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# **Digital Transformation in Georgia's Creative Sector: Key Challenges and Opportunities**

# Digital Transformation in Georgia's Creative Sector: Key Challenges and Opportunities

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The research document “Digital Transformation in Georgia’s Creative Sector: Key Challenges and Opportunities” is created in the framework of the “Digital Transformation” project, which seeks to develop a relevant environment for digital transformation for creative industries in Georgia. The project aims at identifying the needs and challenges within the creative sectors through research, raising awareness about digital tools and trends, and highlighting their potential benefits for creative industries. Additionally, the project aims to build capacity and create opportunities for the development of creative professionals and cultural organizations.

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# Abbreviations

**AI** – Artificial Intelligence

**App** – Application

**AR** – Augmented Reality

**CLDP** – U.S Commerce Law Development Program

**DCMS** – Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport

**EIP** – Economic Investment Plan

**EU** – European Union

**GITA** – Georgia’s Innovation and Technology Agency

**5G** – Fifth generation of wireless cellular technology

**ICT** – Information Communication Technology

**ICOM** – International Council of Museums (ICOM)

**IoT** – Internet of things

**LEPL** – Legal Entity of Public Law

**NFTs** – Non-fungible Token

**PR** – Public Relations

**PIRLS** – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

**PISA** – Program for International Student Assessment

**TIMSS** – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

**UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**WWW** – World Wide Web

**VR** – Virtual Reality

# Introduction

This report was created to help creative organizations and professionals engage in the digital transformation process. It explores the **digital identity** of these institutions, focusing on how they are adapting to the process of digital transformation, the **factors that support** this transition, and **the challenges that impede** their integration into the digital realm. Generally, digital transformation in the creative industries refers to how “they respond to digital innovations, accept the technologies, and enhance their digital presence”.<sup>1</sup> However, for the purposes of this report, the concept of digital identity **is applied** specifically to the efforts of cultural organizations to represent themselves in the digital space, **which is evaluated by the representation on the digital platforms (WWW, Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, etc) and adoption of digital tools (AI, Apps, Mobile Technologies, VR, AR, etc).**

The study was conducted during the fall, 2024. Data for this research were collected from a variety of sources, following a structured, two phase approach. Primary data was collected electronically using email and Facebook, while secondary sources were gathered through online research.

The first phase involved a comprehensive review of international literature on the digital transformation of cultural industries. Our aim with the literature review was not only to support the research with theoretical background, but also to look for good practical examples and case studies that can serve as a model for digital transformation for cultural organizations. In addition to the literature review, international policies were analyzed to understand the benefits of digital transformation and to help to provide recommendations for the Georgian creative industries.

The second phase involved conducting survey’s using three types of questionnaires designed for specific target groups: **experts** in the creative sector, representatives of **creative organizations**, and Georgian **municipalities**. To respect the choice of our participants, we used initials rather than their full names.

Prior to selecting respondents, **the areas eligible for inclusion** in the survey were determined. Nowadays, various definitions exist for creative industries. In Georgia, the definition adopted from the UK Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) is used, which describes creative industries as sectors that rely on the creativity, skills, and talents of individuals, where the creation of intellectual property can lead to the generation of wealth and job opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Povroznik, Nadezhda. “Museums’ Digital Identity: Key Components”. *Internet Histories* 8, no. 1-2 (2024): 154.

<sup>2</sup> Creative Georgia. “Creative Economy in Georgia: Baseline Study of Key Indicators, Characteristics and Needs”. 2022, <https://iset-pi.ge/storage/media/other/2022-11-08/e75b5110-5f5c-11ed-a951-11b271e93950.pdf>.

Georgia has adopted a classification for creative industries, supported by LEPL “Creative Georgia”. This classification was developed based on the legal frameworks of the European Commission and UNESCO, as well as international best practices and local experience. According to this classification, creative industries in Georgia include: *architecture, design and the fashion industry, fine arts, performing arts, digital technology, film and video, literature and publishing, media and broadcasting, music, advertising, cultural heritage, arts and cultural education, crafts, gastronomy, and the culinary industry*.<sup>3</sup>

Key areas were identified based on excluding industries that have utilized a wide range of digital technologies over the past decade, in their daily activities. These industries include: architecture, design, fashion, media, broadcasting, advertising, and the digital technology industry. The gastronomy and culinary industry, while culturally significant, are mainly business-focused and underrepresented in creative fields, with limited participation in Georgia’s creative programs and competitions.

The research is concentrated on: **fine arts, visual arts, performing arts, literature and publishing sectors, music, cultural heritage, arts and cultural education, and craft industries.**

The primary objective of all three questionnaires was to gather insights into the ongoing digital transformation within Georgia’s creative sector. The questionnaires explored general questions regarding the digital tools and platforms utilized, their functions, significance, and usability limitations. Furthermore, creative organizations were asked about the digital skills they aspire to acquire for future professional growth, while museums were specifically inquired about their PR strategies.

**Experts were chosen** based on their professional qualifications and the expertise in the respective creative fields, with at least one expert interviewed for each area.

Organizations that have been actively engaged in creative activities for **at least three years**, produced creative products or services, and contributed to job creation in the creative sector during individual projects were chosen for the survey. Selection criteria included participation in the arts and culture supportive programs launched by the Tbilisi City Hall and the Ministry of culture, including two key competitions: The Tbilisi Municipality City Hall’s “**Creative Tbilisi**” and the Ministry of culture’s “**Creative Georgia**”. It is important to note that **information about competition participants is public** and accessible to interested individuals. The selection for participation focused on **specific directions** within the creative sector rather than the entire classification of creative industries.

A total of **30 organizations** were selected through random sampling to send the questionnaire, and **12 of those** organizations agreed to participate. Some organizations did not respond, while others refused to participate, offering explanations to justify their refusal. The primary reason cited was a lack of relevance. Their own interpretation of digital transformation differs from the definition provided in this document. For instance, simply having a website or a Facebook page was not considered sufficient for developing a digital identity. As a result, these organizations refused to participate.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The executive bodies of **municipal governments**, such as city halls, were contacted across the country, via email. Our purpose was to gather information about creative organizations in the regions, with a particular emphasis on museums. This focus is due to one of the research objectives being to assess the adoption of digital trends in the museum sector. It is also worth mentioning that many creative organizations operate in Tbilisi, largely due to limited resources for supporting creative processes in most Georgian regions. In these municipalities, the cultural heritage sector is primarily represented by museums.

A questionnaire was **sent to 64 municipalities** for the survey. However, in some instances, City Halls facilitated direct communication between museum staff and the authors of this report. We collected responses from **16 municipalities**. One response from **Adigeni municipality** was **excluded** from the study due to the absence of a museum in that area. The analysis incorporated responses from the municipalities of **Dedoplistskaro, Zestaponi, Terjola, Chiatura, Tsageri, Kutaisi, Chkhorotsku, Vani, Tianeti, Shuakhevi, Khelvachauri, Chokhatauri, Gurjaani, Dmanisi, and Kharaguli**.

In addition to qualitative data, we used quantitative data from publicly accessible databases related to the creative industries. Descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze these data, allowing a summary and description of the most important characteristics.

Overall, data analysis used a mixed approach to analyze the data collected in this study. This complex method involves working with both qualitative, open data and quantitative, closed data.<sup>4</sup>

#### Research questions:

- What role does digital transformation play in democratizing access to culture, and how can it foster inclusivity and diversity within the creative industries?
- What are the economic and operational benefits of implementing digital transformation strategies in creative sector?
- What are the key challenges and opportunities for Georgia’s creative industries in the digital transformation process?
- How does an online presence impact the overall engagement and outreach of cultural organizations?
- What are the international trends of digital transformation and how can Georgian creative industries benefit from it?

To address these questions the term “digital identity” is introduced which describes the creative sector’s adaptation to digital transformation. This term refers to the representation in the digital world and assesses its ability and efforts to adapt to the rapidly evolving environment and the demands of the modern age. Creative organizations and artists generate a variety of content for both on-site and online use. However, it is important to highlight that the use of digital technologies goes beyond merely investing in digital tools, like digitizing objects, creating virtual tours, and designing digital exhibitions. While these tools help shape the digital ecosystem, they must be tailored to meet the

<sup>4</sup> Kuckartz, Udo. *Qualitative Text Analysis: A Guide to Methods, Practice and Using Software*. London: SAGE, 2014, 5.



needs, expectations, and interests of modern audiences.<sup>5</sup> In this study, “digital identity” refers to two main aspects: the use of digital tools to realize artistic ideas and the representation of organizations on digital platforms. This encompasses both the creative process and how organizations present themselves in the online world.

**The research shows** that the integration of digital tools and platforms varies across Georgia’s creative sector. An organization’s digital identity is significantly influenced by its status, available resources, workforce, infrastructure, awareness within the digital field and location. For instance, museums in urban areas often exhibit better level of digital engagement compared to those in rural areas.

State-run organizations, including those funded through municipal budgets, generally have much more opportunities to improve their digital presence and adopt various platforms compared to those without stable financial support. The implementation of innovations is hindered by the fact that digital transformation is not a priority for many organizations, which are distracted by infrastructural and other issues. In addition to this, these state-funded institutions have to seek alternative funding sources for modern technology implementation, frequently relying on donor support for enhancements. A notable example is the Union of Tbilisi Museums, which is actively embracing technological advancements to reshape its member institutions and create a more contemporary image for them.

Museums in Georgia’s regions face challenges in digital transformation. They tend to select platforms that require minimal knowledge, no domain fees, and can be managed by any employee without cost. Additionally, with some exceptions, regional museum administrations often lack familiarity with modern digital tools that could enhance their services or offerings. For instance, the Jacob Gogebashvili House-Museum has been considering ways to improve the visiting experience for immigrants and support their engagement. However, concepts such as virtual museums, as well as VR and AR technologies, and mobile applications, are unfamiliar to the museum staff.

Independent self-financing organizations primarily generate income from state and foreign grants obtained in Georgia, including those from diplomatic services. Additionally, some organizations receive donations from the local private and business sector. Access to financial resources is closely tied to the development of new digital trends. Creative organizations vary greatly in their ability to implement these trends, with factors such as the nature of the creative field and the scale of digital transformation in that sector influencing the adoption of digital innovations, alongside funding. Factors such as prior experience in international collaboration also play a role in the formation of digital awareness.

The recommendations derived from the research are included in this document and should be considered for the development of digital strategies for Georgian creative industries and its representatives, including cultural and heritage organizations, art organizations, etc.

5 Povroznik, “Museums’ digital identity”, 154.

This report will help creative sector organizations including the museums, who are faced with digitization challenges to:

- Encourage the digital presence of cultural organizations on popular platforms.
- Support the development of digital skills among organizations’ staff.
- Facilitate effective communication between cultural organizations and their audience.
- Contribute to the expansion of target audiences, including the online segment.
- Enhance the potential for international collaboration among cultural organizations.
- Promote the branding of organizational products and services.

The study has a limitation in that it provides a general overview of digital transformation in the creative sector rather than an in-depth analysis. To gain a more detailed understanding of the macro processes involved, it would be necessary to examine a larger number of organizations while considering factors such as legal status, funding, human resources, qualifications, innovation awareness, and infrastructure. Further analysis of these aspects and their relationships with the development of an organization’s digital identity is essential for a deeper exploration of technological advancements.

# 1 International Context

## 1.1. Digital Trends in Creative Sector

Digital transformation is a crucial aspect of the modern world. The advancement of digital trends and their integration across various sectors are essential for developing sustainable services and products. Digital alternatives will be present in everything that humans can create and innovate. Over the past decade, the creative sector has also embraced the global trend of digital transformation.

The transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 marked a significant shift in how the internet was used and experienced worldwide. Web 1.0, which dominated the early days of the web, was primarily static and focused on providing information through simple, read-only websites. Users were largely passive consumers of content. With Web 2.0, the internet became more dynamic and user-driven, allowing people to create and share content through platforms like blogs and social media platforms. This shift fostered collaboration, the emergence of online communities, and social networking, revolutionizing communication with the rise of sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.<sup>6</sup>

Since 2012, several technological innovations have transformed industries globally, including the creative sectors. Big data emerged as a critical tool for data analysis and management, followed by the widespread application of AI in industrial activities by 2016.<sup>7</sup> The adoption of 5G in 2019 marked a major shift, enabling the full use of the Internet of Things (IoT), which requires powerful connectivity to link devices.<sup>8</sup> Virtual reality (VR) technology, introduced in 2016, has gradually become integrated into various industries, offering immersive experiences. The adoption of 5G has further enhanced data transmission, enabled smart cultural spaces, and supported personalized technologies in cultural venues. These advancements have provided significant opportunities for the growth of cultural industries through enhanced connectivity and immersive digital technologies. Digitalization offers new opportunities for monetizing creative content through digital sales, subscriptions, streaming services, and virtual performances. Advanced tools like virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI) enable artists to explore innovative forms of creativity. These technologies

streamline production, facilitate real-time collaboration, and enhance project management.<sup>9</sup> Big data and analytics help creative industries understand audience preferences, optimize marketing strategies, and improve engagement. Additionally, digitalization supports the preservation of cultural heritage through digital archiving and provides immersive experiences, allowing audiences to interact with creative content in new ways.

This process has only been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, while most cultural institutions have had to move to the digital world not only with online presence, but also with virtual visits, concerts, or other performances.

The digital transformation of cultural and creative organizations is reshaping the entire industry, impacting everything from audience engagement to institutional operations. By digital transformation, we often think of the integration of digital technologies like social media usage, the digitization of objects or written records, and the introduction of digital tools such as virtual reality, interactive elements, or other new technologies. However, digitalization can also improve the day-to-day operations of institutions and the quality of services such as ticket sales.<sup>10</sup>

The adoption of digital platforms not only makes content delivery more flexible but also enables organizations to evolve into dynamic, inclusive institutions suited for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> Creative organizations in the online space can engage more people, so they can expand their reach and build stronger connections with their audiences.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the digital world can provide access to information and knowledge<sup>13</sup>, while some institutions are even digitizing the experience itself.<sup>14</sup> For creative sectors, digital transformation can mean new ways of interacting with their audience and also with the general public worldwide.

