



THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITIZATION IN THE CONFIGURATION OF THE VALUES OF CULTURE.

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TOPIC

The *value* of digital and digitized culture

The aim is to look at how an independent variable affects a dependent variable.

The independent variable is digitization and the digital turn, while the dependent variable is *the configuration of the values of culture*.

Culture: (the production and use of) a diversity of cultural expressions, including cultural heritage.



QUESTIONS ASKED

What kind of values might be related to the digital turn in the cultural sector?

What does research tell us about these questions?

In what way does digitization influence how culture is valued?

Data: a systematic literature review to investigate results from different strands of research on the relations between digitization and on the configuration of values of culture.

CORE CONCEPTS: DIGIT(AL)IZATION AND VALUE

Digitization and digitalization: «the conversion of analogue data to digital data” vs

“the more general process of employing digital tools, digital modes of communication, digital systems, and the structural changes that follow from it.”

Our understanding: digitization is *the process of transition from analogue to digital modes of information, documentation, communication, production and distribution.*

CORE CONCEPTS: DIGIT(AL)IZATION AND VALUE

Any discourse on culture: a discourse on value

Cultural production and cultural policy: marked by a dual set of values: commodity and symbolic object; market and non-market value; economic and cultural value; instrumental and intrinsic value.

Value and digital culture?

Digitization effects cultural value:

“Changes in the way art and culture is produced and consumed are taking place that are cultural processes in themselves, rather than solely technological changes, with implication for the character of cultural value.» (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, p. 34). [commenting on digital transformations]

METHODOLOGY

- initial literature search: *digit** AND *value* AND *culture* generated more than 1 million results. Generic terms
- developing search terms through a snowball method. Key terms in key articles.
- Categories of terms: 1) **Driver** (*digit**, 'new technolog*', algorithm etc.), 2) **Actor**, with the sub-categories a) *Consumer* (user, participa*, prosumer etc.), b) *Producer* (artist, 'cultural entrepreneur*', co-creation etc., and c) *Administrator* ('cultural administration', 'bureaucra*' etc.), 3) **Cultural field** (*art**, 'cultural content', music, literature, book, theatre, film, gaming etc.) and 4) **Value** (value, 'social value', 'cultural value', 'intrinsic value', worth, access, democra*, participation, diversity etc.).
- From 671 (gross) to 150 (net) contributions through relevance testing

TAGGING. INDUCTIVE VALUE IDENTIFICATION

Metalevel, value	
Value	12
Cultural policy	5
Cultural value	3
Social value	3
Public value	2
Value of labour	2
Value chain	1
Value creation	1

Production	
Quality	9
Professionalism	4
Intellectual property	3
Economy	2
Autonomy	2
Innovation	2
Creativity	2
Copyright	1
Prosumption	1
Cooperation	1
Protection	1

Access	
Access	12
Democratization	9
Democracy *	8
Education/literacy	4
Inclusion	3
Information	2

Participation	
Participation *	45
Diversity	12
Equality	8
Identity	8
Empowerment *	6
Authenticity	6
Heritage	5
Identification	5
Prosumption	4
Fairness/justice	3
Experience	3
Entertainment	3
Citizenship	2
Integration	2
Freedom	1
Activism	1
Freedom of speech	1
Collaboration	1
National culture	1
Collectivity	1
Community	1
Individualization	1

* includes all *non*-forms, e.g. Non-democracy



PRODUCTION, ACCESS, PARTICIPATION

PRODUCTION

- a relatively low number of studies deal specifically with digital cultural value from a production perspective
- a certain focus on cultural *intermediaries* rather than producers
- a development from optimistic to pessimistic visions: from the lowering of production thresholds to the threat of AI
- from the democratization of creativity to the disruption of value chains of cultural production

ACCESS

- a primary legitimation for most digitization projects in the cultural sector
- value of access has often been twinned with values like equality, equal rights and general democratization.
- the value of access: has to be created in a «balance between commercial and public interest of culture».
- increased complexity in ideas of access: from access to use, from mere availability to quality of experience
- flip sides of digital cultural access: reproduction of inequality, unregulated power of global companies, or the development of more complex varieties of the digital divide.
- from empowerment to disempowerment?

PARTICIPATION

- the positive discourse: reaching new audiences, giving marginalized group a cultural space, reducing barriers and thresholds
- digital or digitizing cultural heritage: increases local and amateur involvement, but also challenges definitions of what should be considered heritage
- from techno-centred to people-centred
- the negative discourse: consolidation of power structures, reproduction of inequalities, algorithmic illiterates
- balanced, slightly critical discourse: ambiguities of participatory culture. “colonisation, emancipation or a mixture of both” .

SUMMING UP

Digitization of content, digital tools and digital distribution has changed the field of cultural production and the value dynamics of this field.

Values of production: how digitization affects the possibilities, work and results from cultural production. A central value in this category is *creativity*, in the sense that digital tools and digitized processes democratize creativity, enabling more people to take part in creative endeavours. At the same time, a growing number of works have pointed to the limitations of this creative democracy, perhaps mostly visible through the massive influence of the large platforms and tech companies.



Values of access: fundamental to promote and legitimate the public benefits of digitizing within the arts and culture sector.

As a fundamental value of digitization, access has been seen as leading to subsequent, derived values, like *democratization* of culture, *inclusion* and general *education*.

As analyses of digital access to culture has developed, the focus has shifted from mere access and availability to the way digitized culture is used and experienced. An example: studies of the digital divide, where digital inequalities no longer are related to questions of access to the internet and technological infrastructure, but to patterns of use



Values related to *participation*: attributed to the actual use and experience of digital culture.

A widely recognized value in this category is the potential for a more diverse audience, made possible through lower thresholds for participation. However, the results are ambiguous. Digital tools do not in and of themselves lead to a more diverse audience and increased participation.

There is nevertheless a potential value in diverse identification and heritage processes through the use of digital and digitized cultural heritage. At the same time, we find also within the studies of this category of values a critical strand of analysis, focusing e.g. upon the negative consequences of the hegemonic algorithms of the large platform companies.

