories: stories from visitors about objects; text, images, audio
- Visitors make an exhibition: visitors put objects together in a virtual exhibition room (also possible via various museums)

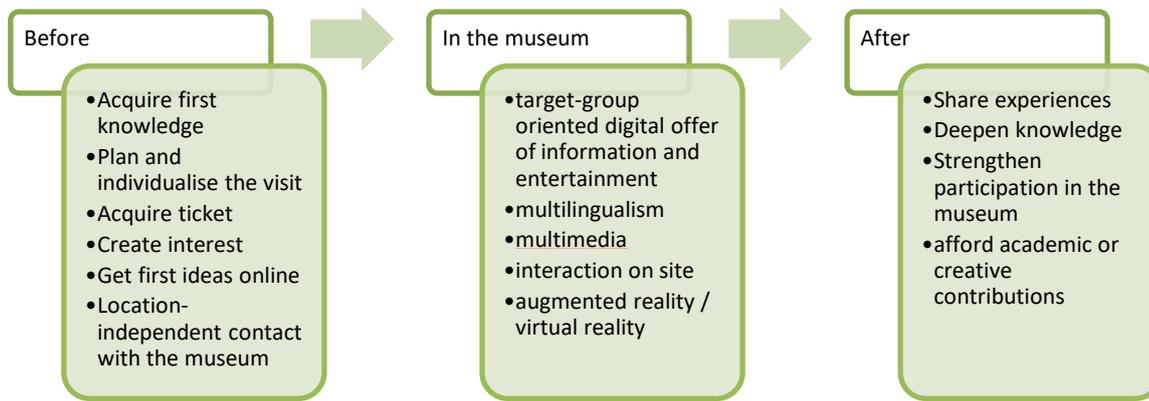


Figure 1: Visitor experience before, during and after the museum visit can be enhanced in many ways with the help of technology.

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4. Develop collections digitally

The Salzburg museums have digitized their collections to varying degrees. For the future therefore, important decisions must be made about the procedure and goals of digitization.

- Make more objects accessible digitally, set up digital access to complement exhibitions
- Providing more than just images: 3D, film and audio
- Develop archives and libraries and strive for interoperability
- Consider digital cultural assets

Examples:

- Define goals of digitization: quality, scope, interoperability, hosting
- Define the interface regarding public relations: scope, form, rights
- Make libraries available for research online and clarify cooperation with the library network for all museums

5. Improving organization

Digitization should also be implemented in the museums themselves to improve processes. The appropriate skills are important for this. Targeted build-up of personnel capacity will be necessary in many cases, as refilling vacant posts due to retirement is too slow.

- Expand digital competence and promote the exchange of experiences with other Salzburg museums.
- Improve training and further education for employees in the field of digital technologies.
- Use digital tools to provide uniform information requirements, define and determine success indicators and KPIs for digital channels.
- Improve communication and networking (between places, people and organizations) in order to support mutual exchange and enable the sharing of experiences.
- Use CRM systems.

- Define digital information needs of the organization (and other decision-makers, e.g. the government, supervisory bodies, the national audit office).
- Exchange information about IT systems, approaches and tools in reciprocal use and with other museums, educational and research institutions, etc.

Implementation

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Digital transformation is a matter for managers. The projects that work best are those that are developed under the clear leadership of the management. Digital projects are complex and require the cooperation of many departments and teams. The directorates must ensure that the digital goals coincide with the goals of the museum. Digital skills are particularly important in public relations, but they also affect almost all other organizational areas. This includes information services and digital experiences for visitors as well as administrative and management tasks. Investments in digitization should be understood as infrastructure, not just marketing. This also affects the question of budget planning. The implementation strategy should pursue long-term goals and build on the existing strengths of the organization. Nevertheless, individual experiments that are carried out with competent partners - but with sustainability in mind - are just as useful. Digitization is not a standard process and it is a clear challenge for smaller museums. Therefore, failure of some experiments and novel ideas should also be accepted.

The first phase of implementation of this strategy is underway; some measures have already been implemented or are being planned. The design of further measures is based on the strategy adopted or on its further development. The implementation of this strategy is evaluated at regular intervals. The Salzburg museums will adapt their respective strategies and mission statements to this digitization strategy.



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