Cultural heritage organizations progressively incorporate digital tools and enhance their functions in response to digital shifts. Changes are particularly evident in the museum sector, where digital transformation is reshaping museums' roles as both organizations and cultural institutions. They have evolved into spaces that engage with diverse audiences and focus on meeting their interests and expectations. Today, museums are reconsidering their roles and responsibilities within society, resulting in innovative practices.

The concept of a modern museum differs from that of the past. The word "museum" originates from ancient Greek, referring to a temple dedicated to the Muses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, who embodied memory and knowledge. The concept of a museum as a "temple of memory" traces back to Babylonian culture, where, as early as 530 BC, objects from various periods were arranged

6 Target UPPSC. 2024. "Understanding the evolution of the web 1.0 to web 3.0". Accessed September 30, 2024. <https://targetuppsc.com/understanding-the-evolution-of-the-web-from-web-1-0-to-web-3-0/>.

7 IBM. "What Is Big Data?" Accessed September 30, 2024. <https://www.ibm.com/topics/big-data-analytics>.

8 Ericsson. "Cellular Internet of Things (IoT) in the 5G Era". Accessed September 30, 2024. <https://www.ericsson.com/en/internet-of-things/5g-iot>.

9 Ecorys. *Virtual Reality and Its Potential for the Future*. 2017. [https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/vr\\_ecosystem\\_eu\\_report\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/vr_ecosystem_eu_report_0.pdf).

10 Agostino, Deborah, and Chiara Costantini. "A Measurement Framework for Assessing the Digital Transformation of Cultural Institutions: The Italian Case". *Meditari Accountancy Research* 30, no. 4 (2021): 1145.

11 Europeana Initiative. *Guide to Digital Transformation in Cultural Heritage: Building Capacity for Digital Transformation Across the Europeana Initiative Stakeholders*, 2022. Accessed October 9. [https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana\\_Professional/Europeana\\_Network/Europeana\\_Network\\_Task\\_Forces/Final\\_reports/Guide\\_to\\_digital\\_transformation\\_in\\_cultural\\_heritage.pdf](https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Europeana_Network/Europeana_Network_Task_Forces/Final_reports/Guide_to_digital_transformation_in_cultural_heritage.pdf).

12 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS), *Culture Is Digital*. (London: Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports, 2018) Accessed September 28, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5aa68f84e5274a3e3603a65e/TT\\_v4.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5aa68f84e5274a3e3603a65e/TT_v4.pdf).

13 Tula, Giannini and Jonathan P. Bowen, "Museums and Digitalism," in *Museums and Digital Culture*, ed. Tula Giannini and Jonathan P. Bowen, Springer Series on Cultural Computing (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 28, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97457-6\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97457-6_2).

14 Agostino, and Costantini, "A Measurement Framework", 1145.

chronologically with inscriptions in a single hall.<sup>15</sup> The notion of a museum serving exclusively as a repository of artifacts is now outdated. Museums are no longer seen merely as places for preserving and transmitting memories across generations. Instead, they actively engage audiences in meaningful ways and reflect real-world issues, focusing on community involvement in exhibitions, inclusivity, diversity, digital innovation, critical thinking, and sustainability.

The traditional and most widely accepted concept of the museum, and its application in the museum practice focuses more on the methodology of work. In general, the institutions direct their attention inwards, and the work is controlled by museum experts, professionals.<sup>16</sup> The ideas behind the so-called New Museology emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. The Declaration of Quebec was an important milestone in 1984, which proclaimed the basic principles.<sup>17</sup> In contrast to the classical concept of museums, new museology aims to make museums an active and meaningful place within the local community.

Similarly, in 2015, UNESCO presented its recommendations on the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society. The recommendation expresses the primary functions of the museum and emphasizes the role of communication: “...museum should be encouraged to use all means of communication to plan an active part in society by, for example, organizing public events, taking part in relevant cultural activities and other interactions with the public in both physical and digital forms”.<sup>18</sup> It further addresses the connection between museums and various information and communication technologies and acknowledges the new opportunities and technologies that can enable museums to transmit their function and message. Among the general and functional policies, the recommendation highlighted the social role of museums, not only in promotion and protection of cultural and natural heritage, but also in accessibility.<sup>19</sup>

This shift in function is also clearly reflected in the ICOM definition of museums. “A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing”.<sup>20</sup>

The new definition highlights the importance of communication and access, in which online presence can have an important role. Gradually, museums began creating websites, engaging with audiences on social media, and producing digital content for online users.<sup>21</sup>

Along with the shift in museums’ focus on the visitors and local communities, the use of digital technologies has accelerated. Museums have realized that digital technology can help them achieve

15 Tsereteli, Mikheil. “At the Origins of Museum Work”. *My World*, no. 38 (2022). <https://gfsis.org.ge/my-world/38>.

16 Peter Vergo, ed., *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 3.

17 MINOM, MINOM. “Declaration of Quebec – Basic Principles of a New Museology 1984”. *Cadernos De Sociomuseologia* 38 (2010).

18 UNESCO, *Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society, adopted by the General Conference at its 38<sup>th</sup> session, Paris, 17 November 2015*, Accessed October 21, 2024. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245176.page=2>.

19 Ibid.

20 International Council for Museums. “Definition of Museum”. Adopted in Prague, August 24, 2022, by the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM. <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>. Accessed September 21, 2024.

21 Povroznik, “Museums’ digital identity”, 154.

their goals more easily. First, digitalization can provide visitors with more accessible collections and experiences. Second, the use of social media platforms can help convey museums’ mission and messages to diverse audiences.<sup>22</sup>

In a consumer-driven culture, museums are viewed as organizations that must embrace new perspectives and tackle challenges introduced by modern technology.<sup>23</sup> This evolution is essential for their survival, as they bear the responsibility of attracting audiences and generating revenue to sustain their operations.<sup>24</sup> To reach a wider audience and promote museum programs and projects, exhibitions—both permanent and temporary—along with other collections, museums need to adapt to digital transformation, starting with establishing a solid presence on online platforms.

Today, creative organizations actively utilize a variety of digital tools and platforms to enhance their functions. Although experimentation in this area began in the mid of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the cultural sector has since adopted innovative approaches, leading to the active implementation and development of digital transformation strategies.

A number of studies have focused on the digital transformation of museums. The digital shift has heightened researchers’ interest in how these institutions navigate through rapid technological advancements,<sup>25</sup> the tools they employ to attract<sup>26</sup> and engage visitors,<sup>27</sup> boundaries between culture and commerce<sup>28</sup> and the evolving demands of modern audiences, both in physical spaces and online.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, research explores how hybrid spaces are being integrated into the museum sector and the advantages they offer, particularly during events like lockdowns.<sup>30</sup>

The degree and intensity of digitization within the creative sector, including museums, varies, largely depending on available resources. As a result, a fundamental measure of digital transformation is how organizations represent themselves in the digital space. This is often achieved by creating a website or registering on social media platforms, which serve as entry points into the digital world and provide visibility.

22 JinHyo Joseph Yun, Byungjin Choi, and Junic Kim, “Changes and Challenges in Museum Management after the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity* 7, no. 2 (June 2021): 148, Accessed September 21, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc7020148>.

23 Povroznik, “Museums’ digital identity”, 158.

24 Honeysett, Nick. *Sustainability, Resilience and Growth through Digital Innovation*. In *Reinventing the Museum, Relevance, Inclusion and Global Responsibilities*. Third edition, Ed. Gail Anderson (Lanham, Boulder, New York & London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023), 149-161.

25 Marty, Paul F., and Katherine Burton Jones. *Museum Informatics: People, Information, and Technology in Museums*. New York and London: Routledge, 2008.

26 Munns, David. “Discovering History in a Digital World: The Texas Story Project”. *Journal of Museum Education* 41, no. 3 (2016): 192–201.

27 Ross, Jen, Jeremy Knox, Caroline Sowton, and Chris Speed. “Mobilising Connections with Art: Artcasting and the Digital Articulation of Visitor Engagement with Cultural Heritage”. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 4 (2018): 395–414.

28 Miežietytė-Gudzinskė, Alina, and Virginija Jurėnienė. “Transformation of the Museum in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Baltic States Museums Visitors”. In *15<sup>th</sup> Prof. Vladas Gronska International Scientific Conference*. Kaunas: Vilnius University Kaunas Faculty, December 3, 2020.

29 Villaespesa, Elena. “Museum Collections and Online Users: Development of a Segmentation Model for the Metropolitan Museum of Art”. *Visitor Studies* 22, no. 2 (2019): 233–252.

30 Silva, Carla. “Pockets of Resilience – The Digital Responses of Youth Collectives in Contemporary Art Museums During Lockdown”. *Journal of Museum Education* 46, no. 4 (2021): 493–508.



## Website

The aim of the website is to provide relevant information about any creative organizations and their work. Usually, it is expected to be practicable and easy to navigate, since websites are usually used by visitors to plan an upcoming physical visit to the organization. It is clear that websites are visited not only by the general public, but also by professionals.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, information on websites must be clearly labeled so that users can easily find what they are looking for. Another important aspect of websites is aesthetics. The quality of websites and digital web faces have key importance in gaining trust and attention of the users. A consistent and attractive appearance has been proven to influence the attention to visit the museum, even if visitors typically only visit the websites briefly.<sup>32</sup>

## Social media

The popularity of social media platforms continues to grow, with approximately 5.17 billion users worldwide as of 2024.<sup>33</sup> Among these platforms, Facebook remains the most widely used, boasting over three billion monthly active users.<sup>34</sup> YouTube ranks second with 2.5 billion active users, followed by Instagram with 2.0 billion users.<sup>35</sup>

Social media use has undergone a significant generational shift, with each group adapting to new technologies in different ways. Notably, there are substantial differences in how different generations engage with social media. For example, around 30% of Facebook's global user base falls within the 25 to 34 age range, indicating that the platform is predominantly frequented by Millennials (Generation Y).<sup>36</sup> In contrast to this, for the younger generation, people between 18–24 (Generation Z), Instagram and TikTok are the most popular social media platforms. The former is visited by almost 32 percent, while TikTok is visited by 36 percent of Generation Z.<sup>37</sup> These generational distinctions highlight the evolving role of social media in communication and connectivity across age groups.

Examining the adoption of digital platforms by museums highlights significant insights into their PR strategies. Museums can take advantage of the popularity of Web 2.0, whose platforms ensure two-way communication methods.<sup>38</sup> While websites provide the most important information related to the opening of the museum, its collection and exhibitions, social media platforms offer visitors the opportunity to participate interactively and shape the museum's activity by reflecting on the shared content.

31 Susana Fernandez-Lores, Natividad Crespo-Tejero, and Ruth Fernández-Hernández, "Driving Traffic to the Museum: The Role of the Digital Communication Tools," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 174 (January 2022): 121273, Accessed October 6, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121273>.

32 Ibid., 2.

33 Statista. "Number of Internet and Social Media Users Worldwide as of July 2024 (in Billions)". *Internet > Demographics & Use*. Accessed October 5, 2024. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/>.

34 Dixon, Stacy Jo. "Social Media – Statistics & Facts". *Statista*, July 16, 2024. Accessed October 5, 2024. <https://www.statista.com/topics/1164/social-networks/#topicOverview>.

35 Statista. "Most Popular Social Networks Worldwide as of April 2024, by Number of Monthly Active Users (in Millions)". *Internet > Social Media & User-Generated Content*. Accessed October 5, 2024. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>.

36 Sprout Social. "The Generational Marketing Playbook: How to Engage Every Age Group on Social". Section 4. Accessed October 13, 2024. <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/guides/generational-marketing/#how-gen-z-uses-social-media>.

37 Dixon, Stacy Jo. "Social Media – Statistics & Facts". *Statista*, July 16, 2024. Accessed October 5, 2024. <https://www.statista.com/topics/1164/social-networks/#topicOverview>.

38 Choi Yun, and Kim, "Changes and Challenges in Museum Management after the COVID-19 Pandemic".

Not only do different social media platforms have different users, but they can also be used for different content creation and messaging. Instagram gained its popularity among museums and the cultural and creative industry, due to its visually driven nature, which aligns well with the display of art and cultural content.<sup>39</sup> Cultural organizations use Instagram to engage audiences through photos, videos, and interactive features like stories and reels. Facebook is serving a broader audience for events and educational content. Additionally, museums are increasingly exploring TikTok for its viral potential, though its use remains limited compared to Instagram and Facebook.

When analyzing communication methods on social media platforms, particularly Facebook, two distinct approaches emerge. First, cultural organizations, including museums act as "message boards", sharing information about collections, exhibitions, and events, which primarily results in passive consumption by followers.<sup>40</sup> Although organizations on social media platforms aim not only to post information, but also to generate active participation, forcing users to actively participate is usually more difficult than, for example, passively following Facebook pages.

The second method, relational communication, involves more interactive and bidirectional exchanges, encouraging users to provide feedback, comments, and engage with each other.<sup>41</sup> This way of communication is more aligned with museums' mission: it is inclusive and diverse, and gives the possibility for communities to engage and participate. In addition, it offers varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing. Entertainment and relevance to users' motives often trigger more active engagement and participation in such communication.<sup>42</sup>

Bidirectional communication involves dialogue between museums and users, allowing for various types of interactions on social media. These can range from formal to informal tones, where museums may invite visitors to share knowledge or rely on expert authority.<sup>43</sup> However, interactivity can be one of the key aspects to motivate users to react and interact. Social media platforms are perfect places for users to showcase their expertise in specific topics or share their ideas.<sup>44</sup> The popularity of Facebook pages is closely related to virality. The greater the number of likes, the greater the number of people who will participate in the communication.<sup>45</sup>

Active organizational presence on social media platforms is beneficial not only because of user engagement, but also because of the opportunity to get to know the users, the potential visitors, better. With the help of social media platforms, museums can better target their audiences, understand their preferences, and thus make responsible decision-making for future strategies.<sup>46</sup>

39 Rebecca Carlsson, "Museums should embrace Instagram rather than rejecting it. Here is why". *MuseumNext*. Accessed 15 October, 2024. <https://www.museumnext.com/article/museums-should-embrace-instagram-rather-than-rejecting-it-heres-why/>.

40 Carmen Maria-José Garrido Camarero, and Rebeca San Jose, "What Works in Facebook Content Versus Relational Communication: A Study of Their Effectiveness in the Context of Museums," *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction* 34, no. 12 (December 2, 2018): 1119–34, Accessed October 5, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2017.1418475>.

41 Ibid., 5.

42 Ibid., 4.

43 Sigurd Trolle Gronemann and Erik Kristiansen and Kirsten Drotner, "Mediated Co-Construction of Museums and Audiences on Facebook," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 30, no. 3 (May 27, 2015): 174–90, Accessed October 5, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2015.1042510>.

44 Zhang, Jie and Sung, Yongjun, and Lee, Wei-Na, "To Play or Not to Play: An Exploratory Content Analysis of Branded Entertainment in Facebook," *American Journal of Business* 25, no. 1 (April 22, 2010): 53–64, Accessed October 5, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1108/19355181201000005>.

45 Camarero, Garrido, and Jose, "What Works in Facebook Content Versus Relational Communication".

46 Fernandez-Lores, Crespo-Tejero, and Fernández-Hernández, "Driving Traffic to the Museum".

In this sense, Facebook is ideal for publicizing and marketing museums, but also for building and maintaining a community. Followers of the museums' Facebook page can feel a sense of belonging, a sense of collectivity, the central point of which is the museum. Due to the Web 2.0, participants in this community can be located anywhere in the world and their size does not have to be limited.<sup>47</sup>

As we already mentioned in our text, although both are social media platforms, Facebook and Instagram differ in both usage and target audience. While Facebook is more comprehensive, offering a wide range of tools for sharing texts, images or organizing events, it appears to a wider, often older audience. Instagram, on the other hand, is more visual and designed for quick, aesthetic content sharing through images, stories, and short videos. It appeals to a younger, more trend-driven audience and emphasizes visual content over text. Facebook tends to concentrate more on in-depth interaction and community management, whereas Instagram can be used by businesses to raise brand awareness through aesthetically appealing posts.

According to Museum Next, a leading platform of museum innovators, creative organizations can no longer afford to overlook the influence of Instagram. The website highlighted seven key strategies that institutions should adopt to build an engaging and successful Instagram page. Given Instagram's inherently visual nature, it is important for businesses to have a clear visual strategy that fits the overall aesthetic of the organization. Consistency in posting is equally vital—random or disjointed content can confuse followers, diminishing engagement. Organizations need to maintain the quality of their page, with regular, but not too many posts. Instagram offers the opportunity to not only showcase core aspects of an institution's mission but also highlight behind-the-scenes activities, staff, and broader cultural engagements. Instagram users like to reflect on trends and current events in the world. Capitalizing on trends and current events can further enhance relevance and reach. Moreover, leveraging user-generated content, such as visitor posts and tagged photos, can significantly boost visibility while fostering a sense of community and encouraging others to engage with the organization. Instagram pages of museums can be a carefully crafted platform, like an exhibition, for museums to reflect on themselves and the world.<sup>48</sup>

TikTok is a prominent social media platform among the younger generation, but its suitability for the cultural and creative sectors is debated. While Instagram is known for its visual content, TikTok is even more so, with posts expected to be both humorous and entertaining in order to stand out. The platform thrives on trending content, often featuring playful twists. Many organizations are hesitant to embrace TikTok due to technical challenges and the need for someone within the team to take on a visible role in videos. Despite these concerns, experts recommend experimenting with TikTok, as it is highly effective for engaging Generation Z.<sup>49</sup>

47 Ibid., 3.

48 Rebecca Carlson, "Museums should embrace Instagram rather than rejecting it. Here is why". *MuseumNext*, February 29, 2020. <https://www.museumnext.com/article/museums-galleries-web-2-0/>.

49 Devon Rose Turner, "How to use TikTok to grow your museum's audience". *MuseumNext*, April 03, 2022. <https://www.museumnext.com/article/how-to-use-tiktok-to-grow-your-museums-audience/>.

## 1.2. Digital Technologies in the Cultural and Creative Industries

Digital transformation technologies are about to conquer the creative industries, including the museum sector. Among the most popular digital technologies are virtual reality (VR), augmented reality, 3D printing, information and interactive displays, artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual exhibitions. These innovations all share a common goal to create a more engaging, and dynamic experience for visitors. However, there are digital technologies that can provide technical help such as non-fungible tokens (NFTs).

Virtual reality transports users into a fully three-dimensional world, designed with the power of computer technology. By wearing a headset or using a display device, visitors can step into a digitally recreated environment where their movements are tracked by sensors or cameras, making the experience feel real and interactive. This technology is ideal for bringing history to life, allowing users to step back in time and explore historical periods or scenes as if they were truly there.<sup>50</sup>

Like VR, augmented reality (AR) enhances the museum experience by creating 3D models and animations, often accessed through smartphones or tablets. However, unlike VR, which typically immerses users in a fully virtual environment, AR overlays digital elements onto the real world, blending the two seamlessly.<sup>51</sup> One key difference is that AR remains optional; while it can enrich exhibitions with additional content, visitors can still enjoy the museum without relying on AR devices or apps.

In 2024, Artificial Intelligence is everywhere, and can appear in many forms. For creative organizations, AI offers exciting possibilities—not only by enhancing visitor experiences through personalized, engaging interactions but also by reforming professional tasks, making work more efficient and innovative. For example, it can be used for real life translations, even for sign language translation, or in exhibition spaces to analyze visitors' non-verbal communication regarding the experience.<sup>52</sup>

3D printing revolutionizes the presentation of the objects in the museums. This technology, known for its speed and affordability, is perfect for reproducing complex shapes and structures, making it an increasingly popular tool in the sector. It allows the creation of precise replicas, increasing the accessibility of vulnerable objects by giving visitors the chance to explore detailed reproductions without risking damage to the originals.<sup>53</sup>

The 3D printing process typically begins with the 3D scanning of artifacts, a step rooted in the broader trend of digitizing collections across the GLAM sector (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums). This movement dates back to the 1970s, though mass digitization only gained momentum in the 1990s.<sup>54</sup> For years, experts have been fascinated by the potential to create virtual museums based on these digital collections. Initially, virtual museums were seen as mere substitutes for physical ones,

50 Jingjing Li et al., "A Systematic Review of Digital Transformation Technologies in Museum Exhibition," *Computers in Human Behavior* 161 (December 2024): 108407, Accessed October 14, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2024.108407>.

51 Manuel Charr, "How museums are using Augmented Reality?" *MuseumNext*, April 10, 2024. <https://www.museumnext.com/article/how-museums-are-using-augmented-reality/>.

52 Lauren Styx, "How are museum using Artificial Intelligence?" *MuseumNext*, May 12, 2024. <https://www.museumnext.com/article/artificial-intelligence-and-the-future-of-museums/>.

53 Li et al., "A Systematic Review of Digital Transformation Technologies in Museum Exhibition".

54 Melissa Terras, "Digital humanities and digitised cultural heritage". in *The Bloomsbury Handbook to the Digital Humanities*, ed. James O'Sullivan (Bloomsbury: Bloomsbury Handbooks, 2022), 255-266.

offering an alternative to the in-person experience. However, this perception shifted dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, which underscored the value and importance of virtual museums as essential platforms for accessibility, engagement, and cultural preservation.<sup>55</sup>

The concept of non-fungible tokens has been present since 2014. “They are digital assets that represent real-world objects like art, music, in-game items and videos. They are bought and sold online, frequently with cryptocurrency, and they are generally encoded with the same underlying software as many cryptos”.<sup>56</sup> In the cultural and creative industries, the use of NFTs is diverse. Sometimes, they represent real-world objects, while in other cases, they can offer alternative ways to engage with not-for-sale items, such as ancient artifacts or artworks. Through NFTs, people can symbolically “adopt” these objects by contributing a small, symbolic amount, fostering a sense of connection and support for cultural heritage.<sup>57</sup>

55 Mateusz Klinowski and Karolina Szafarowicz, “Digitisation and Sharing of Collections: Museum Practices and Copyright During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law - Revue Internationale de Sémiotique Juridique* 36, no. 5 (October 2023): 1991–2019, Accessed October 13, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-023-09986-x>.

56 Robyn Conti, “What is an NFT? Non-fungible tokens explained”. Forbes May 10, 2024. <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/investing/cryptocurrency/nft-non-fungible-token/>.

57 Balogh Bodor, Tekla “The role and operation of museums in Esztergom, Hungary” (MA Thesis, Central European University, 2022), 65.

## 2 Creative Sector Overview in Georgia

### — 2.1. From the History of Creativity to Creative Economy

The people living on the territory of modern Georgia have been engaged in creative processes since ancient times. A testament to this is the unique cultural heritage preserved in the various branches of the National Museum of Georgia, showcasing the rich history and creativity of the region. History has preserved remarkable examples of architecture, craftsmanship and painting, and other art pieces, many of which were created using methods that remain unknown to modern masters. Furthermore, the creative activities were used as a source of economic income, a perspective even echoed in local legends. One such story speaks about 12<sup>th</sup> century Georgian Queen Tamar who sold her own embroideries to provide financial assistance to the poor.

Georgia’s rich cultural heritage, which includes traditional crafts, internationally renowned poets and musicians, and a distinctive “Georgian design touch,” are key features of the country and significant aspects of national identity of Georgian citizens.<sup>58</sup> Despite its rich cultural heritage, the view of the creative sector as an economic activity is a relatively recent development in Georgia, gaining popularity only in modern times.

Culture and creativity are increasingly recognized as vital economic factors, prompting many countries to evaluate their contributions to the economy. The concept of a creative sector emerged from cultural policy, which sought economic justification for promoting cultural activities and companies. This highlighted creativity’s importance in the economy, particularly in the shift from industrial mass production to creative economy, where innovations and cultural products gain prominence. While creativity influences various economic areas, it is central to the activities of creative industries, distinguishing them as a separate economic sector.<sup>59</sup>

In Georgia, the concepts of “creative industry” and “creative economy” emerged after the adoption of a cultural policy strategy that established foundational terms for functioning within the fields of culture.

58 Saha, David, and André Störr. The Creative Sector in Georgia: Situation, Potential and Policy Issues. Policy Paper Series, 2017. Accessed October 14, 2024. [https://www.german-economic-team.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/PP\\_02\\_2017\\_en.pdf](https://www.german-economic-team.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/PP_02_2017_en.pdf).

59 Ibid.



## 2.2. Cultural Policy Trends

The term “cultural policy” refers to a framework of operational principles, administrative practices, and budgetary procedures that guide the state’s cultural initiatives. Clearly, a single cultural policy cannot fit all countries; each state establishes its own policy based on its unique cultural values, goals, and preferences.<sup>60</sup> Cultural policy is sensitive to change. It evolves in response to political shifts in a society.

Georgia’s cultural policy has experienced a complex and challenging evolution. During the Soviet era, culture was institutionalized through various methods and served multiple roles, including supporting ethnic politics, official propaganda, and diplomatic relations. Cultural events received significant funding, not primarily for the advancement of culture, but to serve political purposes, positioning culture as a tool for political agendas. In independent Georgia, securing funding for culture has become a considerable challenge. Amid the restoration of collapsed institutions, many artists have departed the country. This created favorable conditions for the Russian-style “Estrada” (genre of popular music) to flourish.<sup>61</sup>

The Rose Revolution marked a pivotal moment in cultural politics, leading to a significant increase in creative output. Beginning in 2004, the notion of monetizing culture and linking it to the economy gained traction, as seen in the official statements from politicians. For instance, representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection emphasized not only the aesthetic value of culture but also its economic advantages and its potential to enhance public welfare.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, professionals criticized the government for its centralized management and the absence of a unified cultural policy strategy.<sup>63</sup>

Following a period of centralized cultural management (2003-2011), Georgia saw a turning point in 2013 with the introduction of expert methods in cultural policy development. This shift, influenced by the 2005 UNESCO Convention, led to the creation of a cultural policy concept, though it was never formally adopted. In 2015, an intensive and systematic effort began to develop a cultural policy strategy, focusing on defining cultural values, setting priorities and goals, implementing initiatives, and monitoring policy progress.<sup>64</sup>

The development of Georgia’s Culture Strategy was carried out in close collaboration with the European Union and received positive evaluations from both the EU and the Council of Europe. The strategy aims to establish a long-term vision for the growth of culture and the creative sector, emphasizing their importance in shaping national identity, fostering social unity, and contributing to the country’s sustainable development.<sup>65</sup>

60 “Cultural Policy: A Preliminary Study. Round-Table Meeting on Cultural Policies, Monte Carlo, Monaco, 1967”. Accessed October 19, 2024. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000001173>.

61 Ninoshvili, Lauren. “Georgian Popular Music and the Cliché of the Nation at War”. *Ulbundus Review*, no. 13 (2010) 94–108.

62 Epadze, Ketevan. “Cultural Policy and Civic Identity in Georgia, after the Break-up of the Soviet Union”. 41-49. Space, Society, politics. 4<sup>th</sup> International Scientific conference, TSU, 2016.

63 Heinrich Böll Stiftung. “Georgia’s Cultural Policy between the Past and the Future”. November 12, 2012. Accessed October 19, 2024. <https://ge.boell.org/en/2012/11/12/georgias-cultural-policy-between-past-and-future>.

64 Association of the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends. *Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends*, 20<sup>th</sup> ed. 2020. Country Profile: Georgia, p. 4,5. Accessed October 9, 2024. <https://www.culturalpolicies.net>.

65 Ibid.

## 2.3. Legal Framework

In Georgia, multiple laws regulate creative activities, outlining key provisions for organizations and individuals within the creative sector. These laws also establish the rights and obligations of the state in supporting and overseeing creative industries. These laws include regulations on culture, cultural heritage, museums, theaters, cinematography, copyright, architecture, and media broadcasting, among others. However, Georgia still lacks legislation regarding the digitization of the creative sector.

In this study, provided a brief overview of several laws: the first pertains to the field of culture, offering a general framework that more or less encompasses all creative activities. The second and third laws focus specifically on cultural heritage and museums.

In Georgia the law on culture was adopted in 1997. It mandates the state to actively promote cultural development, ensure citizen participation, facilitate access to cultural achievements, and enhance international cultural relations. It also requires citizens to preserve cultural heritage and obliges the government, at all levels, to provide financial and technical support to the cultural sector. The law serves as the legal foundation for the development, protection, and preservation of culture in Georgia.<sup>66</sup>

The Law on Museums of Georgia, adopted in 2001, regulates museum activities and establishes key principles for their operation. It addresses the management and financing of the museum system, defines museum categories, and outlines the fundamental rights and responsibilities of individuals and organizations involved in museum activities.<sup>67</sup>

The 2007 Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage governs the protection of cultural heritage and establishes the framework for regulating legal relations in this area.<sup>68</sup>

The Law on Creative Workers and Creative Unions, established in 1999, remains valid in Georgia. However, artists advocate for a new, more effective law that clearly outlines artists’ rights. Despite the current law, artists believe that the legislative framework governing creative fields requires reassessment. The initiation of a new law on the status of artists is underway, with the Valerian Gunia Youth Union of Theater Artists developing a package of recommendations for legislative changes, supported by the UNESCO-Aschberg program funded by Norway. Hearings on this initiative have yet to commence in the Parliament of Georgia.<sup>69</sup>

All these laws discussed here encounter challenges as they do not account for the changes that have occurred since their enactment. Establishing a legal framework to support the creative process in this area is crucial. N.S., the director of the Union of Museums of Tbilisi, highlighted this concern, noting that legislative resistance is one of the factors impeding the digitalization process.<sup>70</sup>

66 Legislative Herald of Georgia. *Law of Georgia on Culture*. Parliament of Georgia. June 12, 1997. <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/31402?publication=13>.

67 Legislative Herald of Georgia. *Law on Museums*. Parliament of Georgia. June 22, 2001. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/15508?publication=9>.

68 Legislative Herald of Georgia. *Law on Cultural Heritage*. Parliament of Georgia. May 8, 2007. <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/21076?publication=16>.

69 Interpressnews. The project “Development of a Recommendation Package for the Legislative Initiative “On the Status of an Artist” in Georgia” is being implemented, February 6, 2024. Accessed October 30, 2024. <https://www.interpressnews.ge/ka/article/786522-proekti-sakartveloshi-xelovanis-statusis-shesaxe-sakanonmdeblo-iniciativist-vis-sarekomendacio-paketis-shemushaveba-xorcieldeba/>.

70 N.S., response 30 September, 2024.



Besides the legislation challenges, this sub-chapter also addresses the legal status of creative organizations and emphasizes the deliberate or unintentional divisions between the state, non-governmental and private sector in the creative fields, as established by legal distinctions.

Cultural organizations can be divided into three parts: state, private commercial entities, and non-profit organizations. State-controlled entities include art schools, cultural heritage sites, archives, libraries, museums, some of the theaters, symphony orchestras, and cultural centers, culinary training centers. Private ownership covers areas such as architecture, design and the fashion industry, art galleries, film and video industry, literature and publishing, media and broadcasting, music, advertising, cultural education, crafts, gastronomy, and the culinary industry. The non-governmental sector comprises cultural institutions, research centers, conservation organizations, and similar entities, focusing on the preservation and development of both modern and traditional culture.<sup>71</sup>

The division of cultural fields in Georgia presents several challenges for the creative sector. State-controlled cultural organizations often receive more funding and resources than non-profit entities, leading to underdevelopment in areas like non-profit theaters, and cultural research centers.

Private commercial entities tend to dominate industries such as media and advertising, making it difficult for non-profit organizations to compete and limiting diverse artistic expression. Furthermore, private entities often prioritize commercial viability over cultural significance, leading to a homogenization of cultural products that undervalues traditional and innovative expressions. As a result, non-profit organizations focused on preserving culture may struggle for visibility and support.

Creative organizations, despite their varying legal structures, have a history of successful collaboration. However, this cooperation is limited and involves only a small number of organizations. The state supports these efforts through cultural promotion programs and by providing funding to non-profits. Nevertheless, the available funding is restricted, covering only the basic costs of one or two projects each year.

Additionally, there are notable partnerships between the private sector and non-governmental organizations, particularly in fields related to digital arts, such as animation, design, and illustration.

The current situation highlights the need for stronger partnerships to prevent missed opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaborative projects and to support non-profit organizations to strengthen their visibility in cultural industries. Without integrated efforts, cultural growth may be hindered, and the full richness of Georgia's creative sectors might remain unrealized.

## 2.4. Finances in the Creative Sector

In Georgia, continuing the Soviet tradition, the state remains the primary financier of the cultural sector. The state body funding cultural projects is the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry oversees a culture promotion program, which offers financial support for short-term projects. Under the ministry LEPL "Creative Georgia" was founded, which plays a key role in the development of Georgia's

<sup>71</sup> Association of the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends, 13.

creative industries. Operating under the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection (at that time of establishment), it was established as part of the country's 2025 cultural strategy implementation act in 2017. Its mission is to create a supportive environment for the growth of creative industries in general, focusing on raising awareness, developing creative entrepreneurship skills, conducting sector research, improving access to finance, and promoting creative platforms, clusters, and internationalization.<sup>72</sup> Alongside Creative Georgia, other entities are also actively involved in initiatives promoting the creative industries. Enterprise Georgia is one of the governmental organizations, belonging to the Ministry of Economics and Sustainable Development of Georgia, which runs diverse programs supporting creative industries in the country, including capacity building, fundraising, marketing and commercialization and digital transformation. They support the fashion and design sectors, film industry, culinary and gastro-tourism industries, etc.<sup>73</sup>

Additionally, municipalities have allocated resources within their budgets to fund cultural projects at the local level. In 2019, Tbilisi launched a special program called "Creative Tbilisi" to support creative industries. Organized by the Culture, Education, Sports, and Youth Affairs Unit of Tbilisi City Hall, the program aims to foster the growth of the creative industry in the capital by providing a platform for artists and artistic groups to showcase and bring their creative ideas to life. The competition focuses on three main areas: publishing, design and crafts, and contemporary visual art. It is held twice a year, in spring and autumn, with media art included as an additional category during the spring phase.

Both "Creative Tbilisi" and "Creative Georgia," two leading initiatives supporting Georgia's creative sector, share the same definition of creative industries. However, due to limited resources and varying needs within the field, the scope of their operations differs, with each initiative focusing on different areas of impact. Creative Tbilisi operates within a more focused scope compared to Creative Georgia. Creative Georgia is a legal entity of public law, founded in 2017. It has two main directions: Creative Industries Direction and Creative Europe Direction. The organization aims to create a favorable ecosystem for creative industries development and implement the Creative Europe Programme on a national level.

Many cultural organizations in the field are either unable or struggle to sustain themselves independently within the country. As part of their social responsibility efforts, the private sector has shown interest in supporting the creative industries through donations. The largest contributors are TBC Bank and the Bank of Georgia.

TBC Bank has supported cultural and social initiatives in Georgia, focusing on preserving national heritage, empowering artists. Since 2003, it has co-founded the Saba literary contest, which honors outstanding literary achievements and is considered a key event in the country's literary landscape. Furthermore, founded in May 2012 through TBC Bank's initiative and funding, Art Area TV is an internet television channel focused on culture. It explores various areas including art, theatre, film, music, pop culture, jazz, literature, and contemporary art.<sup>74</sup> With the support of the same organization, an art gallery was established where Georgian artists can host their own exhibitions.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Creative Georgia's official webpage, seen, October 30, 2024. <http://creativegeorgia.ge/>.

<sup>73</sup> Enterprise Georgia's official webpage, seen October 30, 2024. <https://www.enterprisegeorgia.gov.ge/ka>.

<sup>74</sup> "Switsch off Tv – Switch on Artarea". *Georgia to See*, 2017. Accessed October 9, 2024. <https://georgiatosee.com/2017/05/switch-off-tv-switch-artarea/>.

<sup>75</sup> TBC Concept. *TBC Concept Gallery*. Accessed October 9, 2024. <https://biennial.ge/member/tbc-concept>.

In partnership with Miami Ad School Europe, the Bank of Georgia runs an education promotion program for talented, driven, and creative youth. The scholarship program's winner can pursue studies in any creative field in the branches of Miami Ad School Europe.<sup>76</sup> In addition to this, it also supports the street art festival "Niko", alongside the Tbilisi City Hall. The festival has empowered both experienced and novice mural artists from across the country to share their messages through mural paintings. Over the years, this initiative has fostered the growth of street art culture in Georgia, creating a rich history and experience in the field while paving the way for future artistic development and innovation.<sup>77</sup>

Another significant contributor to the creative sector is the Adjara Group. It actively collaborates with Georgian artists, designers, curators, architects, and innovative entrepreneurs to foster the development of Georgian art and culture. The company hosts various cultural events and programs in its facilities, which have become cultural hubs for meetings with internationally renowned creatives. STAMBA Hotel features a diverse collection of works by both established and emerging Georgian artists, along with the Tbilisi Museum of Photography and Multimedia, showcasing significant local and international photography. In addition, Hotel STAMBA and FABRIKA under the Adjara group provide residencies for innovative individuals and groups, enriching the country's creative landscape. Adjara Group partners with modern art platforms like Art Area and Propaganda Network and supports film, music, and visual arts festivals, including the Tbilisi Architecture Biennale. Recognizing the importance of cultural heritage in preserving national identity, the group also collaborates with key cultural institutions such as the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theater and the Tbilisi Academy of Arts.<sup>78</sup>

Different international organizations and diplomatic missions also offer funding for cultural projects. The "Creative Europe" program is an EU initiative supporting cultural and creative sectors from 2021 to 2027. It aims to promote cultural diversity and address the needs of these sectors, contributing to their recovery by fostering digital transformation, sustainability, resilience, and inclusiveness. The program aligns with key European Commission priorities, such as the Green Deal, inclusiveness, and gender balance. Creative Europe is divided into three strands: culture (excluding audiovisual and film sectors), media (focusing on audiovisual and film), and cross-sectorial (facilitating collaboration across creative industries and covering the news media sector).<sup>79</sup>

The British Council also plays a significant role in developing creative industries in Georgia. It initiates diverse programs to support creative organizations and professionals, including in the digital transformation process. One of the huge interventions was the "Creative Spark Programme", which was run for 5 years (2018-2022) and implemented by LEPL Creative Georgia and several educational institutions, universities. The programme was designed to develop enterprise skills and boost the creative economy through partnerships between UK universities and institutions in the selected Post-Soviet countries, including Georgia. The initiative provided training packages covering various skills, such as pitching business ideas, starting ventures, protecting intellectual property,

76 "Recipient of the Bank of Georgia and MASE Nika Gujejani Scholarship Program Announced". September 26, 2023. Accessed October 9, 2024. <https://bankofgeorgia.ge/ka/about/news/details/6512cf58ee38708fb65e44a1>.

77 "Girl with Crystal" in Tbilisi Area - TAMOONZ & Niko. October 20, 2023. <https://argacherde.bog.ge/ar-gacherde/gogona-kristalit-tbilisur-ubanshi-tamoonz-niko/>.

78 Creative Economy. Adjara Group. Accessed October 13, 2024. [https://adjaragroup-com.translate.goog/ka/creative-economy-2/?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=ka&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=sc](https://adjaragroup-com.translate.goog/ka/creative-economy-2/?_x_tr_sl=ka&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc).

79 Creative Europe. "Project Description". Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://eu4georgia.eu/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1628>.

and securing funding. It aimed to develop creative entrepreneurship skills including digital skills.<sup>80</sup> The British Council continues supporting digitalization through different actions, elaboration policy and strategy documents, organizing study visits and knowledge sharing events, etc.

The culture support program, with a small budget, is provided annually by the American Embassy in Tbilisi. This program supports educational initiatives, creative activities, conservation efforts, and exchange programs in the fields of culture with the involvement of American institutions or professionals.<sup>81</sup> In addition to this, the USAID Economic Security Program is essential in empowering representatives from the private sector within the creative industries. Over the past years, the program has engaged in various activities centered on pre- and post-production value chains, partnering with organizations such as the National Intellectual Property Center of Georgia and the U.S. Commerce Law Development Program (CLDP) to address copyright issues and promote legal alternatives to piracy.<sup>82</sup>

The other example is the Embassy of Switzerland, which actively funds cultural projects through its cooperation program, supporting a range of initiatives by local non-governmental organizations. For the 2022-2025 agenda this includes projects focused on different aspects of public life, including digitization, as well as art and culture.<sup>83</sup>

Despite these initiatives and support from foreign partners, challenges persist. Securing financing remains a significant challenge in the creative sector. In the face of modern digital challenges, organizations must adapt to new market conditions, making funding crucial for their survival. While some organizations with fundraising experience successfully develop their products and services through collaboration, many others, particularly newly established and those lacking fundraising skills, face considerable vulnerability and obstacles.

## 2.5. Infrastructure

Infrastructure is essential for cultural sectors, supporting artistic expression, community engagement, and cultural exchange. Buildings like theaters, galleries, and museums make cultural events accessible, while well-designed spaces enhance audience participation. Creative hubs and studios provide artists with vital resources, fostering innovation and collaboration. Conservation facilities, such as archives, help preserve cultural heritage and promote historical awareness. Educational institutions, including arts schools and cultural centers, offer arts education and community outreach. Additionally, open spaces serve as venues for public art and performances, boosting community interaction and cultural vibrancy.

80 British Council. "Creative Spark". Accessed October 23, 2024.

<https://www.britishcouncil.ge/en/programmes/education/creative-spark>.

81 Cultural Small Grants Program 2024. U.S. Embassy in Georgia. Accessed October 13, 2024.

<https://ge.usembassy.gov/cultural-small-grants-program/>.

82 Mtvilishvili, Mariam. "Economic Power of Creativity: USAID's Impact on Georgia's Creative Industries". *Georgia Today*, 2024. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://georgiatoday.ge/economic-power-of-creativity-usaids-impact-on-georgias-creative-industries/>.

83 "Switzerland is Initiating Cooperation Program for the South Caucasus for the Years 2022-2025," 2022. <https://www.interpressnews.ge/ka/article/711385-shveicaria-samxret-kavkasiashi-2022-2025-clebis-tanamshromlobis-programas-icqebis/>.

Cultural infrastructure was severely damaged in Georgia, during the 1990s conflicts and the economic crisis that followed. Unregulated privatization in the 2000s further harmed cultural heritage sites and disrupted historical city networks. Despite this, restoration efforts for key facilities like theaters, art schools, and churches involved collaboration among the government, international donors, and the private sector, with private contributions often exceeding public funding. Today, challenges in cultural infrastructure persist, with budgetary resources falling short of requirements.<sup>84</sup>

Organizations vary in their infrastructure capacity and human resources. State institutions have greater opportunities for workspace and hiring employees, whereas independent organizations face relatively challenging conditions. These organizations succeed in renting office space primarily through individual projects or temporarily utilize facilities provided by the business sector for free.

LEPL Creative Georgia is actively advocating for the creation of creative hubs. Private sector representatives such as TBC Bank and Adjara Group are also involved in the creation of free working spaces for creative organizations. Additionally, the Agency for Technology and Innovation provides free space for organizations and professionals engaged in innovation.

Efforts to promote creative spaces have resulted in the repurposing of old buildings for creative use. “TBC Concept” Space was among the first to revitalize a previously idle building. Originally constructed between 1910 and 1913, this modernist structure in Tbilisi reflects the city’s diverse Eastern and European influences, designed by the renowned Polish architect Alexander Rogowski. Over the years, the building served various purposes, including housing a workers’ cooperative and later the Tbilisi Central Department Store. In 2002, TBC acquired the inactive site and completed renovations in 2005. Initially serving as TBC’s headquarters, it is now repurposed as a space for gallery, workspace and café. Access to the workspace is available in exchange for meeting certain conditions. Meeting rooms are equipped with technological amenities, such as a screen.<sup>85</sup>

In the 1930s, a book printing house opened on Kostava Street, aimed at promoting reading and improving literacy in the country. Architecturally, the building was considered ultra-modern for its time, featuring an atrium design with printing presses in the center and various workspaces on the upper floors. After years of inactivity, it was transformed into the “Printing House” hotel in 2018, aptly reflecting its original purpose. The hotel, inspired by the industrial era, includes a green amphitheater, a restaurant, and an open terrace. It also offers free working space for organizations and individuals.<sup>86</sup>

The FABRIKA Hostel is located on the site of Georgia’s largest textile factory, built during World War I, with an extension added after the Soviet era. After the factory closed in the 1990s and sat abandoned for years, it was revitalized in 2016 into a lively hub in Tbilisi. The hostel preserves the original facade, featuring street art, while the inner courtyard includes various restaurants, cafes, shops, bars, and office spaces.<sup>87</sup>

Other notable examples demonstrate the renovation of old buildings for creative use, highlighting the importance of accessibility for the creative sector. However, the demand for creative hubs

84 Gunia-Kucnetsova, Nino. “Cultural Policies and Trends: Short Cultural Policy Profile of Georgia”. 2022. accessed October 24, 2024. [https://www.culturalpolicies.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Georgia\\_short\\_112022.pdf](https://www.culturalpolicies.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Georgia_short_112022.pdf).

85 Alphaidze, Liza. “New Life for Buildings: 8 Buildings in Georgia with Changed Functions”. *Hammock Magazine*, 2022. Accessed October 24, 2024. <https://hammockmagazine.ge/articles/2307/8>.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

significantly exceeds what is currently available from stakeholders. The lack of creative clusters and hubs in Georgia greatly impedes the development of organizations and the production of creative products. The 2021 policy document on creative clusters in Georgia, prepared as part of the EU/ UNESCO-supported project “Development of a Creative Cluster Ecosystem in Georgia”, highlighted a strong demand among creative professionals for supportive conditions to carry out projects. However, a substantial portion of the existing infrastructure, both state/municipal and privately owned, is neglected, with many areas being dysfunctional brownfields or vacant spaces.<sup>88</sup>

## 2.6. Human Capital and Capacity

In Georgia, creative education is offered by a range of state and private organizations. Additionally, there are practices for sharing creative skills informally, such as individual-to-individual transfers within traditional community networks.

Municipal art schools aim to develop competitive creative skills that align with market demands by offering training in various traditional and contemporary artistic disciplines. For instance, the Unit of Cultural Objects Management and Planning at the Tbilisi City Hall supports the development of cultural and educational facilities, primarily consisting of art schools. Its focus is on promoting artistic education and organizing various events, while also supporting traditional art forms and introducing new artistic directions.<sup>89</sup> Most municipalities in Georgia have cultural units that promote artistic education within their respective regions.

In addition to this new law was initiated in 2021, according to which in general education institutions, both teachers with higher education and specialists with vocational training will be eligible to teach art education. According to the committee of the Culture within Georgian Parliament, the changes will enhance the quality of art education for children and expand the pool of qualified educators, as the proposed amendments to the Law on Higher Education, will allow individuals with artistic professional education (without university degree), like those with military or sports qualifications, be eligible to complete teacher training programs and qualify as teachers.<sup>90</sup> An amendment to Georgia’s General Education Law has already been enacted.

This year, the Parliament of Georgia is going to address the draft Law on Artistic Education and related legislative amendments. This initiative emphasizes the promotion and formalization of artistic education.

The new legislation aims to integrate artistic education into the formal education system. Currently, only higher-level art education is formally recognized, while lower-level art education remains informal. The draft law seeks to:

88 Creative Georgia. *Policy Paper 2021 - “Designing a Creative Cluster Ecosystem in Georgia”*. July 7, 2022, Accessed October 13, 2024. [http://creativegeorgia.ge/en/n/startegic-documents/politikis\\_dokumenti](http://creativegeorgia.ge/en/n/startegic-documents/politikis_dokumenti).

89 Cultural Facilities Management and Planning Department. “Tbilisi City Hall’s Official Page”. Accessed October 24, 2024. <https://tbilisi.gov.ge/page/3222>.

90 “Specialists with professional education will also have the right to teach art education at school”. Edu Aris Ge, December 6, 2021. <https://shorturl.at/q7tGY>.



- Establish legal grounds for the formalization of early stages of art education.
- Define the framework, rules, and qualifications for formal art education.
- Regulate the status and remuneration of teachers in formal art institutions.
- Address real estate management by art education institutions.

The amendments will also affect other laws, including the Law on General Education, enabling the creation of public schools focused on art education. These specialized schools will operate under unique rules for admission, curriculum design, and administration, with detailed regulations outlined in accompanying by-laws.<sup>91</sup> The amendment has not yet been incorporated into the General Education Law.

A major challenge in Georgia's education system is its failure to equip students with essential qualifications, including digital skills, needed for further education and professional development. While students spend a relatively long time in school, their performance in international assessments remains notably below average at both primary and secondary levels.<sup>92</sup>

Additionally, the country has higher education institutions that offer professional artistic education, including the Vano Sarajishvili State Conservatory, the Shota Rustaveli State University of Theatre and Cinema, and the Apollon Kutateladze State Academy of Arts. A few years ago, a University of Business and Technology was established in the country, specifically aimed at providing education in digital and innovative professions.

The State Law of Georgia on Higher Education aims to provide artistic and creative education by training specialists in various art fields, fostering personal potential and creative skills, and equipping individuals with competencies relevant to current market demands. It seeks to enhance the competitiveness of graduates in both domestic and international labor markets while delivering high-quality education that meets the needs of students and the public.<sup>93</sup>

A 2014 World Bank report ranked Georgia poorly in higher education, with particularly low participation in developing information and communication technologies. Despite reforms and incentives, progress has been limited. Many students entering higher education are underprepared, which experts attribute to weaknesses in the general education system. Georgian students continue to score below their international peers in reading, mathematics, and science, as shown by international assessments programmes as TIMSS, PIRLS, and PISA, despite some improvement over time.<sup>94</sup> Although the data cited in this report doesn't focus on the arts, it highlights broader educational challenges that also affect the arts sector.

<sup>91</sup> "A new type of public school will be established, detailing the planned regulations for arts education". Edu Aris Ge, February 2024. <https://shorturl.at/dzt4w>.

<sup>92</sup> "A high level of education is the only path necessary for Georgia's economic development". BM.Ge. December 2019. <https://bm.ge/news/ganatilebis-magali-done-is-ertaderti-gzaa-rac-aucilebelia-saqartvelos-ekonomikuri-ganvitarebistvis/44798>.

<sup>93</sup> Legislative Herald of Georgia. *Law of Georgia on Higher Education*. Parliament of Georgia, 2004. <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/32830?publication=112>.

<sup>94</sup> Pignatti, Norberto. "Higher Education Reform In Georgia: Challenges and Opportunities". *ISSET* 2019. <https://iset-pi.ge/storage/media/other/2021-10-06/f801cce0-2673-11ec-bd97-25fa0095a319.pdf>.

The shortage of manpower is a pressing issue. The challenges arise from a shortage of qualified personnel who struggle to adapt to technological changes, compounded by insufficient funding. Significant knowledge gaps make the services of qualified professionals costly, which forces arts professionals affiliated with the organizations to handle multiple functions themselves. However, without specialists, many projects struggle to effectively communicate their complete concepts to the audience. It is important to note that we observed a similar situation in many municipal museums. Most of these organizations, financed by the local budget, lack a PR or communications specialist. This can be attributed both to limited resources and a lack of awareness of the issue.

Keeping up with digital trends is a significant challenge in the creative sector, as evidenced by some respondents who questioned their ability to participate in the survey, finding the questions irrelevant to their organizations. Some organizations in Georgia's creative sector are unaware of the extensive digital opportunities available to their fields. Additionally, their concept differs from the one presented in this document.



# 3 Digital Transformation in Georgia's Creative Sector

## 3.1. Digital Trends in Georgia's Creative Industries

Digital transformation in Georgia is a complex process involving various state agencies, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations. The development of digital identity in the creative sector reflects and responds to broader changes within the country, evolving alongside transformations in multiple sectors, especially business. Thus, before examining digital trends in the creative sector, it is important to briefly address the overall situation in the country and the stakeholders involved in the digital transformation process.

One of the key institutions driving digital transformation in Georgia are the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, which develops and implements ICT and innovation policies, and the Georgian National Communications Commission (COMCOM), responsible for regulating electronic communications and broadcasting. Their regulatory framework aligns with EU standards, and the Constitution ensures the regulator's independence.<sup>95</sup>

Under the Ministry of Economy, the Georgian Agency for Innovation and Technology (GITA) was funded in 2014. It aims to create an effective ecosystem for developing innovation and technology in Georgia while promoting the commercialization of innovative knowledge. This initiative focuses on integrating advanced technologies across all economic sectors and establishing a foundation for innovative development. To achieve these goals, the agency will leverage its infrastructure, prioritize the commercialization of innovations, encourage investment capital growth, and foster private sector involvement in research. It also aims to enhance competitiveness, particularly through distance learning initiatives.<sup>96</sup> Since 2014, GITA has been establishing tech park offices across various regions of Georgia. Currently, it operates in Tbilisi, Batumi, Kaspi, Gurjaani, Telavi, Akhmeta,

Zugdidi, and Ozurgeti. These hubs serve as essential pillars for fostering and supporting creative initiatives in their respective areas.<sup>97</sup>

According to the 2021 document on Georgia's digital transformation, Georgia ranks above average in international assessments of entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology. The Georgian government seeks to foster a technology-driven economy through innovation incentives. Since the establishment of GITA in 2014, the country has made notable progress in developing its digital ecosystem. The "Georgia, 2020" socio-economic strategy emphasized ICT-centric innovation and enhanced private sector competitiveness. However, in the document it is noted that efforts to implement a new national innovation strategy have stalled since 2020 due to leadership changes and shifting policy priorities, which left stakeholders without a clear vision.<sup>98</sup>

Alongside state institutions, various groups are engaging in developing the digital ecosystem across the country. The European Union also supports Georgia's digital transformation through initiatives like its partnership with the European Investment Bank under the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP). This effort aims to deliver fast, reliable internet to 1,000 rural communities, benefiting 500,000 people and promoting digital inclusion by enhancing access to affordable broadband. In addition to this the EU supports Georgia by providing digital skills training, with a focus on women, and improving access to online services. It promotes start-ups, green entrepreneurship, and SME digitalization through grants and tailored assistance. Additionally, the EU aids policy development to support Georgia's Digital Economy and Information Society Strategy.<sup>99</sup> These initiatives support the creative sector by improving digital skills, raising awareness, and encouraging investment in digital transformation. Reliable internet access will help regional organizations strengthen their social media presence and engage more effectively with the public.

Digital Transformation Forum was organized in Tbilisi in 2023. It convened representatives from government, business and academia to discuss Georgia's economic prospects and the IT sector. The forum was organized with support from the USAID Economic Security Program. The four-day event aimed to engage all stakeholders in developing the country's digital transformation agenda and improving its global economic standing. The forum addressed technological trends, challenges, and opportunities in Georgia's digital economy, attracting around 300 participants. Emphasis was placed on creating a supportive environment for future start-ups and equipping individuals with essential digital skills. So far, about 250 start-ups funded by Georgia's Agency for Innovation and Technology have raised over \$300 million in private investments.<sup>100</sup>

These results indicate that Georgia is keeping pace with the digital transformation process and achieving notable success. However, we cannot apply this overall assessment to all organizations, as the study reveals that some organizations show specific vulnerabilities regarding the development of their digital identity.

The Georgian creative sector is highly diverse in its use of digital tools and platforms. Some organizations are eager to grow and establish their presence in the digital realm, as evidenced by

<sup>95</sup> United Nations in Georgia. "Digital Development Country Profile - Georgia". May 4, 2022. Accessed: October 23, 2024. <https://georgia.un.org/en/180467-digital-development-country-profile-georgia>.

<sup>96</sup> GITA. "About Us". Accessed October 23, 2024. <https://gita.gov.ge/en/about>.

<sup>97</sup> GITA. "Techno Park and Innovation Centers". Accessed October 24, 2024. <https://gita.gov.ge/en/regions>.

<sup>98</sup> United Nations in Georgia. "Digital Development Country Profile - Georgia". May 4, 2022. Accessed: October 23, 2024. <https://georgia.un.org/en/180467-digital-development-country-profile-georgia>.

<sup>99</sup> European Union in Georgia. "Digital". Accessed October 23, 2024. <https://eu4georgia.eu/digital/>.

<sup>100</sup> Eu4Digital. "Georgia Digital Transformation Forum Explores Economy and IT Development". July 27, 2023. Accessed October 23, 2024. <https://eufordigital.eu/georgia-digital-transformation-forum-explores-economy-and-it-development/>.



various festivals, installations, exhibitions, and musical events; Organizations that have a strong digital identity typically have their daily operations and product or service creation processes closely integrated with the use of digital tools. However, many struggle to keep up with the rapid pace of change and opt for simpler ways to participate in the digital process.

It can be stated that there is an awareness in the country that digital transformation goes beyond mere technical changes; it represents a fundamental shift in how industries operate, create, and interact with audiences. A notable example of digital awareness in the creative sector is the "Tkeshi" festival, initiated by Georgian artists. Launched in 2020 as an online event series in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Tkeshi aimed to foster connection and creativity in a digital environment. In summer 2021, it transitioned to a physical event in the enchanting Kojori Pine Forest. With its versatile format and collaborative spirit, Tkeshi continues to evolve as a platform for diverse experiences and community engagement, blending technology-driven art with natural landscapes to enhance the sensory experiences of its visitors.<sup>101</sup>



Source: **Official Facebook page of the festival Tkeshi**

The platform "In Between Conditions" explores cultural responses driven by political and social changes through an experimental format. Utilizing new media and transdisciplinary practices, it aims to investigate artistic trends and movements that have yet to be contextualized in Georgia or have been overlooked. The artists employ projection devices and screens to create immersive installations that enhance the exhibition's themes.<sup>102</sup>

Tbilisi International Stage Design Biennale offers immersive experiences to the visitors of its exhibitions. This year, it hosted an exhibition "Rare Memories of the Future" reflecting the transformative power

<sup>101</sup> Festival "Tkeshi". *Tkeshi*. Accessed October 13, 2024. <https://tkeshi.com/en/about/>.

<sup>102</sup> Exhibition "In Between Conditions". *Iliia State University*. Accessed October 11, 2024. <https://iliauni.edu.ge/ge/siaxleebi-8/gonisdziebebi-346/gamofena-mdgomareobebs-shoris-in-between-conditions.page>.

of art during the challenging times of the pandemic and war, serving as a contemplative space for solitary spectators where past memories merge with future visions. Inspired by the Rustaveli National Theatre's 2020 production of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, the project showcases the evolution of Georgian stage director Robert Sturua's 'political theatre' into a more metaphysical and philosophical form, highlighting deep theatrical metaphors.<sup>103</sup>

"Open Space for Experimental Art" is a creative venue designed to discover and promote young, talented artists, providing them with a platform for self-expression and fostering connections among representatives from various artistic disciplines. The space regularly hosts a range of exhibitions and performances, with digital media playing a significant role in these events. One of the recent multimedia production by contemporary Georgian stage director David Khorbaladze, titled "unlove," was presented in October. Drawing on documentary materials, "UNLOVE" crafted a world that fluctuates between reality and fantasy, mirroring the complexities of love itself.<sup>104</sup>



Source: **Official Facebook page of Open Space**

The Caucasus Music Award Ceremony Phoenix uses various audiovisual means of presentation of the Caucasus music teams. The event is traditionally held every year and is one of the large-scale musical events in the capital.<sup>105</sup> The musical platform "Usmine," initiated by G.J., a participant in this study, actively uses AI for text and voice generation. The platform also employs modern installation programs that offer ready-made, trendy graphic templates.<sup>106</sup> E. Kh., a musical event

<sup>103</sup> "Tbilisi Biennale of Stage Design Official Page". Post, September 26, 2024. Accessed October 11, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/p/Tbilisi-Biennale-of-Stage-Design-100064960502818/>.

<sup>104</sup> "Open Space Official Page". Post, October 2, 2024. Accessed October 11, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/osoea>.

<sup>105</sup> Caucasian Music Awards "Phoenix" Official Page. Accessed October 11, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/CaucasianMusicAwardsPhoenix/>.

<sup>106</sup> G.J., response, October 10, 2024.

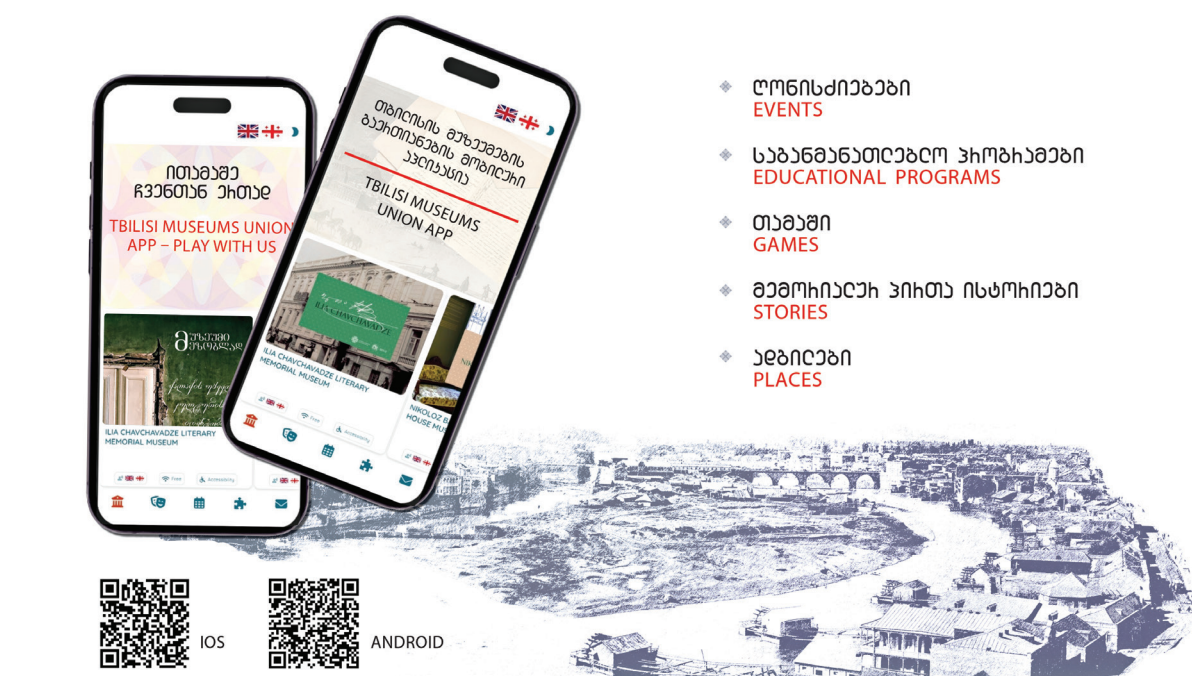


manager and expert interviewed for this study highlights that the creative sector frequently utilizes online platforms like Canva and In Shot for content creation, in addition to traditional graphic and multimedia applications. He also notes the importance of Spotify as an online streaming platform for distributing audio content.<sup>107</sup>

The successful example of museums undergoing digital transformation is the Union of Tbilisi museums. Over the past few years, the organization has been executing the project “More Innovations and Public Involvement in the Union of Tbilisi Museums”, funded by donations, which has introduced various innovations for visitors.

In 2017, the Union of Tbilisi Museums inaugurated the opening of the renowned Nikoloz Baratashvili Memorial House-Museum to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the poet Nikoloz Baratashvili. This ceremonial opening celebrated his legacy and contributions to literature. The exhibition project leveraged creative industry and 3D animation to enhance modern museography, marking the first use of these techniques in an exhibition space. Its goal is to introduce and popularize the work of Nikoloz Baratashvili to the general public by employing innovative cultural methods, making his legacy engaging and accessible to viewers.<sup>108</sup>

An audio guide on Georgian and English language for the Literary-Memorial Museum of Ilia Chavchavadze has been created.<sup>109</sup> This allows visitors to enjoy a self-guided tour in a language of their choice. A solar panel system was installed at the museum, marking the first use of a renewable energy source in Transcaucasia. This initiative aims to minimize environmental impact.<sup>110</sup>



Source: The official Web. Page of the Union of Tbilisi Museums

107 E. Kh., response, October 10, 2024.  
 108 Unions of Tbilisi Museums. *Nikoloz Baratashvili Renovated Memorial House-Museum*. Accessed October 12, 2024. <https://tbilisimuseumsunion.ge/about-us/baratashvili-beforeafter-museum/>.  
 109 Union of Tbilisi Museums. “The Project ‘More Innovations and Public Involvement in the Union of Tbilisi Museums,’” 2023. Accessed October 12, 2024. <https://shorturl.at/c5AB4>.  
 110 Union of Tbilisi Museums. “Representatives of the BP Georgia Office Visited the Union of Museums in Tbilisi,” 2024. Accessed October 12, 2024. <https://shorturl.at/2TpVb>.

In January 2024, the museum launched its mobile application, the first of its kind in the Georgian museum sector. The app includes information about the history of the museums and educational components, along with a new museum game for users. It is bilingual, offering content in both Georgian and English.<sup>111</sup>

Literary scholar M.E., who was interviewed for this study, notes that the Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature has established a digital laboratory focused on preserving and researching Georgian literary heritage through the implementation of digital paradigms and tools. In the laboratory, digital academic editions of Georgian writers are being developed in accordance with Western standards for data coding and organization. The project involves a quantitative analysis of literary texts, utilizing various digital tools, algorithms, and natural language processing techniques during the data collection and analysis stages. Additionally, it incorporates cartography of Georgian literature alongside narrative theory and spatial data analysis tools. Another key objective is to introduce digital teaching methodologies for literature at the university level. This digital transformation laboratory is actively expanding its academic network by collaborating with world-leading research and educational institutions, currently partnering with the Sorbonne and universities in Darmstadt and Trier.<sup>112</sup>

In addition to these examples, numerous events are organized by various entities in the contemporary creative sector using digital tools, along with many instances of digital trends being implemented in cultural heritage organizations that could be highlighted. Our respondents also confirm the adoption of digital trends in the sector. According to T.R., a technological educator who was interviewed for this study, contemporary creative startups primarily utilize digital project management platforms like Trello and Asana as these tools are crucial for effectively managing digital projects.<sup>113</sup> The current situation in Georgia suggests that some organizations within the sector acknowledge that digital transformation represents more than a technical shift; it marks a transition into a new reality that changes how industries operate, create, and interact with audiences.

However, our research indicates that there are also many organizations in Georgia that struggle to keep pace with digital changes in the creative sector. The varied levels of adoption of digital trends make it challenging to draw clear conclusions about the overall extent to which the Georgian creative sector embraces digital trends and develops a digital identity. This process is not consistent across the sector. Drawing these conclusions is further complicated by the lack of a cohesive approach to digital transformation from the state and by the lack of data on digitalization. While the cultural policy strategy document includes mentions of developing digital transformation capabilities and establishing necessary mechanisms for creating a digital identity, there is currently no law mandating digitization in Georgia.

Interestingly, an examination of the examples provided reveals that events utilizing digital tools often necessitate collaboration with multiple partners and donors. As a result, you will also see several sponsor logos listed under each event. While digital opportunities are vast, many parts of Georgia’s creative sector lack access to them. These technologies are costly, require specific infrastructure for implementation, skilled professionals, and greater awareness within the digital field.

111 “Presentation of the Mobile Application of the Union of Tbilisi Museums,” 2024, Union of Tbilisi Museums, Accessed October 12, <https://shorturl.at/w6UI0>.  
 112 M.E., response, October 9, 2024.  
 113 T.R., response, September 25, 2024.

## 3.2. Use of Digital Tools and Platforms in Georgia's Creative Sectors

The development of digital identity in Georgia's creative sector was connected both to an organization's presence on digital platforms and to the digital tools it employs in the process of product/service creation.

In Georgia's creative sector (including cultural heritage organizations, such as museums) social media and streaming platforms are predominantly used. Facebook and Instagram are the most popular choices, while some creative organizations also have a presence on platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and LinkedIn. A small number of respondents indicated ownership of X (formerly Twitter) and web platforms. Organizations that utilize websites typically have a relatively stable budget, which is often supported by state funding or generated through self-production.

Creative organizations and experts highlight the rapid dissemination of information, the desire to reach a wider audience, and budget-friendly advertising as the main reasons for using social media channels. They emphasize that expanding their audience is connected to four key objectives: boosting sales, enhancing visibility, providing social benefits to society and supporting creative education.

N.K., a visual arts critic and film heritage manager discussed the potential for rapid information dissemination through social media channels. She noted that "web page" was an only alternative in Georgia when digital trends first emerged. She observes that the influence of Facebook and Instagram is quite evident in the present day creative sector, "as users receive a constant stream of verbal and visual information every morning through these platforms".<sup>114</sup>

D.Ch., a founder of "Human Development and Culture International School" and M. Sh., an initiator of the platform "Colorful Cabriolet" also shared a similar opinion. D.Ch., noted that through digital platforms, "projects and content produced by the organizations become more widely known, and information reaches a larger audience".<sup>115</sup> While M. Sh. pointed out that "social media is the fastest and most effective way to showcase one's creativity and cultural activities to the public".<sup>116</sup>

G.S., a manager of contemporary experimental arts projects, G.S. emphasized the importance of social media channels for small organizations in engaging and communicating with their target audience. He emphasized that "in today's digital age, platforms are essential, particularly for small, independent, and non-profit organizations," as they help maintain communication with their audiences.<sup>117</sup> The founder of "Street Gallery" L.G., discussed attracting international online consumers to their products. To engage audiences, the gallery uses social media platforms like Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and Facebook, with the latter specifically aimed at the Georgian audience.<sup>118</sup>

I.K., a member of the independent theater organization "Khvliki," (Lizard) mentioned that the Georgian creative sector relies on low-budget platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok

<sup>114</sup> N.K., response, September 29, 2024.

<sup>115</sup> D.Ch., response, September 23, 2024.

<sup>116</sup> M.Sh., response, September 24, 2024.

<sup>117</sup> G.S., response, September 27, 2024.

<sup>118</sup> L.G., response, October 13, 2024.

to effectively reach audiences by creating engaging content through reels. Since starting to use digital platforms in 2020, the organization currently focuses on Facebook and Instagram but plans to incorporate TikTok for future projects.<sup>119</sup>

N.G., an illustrator and arts professional, surveyed for this study suggests that while modern digital platforms enhance artists' visibility, there isn't a dedicated digital platform as popular as Instagram specifically for visual artists, akin to SoundCloud for musicians.<sup>120</sup>

Respondents emphasized the economic advantages of utilizing social channels. The founder of Street Gallery L.G., emphasizes that social platforms are primarily used to engage with the audience and boost sales. Information about organized exhibitions is shared through these channels to attract sponsors, whose main objective is gaining access.<sup>121</sup>

N. Gh., a publishing and rights manager from "Sulakauri Publishing" notes that "The demand for buying books online is increasing. Facebook is the most effective platform for reaching a broad audience, while Instagram and TikTok engage younger users. Although the publishing house doesn't pay influencers on Instagram or TikTok, it sends them books as gifts, leading to organic appearances in their content".<sup>122</sup>

The director of the Jacob Gogebashvili Varani House-Museum N.A., mentioned that their digital presence has boosted visitor numbers and sparked greater interest in their programs. One notable initiative enables school teachers to conduct the first lesson for students in Jacob Gogebashvili's school office, making use of the museum's resources. This increase in visitors has also contributed to a rise in the museum's annual income.<sup>123</sup>

Boosting sales is one of the important points mentioned by M.J., the director of the crafts organization "Art Universe". She utilizes a website, Facebook, and Instagram to promote crafts products. She also mentions that she relies on graphic designers for product design since the organization does not have a specialist in that field".<sup>124</sup>

N. Kh., a textile specialist, highlights that handicraft organizations actively utilize social networks, particularly Facebook and Instagram, which play a dominant role. She observes that digital support visibility of the crafts sector and increases sale.<sup>125</sup>

N.S., the director of the Union of Tbilisi Museums, recognized that while a digital presence can enhance economic benefits for museums, it is not a reliable indicator of sales, and museums should not be evaluated solely on economic terms. She highlighted the Union's effective use of its social channels to attract new visitors and communicate with a broader audience. N.S. emphasized that the educational and social benefits of digital tools are incomparable.<sup>126</sup>

The pandemic lockdown significantly accelerated the use of digital channels, leading much of the creative sector to recognize that the digital world is an essential and lasting alternative to the physical

<sup>119</sup> I.K., response, October 8, 2024.

<sup>120</sup> N.G., response, October 18, 2024.

<sup>121</sup> L.G., response, October 13, 2024.

<sup>122</sup> N.Gh., response, October 18, 2024.

<sup>123</sup> Facebook Interview with N.A, October 2, 2024.

<sup>124</sup> M.J., response, October 23, 2024.

<sup>125</sup> N.Kh., interview, October 29, 2024.

<sup>126</sup> N.S., response, September 30, 2024.



world, a trend expected to continue in the future. A literary scholar M.E., addressed this topic during the interview. She noted that social networks are actively employed in the creative sector. Using the literature and publishing fields as an example, she highlighted that these areas significantly increased their use of digital platforms during the Covid pandemic, when direct access to information was severely limited, rendering libraries and in-person lectures and meetings inaccessible.<sup>127</sup>

The impact of the COVID pandemic on creative organizations is evident in N. Kh's response, a member of the Independent Contemporary Dance Organization "Metaliki". She highlights that, in addition to their standard website, they use Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to connect with the youth. Since their founding in 2021, they have embraced TikTok organically, acknowledging its potential as a leading video platform, particularly during its surge in popularity at the onset of the COVID pandemic. She also notes that digital platforms facilitate easier communication with individuals and organizations, allowing for more organic interactions. They can directly share their activities and exchange knowledge and experience, leading to more effective and productive use of time and resources.<sup>128</sup>

The use of digital tools differs among organizations, with some lacking awareness of the available options in their field. While all respondents agreed on the essential role of digital tools in the creative sector, the degree of their integration into the working operations of creative organizations varies significantly. The use of digital tools is linked to developing innovative and competitive products and services, enhancing artistic concepts, ensuring quality and processing larger volumes of data.

In sectors of the creative industry closely linked to modern technologies, such as tech startups, design, and marketing, a wider array of digital platforms and tools is employed. According to one of the respondents T.R., the contemporary creative sector employs a variety of digital trends. He highlighted the growing relevance of AI-based tools that streamline content creation and transform business dynamics. Specifically, he mentioned Chat-GPT, Gemini, and DALL-E.<sup>129</sup>

N.E., a scholar in art history, theory, and philosophy, also discussed the use of contemporary digital tools in Georgia's creative sector during the interview for this study. She acknowledges instances of digitized works made by Georgian artists being placed on the NFT market. However, she was unsure about the extent to which Georgian artists use modern day digital tools that contemporary creative industries employ – AR, VR technologies, AI tools (like DALL-E and DALL-E 2), machine learning (ML), and NFTs. N.E. emphasizes the importance of digital tools in today's artistic fields. She notes that generative processes and NFT markets are increasingly integrated into exhibition practices within the digitized creative landscape. In the current global art environment, digital platforms are seen as the most effective way to distribute art products. As the materiality of art is reevaluated amid the growing digitalization of culture, it becomes crucial to utilize digital spaces and consider emerging trends. This shift necessitates a reevaluation of the concepts of art and creativity as a whole.<sup>130</sup>

L.G., the founder of "Street Gallery," shared a personal example, noting that he has been successfully utilizing augmented reality (AR) since 2017-2018. The organization developed its own Web AR platform and primarily focuses on digital art. Since its inception, the gallery has launched a

<sup>127</sup> M.E., response, October 9, 2024.

<sup>128</sup> N. Kh., response, October 11, 2024.

<sup>129</sup> T.R., response, September 25, 2024.

<sup>130</sup> N.E., response, October 12, 2024.

website where artists can submit their work. It integrates online exposure and various tools into its operations. To reach out and connect with audiences, the gallery uses social media platforms such as Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and Facebook, with the latter specifically targeting the Georgian audience.<sup>131</sup>

G.J., an initiator of musical platform "Usmine" discusses the supplementary role of digital technologies in enhancing the creative concept and generating a new effect. She considers that "the creative industry today delivers quick, timely content designed to capture the audience's attention within the first three seconds. It should be trendy, concise, and dynamic, incorporating textual elements while highlighting impactful visuals. If sound effects are used, they should enhance the overall message". However, similar to N.S., the director of the Union of Tbilisi Museum the respondent believes that digital technology facilitates a technical process rather than a creative one, making it highly time-efficient.<sup>132</sup>

E. Kh., an event manager surveyed for this study, observes that, based on his experience, services or products from the creative sector would be much more accessible if digital technologies were widely adopted. The primary advantages of these technologies include speed, efficiency, mobility, and operational capability, with quality often being improved as well.<sup>133</sup>

The literary scholar M.E., mentions that the use of digital tools and platforms will facilitate the widespread dissemination of information, allowing for quicker familiarization and processing of larger volumes of data. She cites the example of the Institute of Literature, which has created electronic records of several classic writers accessible through the Iverieli library. Any interested individual can obtain a wide range of information, including links to scholarly resources and relevant sources, as well as photographic or documentary materials, allowing for quick access to a substantial amount of information.<sup>134</sup>

O.Ch., a voice and diction coach, highlighted the educational value of digital tools in creative education, noting their adoption came later than in other fields. "While film directors, illustrators, and animators embraced these tools early, students in other disciplines were slower to adapt. Today, technologies like sound reinforcement systems and audio effects are used in rehearsals". {...} He also mentioned that "students in art direction learn to use digital tools for multimedia projects, with some universities, such as the Shota Rustaveli State University of Theater and Cinema, offering electronic systems for accessing course materials".<sup>135</sup>

N. Kh., a textile specialist highlights that handicraft organizations actively utilize social networks, particularly Facebook and Instagram, which play a dominant role. She observes that digital tools are integrated to varying extents in craft activities. For instance, sublimation printing is commonly used when working with fabric, allowing for the creation of various souvenirs and accessories, such as bags and scarves. She notes that sublimation printing is highly popular among customers, resulting in frequent private orders in this area.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>131</sup> L.G., response, October 13, 2024.

<sup>132</sup> G.J., response, October 10, 2024.

<sup>133</sup> E.Kh., response, October 10, 2024.

<sup>134</sup> M.E., response, October 9, 2024.

<sup>135</sup> O.Ch., Interview October 28, 2024.

<sup>136</sup> N.kh., interview October 29, 2024.

This research shows that some organizations are particularly vulnerable in adopting digital tools. For example, this holds true for rural museums as shown below. Digital tools are essential for redefining their roles and improving their overall function and image. However, only few of them allow the digital development in its space. An art historian M.G., emphasized that modern museums cannot effectively operate without these tools, as merely organizing quality exhibitions is insufficient. She likened this to selling poorly packaged products, where both quality content and presentation are vital for attracting audiences. M.G. also noted the difficulty of expanding museum audiences, as many perceive them as uninteresting spaces. Furthermore, she stated that in Georgia, where many museums face basic infrastructural challenges, access to digital tools is regarded as a significant luxury.<sup>137</sup>

### 3.3. Barriers to the Use of Digital Tools

Some digital tools are easily accessible and user-friendly, others require additional financial resources and manpower. As a result, non-profit, self-financed, and small organizations often rely on tools they can manage on their own, without hiring additional staff. These organizations typically gain access to more advanced digital tools only when they secure funding for promotion through specific projects or when the nature of the project demands the use of certain technologies, allowing them to hire a technical team. However, in their day-to-day operations, creative organizations and professionals often lack a permanent website, and tools like VR, NFTs, and blockchain technologies remain out of reach.

The primary barriers to digital transformation include personnel challenges, such as lack of digital skills, financial constraints, low awareness among creative organizations and professionals, legislation challenges. Financial issues are particularly linked to compromises on quality, inability to hire the qualified specialists and the need to obtain licenses for various software programs.

I.K., a member of the independent theater organization "Khvliki," (lizard) highlights that the primary challenge for the creative sector lies in producing high-quality advertising materials, which necessitate specific skills and expertise.<sup>138</sup>

One of the key findings of the research was the low awareness of digital transformation and its implications for developing a digital identity. The study identified a significant barrier stemming from a lack of knowledge about available digital tools in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Additionally, some respondents, mainly from traditional arts fields, questioned their eligibility to participate, doubting the relevance of digital transformation to their work.

Similar observation was made by N.E., a scholar in arts history, theory and philosophy, who observed that many digital tools are not yet widely embraced in Georgia's creative sector, leading to limited usage. According to her, this is partly due to the availability of budget-friendly AI tools and platforms that are accessible to the creative sector. Furthermore, a lack of technical knowledge required for more complex projects utilizing these technologies contributes to their limited adoption.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>137</sup> M.G., response, September 17, 2024.

<sup>138</sup> I.K., response, October 8, 2024.

<sup>139</sup> N.E., response, October 12, 2024.

N.K., a visual arts expert and film heritage manager from the National Cinema Center, notes that the primary challenge is securing funding to develop a digital infrastructure. She believes that while "human resources are also essential to this process, managing what has already been established—specifically, finding the people behind it—is not difficult".<sup>140</sup>

According to T.R., while graphic design and animation programs are somewhat more accessible in the creative sector, they are still considered costly, limiting their consistent use.<sup>141</sup> Similar observation was made by E. Kh., who points out that the Georgian creative sector frequently has to compromise on quality. For instance, reliable brands in the technology sector, known for their stable, fast, and high-quality performance, are often substituted with more affordable technological products.<sup>142</sup>

According to G.J., most obstacles while using digital tools are linked to licensing and financial issues. The installation of various programs involves costs that independent organizations often cannot afford.<sup>143</sup>

N. Gh., mentioned that the "Sulakauri" company is "unable to sell published books in Kindle format on Amazon or other platforms because their files don't use Unicode fonts, which Kindle cannot process".<sup>144</sup> She is also eager to address this issue and make Georgian books available to immigrants on Kindle.<sup>145</sup>

A similar observation was made by T.R, who noted that the adoption of digital tools requires awareness and understanding of their existence and usage—knowledge that many creative organizations and professionals in Georgia currently lack.<sup>146</sup>

O.Ch., noted that many software systems and digital technologies used in creative fields are expensive and often beyond the budget of Georgia's creative organizations. These tools require significant financial investment. Furthermore, he also noted that unfamiliarity with these platforms can pose a barrier; training in areas like editing and audiovisual art is necessary to effectively handle new audio and video content".<sup>147</sup>

M.G., an artist also observed that Georgian artists tend to spend less on technology, expressing discomfort with monthly subscription fees for software. They would prefer a one-time payment option that grants lifetime access instead.<sup>148</sup>

N.M., an expert from the "Palace of Art - Museum of Cultural History," indicates that web pages and Facebook are predominantly utilized in Georgia, having gained popularity around 5 to 6 years ago. Many organizations in the creative sector effectively use these platforms, with Facebook being particularly successful. However, some organizations seem to encounter difficulties concerning financial and human resources when it comes to adopting additional digital tools.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>140</sup> N.K., response, September 29, 2024.

<sup>141</sup> T.R., response, September 25, 2024.

<sup>142</sup> E.Kh., response October 10, 2024.

<sup>143</sup> G.J., response, October 10, 2024.

<sup>144</sup> N.Gh., response, October 18, 2024.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> T.R., response, 25 September, 2024.

<sup>147</sup> O.Ch., interview, October 28, 2024.

<sup>148</sup> M.G., response, October 18, 2024.

<sup>149</sup> N.M., response, 30 September, 2024.

N.S. assesses the process of digital transformation from a broader perspective, emphasizing that effective digital content necessitates a robust legal framework and the expertise of decision-makers in the sector. She believes this foundation is essential for producing digital content in the creative sector, including museums.<sup>150</sup>

### 3.4. Digital Skills Desired by Respondents

The survey revealed a mixed perspective on the need for digital skills within the creative sector. Some respondents think that specialized digital skills are unnecessary, as they are confident in managing social media channels themselves and believe their current abilities are sufficient for effectively engaging with their target audience. Additionally, a portion of creative organizations possess limited knowledge of advanced digital technologies and rely mostly on familiar, budget-friendly tools. However, there is a contrast among respondents. Some actively follow the latest developments in their field and prioritize enhancing their organization's digital identity. Despite this, digital transformation is generally perceived as a costly process, and many organizations are hesitant to adopt the latest programs or tools. In response to the competitive and challenging environment, most creative organizations opt for a gradual approach to digital transformation, avoiding rapid or risky changes. They aim to balance progress with caution.

According to M. Sh.: "Independent Georgian artists are trying to sell their products through social media. There are various websites, although they work less well both in Georgia and abroad".<sup>151</sup> She currently manages the Facebook page of the platform that brings together young Georgian artists, promoting their artwork by inviting people to the page, sharing updates about new additions, and creating engaging posts. She believes that she has not faced any obstacles in the way of assimilation and use of simple digital tools.

D.Ch., is currently working on creating a website. He has a small organization and does not have the resources to hire additional personnel. Therefore, he tries to promote his own products, projects and programs. He would like to have the skills necessary for a social media manager to create effective content and audience engagement.<sup>152</sup>

Many organizations face challenges due to budget constraints, which prevent them from hiring dedicated social media managers and designers. As a result, staff members are often responsible for managing their social media presence and design work themselves.

G.S., highlighted that many of his colleagues from creative industries, himself included, are eager to grasp the fundamental principles of graphic design. Additionally, proficiency in working with web platforms is becoming increasingly essential within the creative industries.<sup>153</sup>

150 N.S., response, 30 September, 2024.  
151 M. Sh., response, September 24, 2024.  
152 D.Ch., response, September 23, 2024.  
153 G.S., response, September 27, 2024.

I.K. emphasizes that digital channels and platforms enable global connections, but only high-quality content attracts attention. To enhance their work, the members seek to learn Photoshop and video editing techniques.<sup>154</sup>

According to G.J., further exploring artificial intelligence and its application in musical projects can broaden creative boundaries and enhance imaginative possibilities for herself and the artists she collaborated with.<sup>155</sup>

According to L.G., acquiring specific skills, such as creating video content, presents a significant challenge in the creative sector, and many professionals are eager to develop this skill.<sup>156</sup>

Similar opinion was made by M.J., She mentions that producing content independently is challenging, and like other creative specialists, she wishes to acquire skills in video shooting and editing to enhance her ability to create digital content.<sup>157</sup>

The respondents' desires for developing digital skills varied and were shaped by the unique needs and specifics of their work, encompassing everything from video creation to utilizing artificial intelligence and different software. A key factor is that some organizations possess a clear vision for their future, which paves the way for progress. However, some remain skeptical about their presence in the digital realm due to the acknowledgment that transformation is a challenging, lengthy, and intricate process.

International experience and the exchange of insights from organizations that have navigated the challenges of the digital age are inspiring for overcoming obstacles and fostering positive perceptions.

The Georgian creative sector can learn valuable lessons from Eastern Europe, particularly in building a strong organizational image and its representation on social media. Establishing a recognizable brand helps consumers connect with the creators behind products or services. Organizations should introduce themselves and their employees to foster personal communication, trust, and familiarity with consumers. Additionally, using hashtags can enhance brand awareness. It's crucial for organizations to identify their internal strengths and capabilities, which can drive significant changes in product or service creation. This pursuit should be approached gradually, focusing on a step-by-step plan rather than large-scale technological investments, to clarify the organization's vision over time.

154 I.K., response, October 8, 2024.  
155 G.J., response, October 10, 2024.  
156 L.G., response, October 13, 2024.  
157 M.J., response, October 23, 2024.



#### 4.1. Overview of Easter European Museums: Case-studies from Hungary and Estonia

In 1997, a law was introduced that continues to define Hungary's museum network.<sup>158</sup> It separates five different types of museums based on their collections: national museums, specialized museums (museums of different disciplines with a national sphere and scope), city museums (different collection types, county scope), territorial museums (different collection types, specified territorial scope) and thematic museums (one theme, different collection types). Furthermore, the

Although the digitalization of public collections in Hungary began in the 1990s—museums in that decade, libraries in the early 2000s, and archives in 2009<sup>165</sup>—large-scale efforts only took off after the 2017

165 Közgyűjteményi Digitalizálási Stratégia [The Digitalisation Strategy of Public Collections] (2017-2025). 14.

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government decision. This strategy is extensive and long-term, involving sector-specific aggregators tasked with driving the process. Each sector, including libraries, museums, archives, audiovisual archives, and other institutions, has an assigned aggregator responsible for developing recommendations, coordinating efforts, assessing capacity, and connecting with international counterparts.<sup>166</sup>

The implementation relies on models created by these aggregators, and collaboration is key. If an organization lacks the necessary equipment or expertise, support from the sector ensures the project moves forward smoothly. Regarding finances, the strategy is state-funded, but the institutions have to apply for the financial support.<sup>167</sup>

These museums face similar challenges to those in Georgia, including financial resources and workforce capacity. Smaller institutions usually do not have Social Media Managers or IT departments, the tasks are carried out by enthusiastic, self-taught other employees: archaeologists, art historians or museum educators (called museum pedagogy in Hungary). Nevertheless, in 2021, 42 percent of the Hungarian museums had websites.

Despite having only 170 museums overall, Estonia has more museums per 100,000 people than any other European nation.<sup>168</sup> Professionals quickly realized the value of digitization, and they developed an action plan with the goal of having one-third of the cultural heritage available online by 2023, which was successfully achieved. The cultural sector is now working on the Cultural Heritage Digital Action Plan 2024-2029, which calls for 55% of the nation's cultural heritage to be digitalized by 2029, with a particular emphasis on accessibility.<sup>169</sup>



Source: Aquincum Museum promotes its event, **Barbaric Day** with a short video

### Aquincum Museum's Facebook Page<sup>170</sup>

Aquincum Museum is a thematic museum located in the capital city of Hungary, in Budapest. It is an archaeological park, situated partly on the site of the ancient Roman city of Aquincum. The museum primarily exhibits archaeological artifacts from the Roman period, and the remains of buildings from this historic settlement, offering visitors a glimpse into life during that period.

With a strong online presence, the museum engages audiences through its website, Facebook, and Instagram. Its Facebook page, established in 2011, has grown to over 17,000 followers, making

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 53, 56.

<sup>168</sup> "Fascinating facts about museums in Estonia", Visit Estonia, accessed October 28, 2024. <https://visitestonia.com/en/museums>.

<sup>169</sup> "Action Plan for the Digitisation of Cultural Heritage," Kultuurministeerium, accessed October 28, 2024. <https://www.kul.ee/en/node/41>.

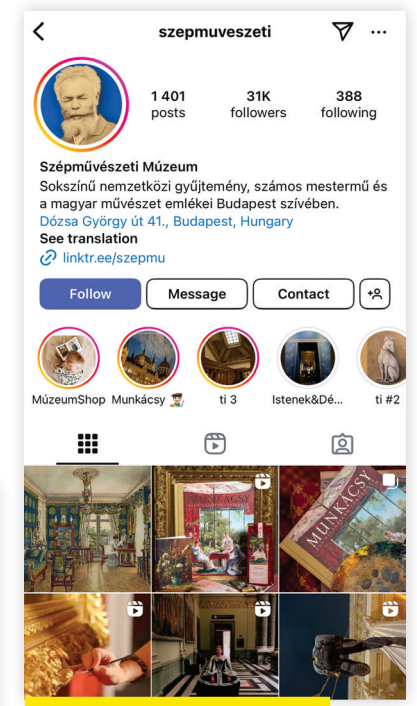
<sup>170</sup> "Aquincumi Múzeum," Facebook, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/Aquincum.Museum>.

it one of the most followed museums in Hungary. The museum actively posts content daily or every other day, focusing on announcements, exhibition news, and event updates. Additionally, they share consistent features like "Sunday Lunch," where traditional Roman recipes are posted weekly. The museum's social media also highlights creative video content, often featuring staff dressed in Roman costumes, promoting museum events or reenacting Roman customs. Furthermore, Aquincum participates in global digital trends, including "On This Day" posts, to connect with a broader audience.

### Instagram page of Museum of Fine Arts<sup>171</sup>

Museum of Fine Arts, one of the oldest museums in Hungary, is located in the capital city of Hungary, in Budapest. The collection showcases a diverse collection of mostly European art. The museum maintains a strong digital presence with a website, Facebook, and Instagram, actively working to digitize its collection.

Since launching its Instagram page in 2016, it has gathered over 30,000 followers. The museum's Instagram feed is filled with visually appealing content daily, including artwork from its collection, accompanied by educational facts or intriguing insights. It also uses its Instagram page to promote exhibitions and related programs, often giving followers a behind-the-scenes look at the process of exhibition curation or restoration. The museum actively engages with its online community by regularly reposting user-generated content and encouraging interaction through questions and games. The museum's posts are often accompanied by numerous hashtags, helping to increase visibility and connect with a broader audience.<sup>172</sup>

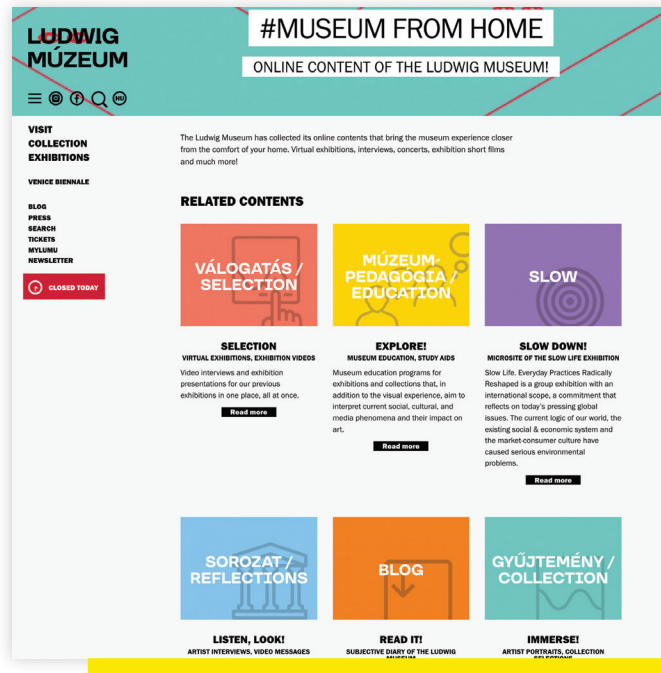


Source: The Instagram page of the Museum of Fine Arts and one part of their Behind-the-Scenes videos featuring the new temporary exhibition.

<sup>171</sup> "Szépművészeti," Instagram, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/szepmuveszeti/?hl=en>.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.





Source: Online content of the Ludwig Museum

## VR room in the Hungarian National Museum

The Hungarian National Museum, founded in 1802, is the oldest museum in Hungary. The museum has an extensive collection that includes archaeological artifacts, paintings, historical objects, and numismatic collections. In 2022, the museum opened its VR room featuring two immersive virtual reconstructions. One experience transports users to the environmental reconstruction of a 330,000-year-old Middle Palaeolithic site from Vértesszőlős, where they can explore the prehistoric environment, encounter extinct animals, and compare the environment with the modern-day landscape.<sup>176</sup> The other VR experience allows visitors to step inside the Villa Romana Baláca, exploring Roman architecture, furnishings, and engaging with replicas of Roman artifacts, offering a vivid look into life during that era.<sup>177</sup>



Source: The virtual reconstruction of the Middle-Paleolithic site from Vértesszőlős

173 “#Museum from home,” Ludwig museum, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://www.ludwigmuseum.hu/en/museum-home>.

174 “About the Museum,” Ludwig museum, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://www.ludwigmuseum.hu/en/about-ludwig-museum>.

175 “#Museum from home,” Ludwig museum, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://www.ludwigmuseum.hu/en/museum-home>.

176 Loránd Olivér Kovács, András Markó, Szilvia Fábíán, Szabolcs Czifra, and Adrienn Pálkás. 2022. “Contrasts in Luxury: The Ice Age Camp at Vértesszőlős and the Roman Villa of Baláca from Hungary”. In *Stories of the Past*, Ed. W. Lamb Andrew (Ljubljana: Narodni Muzej Slovenije, 2022), 40–51.

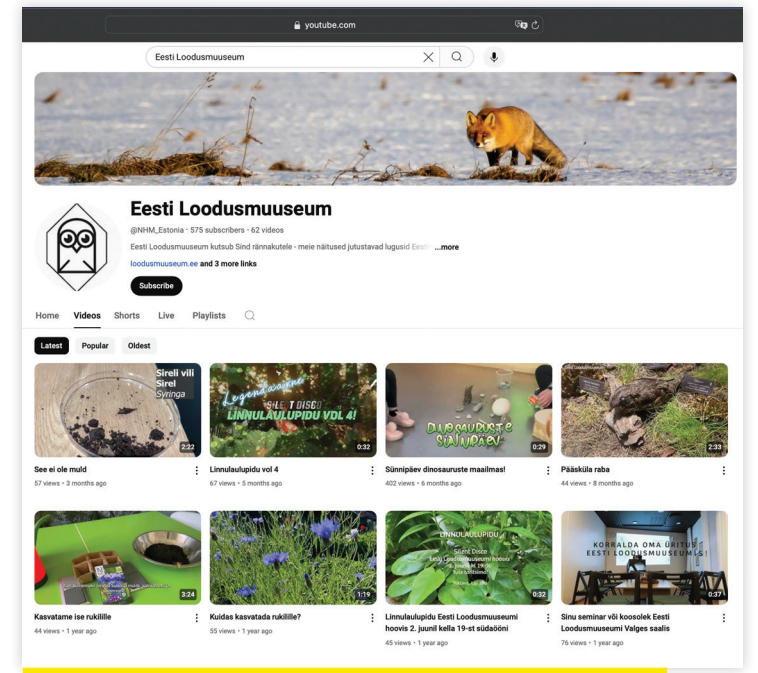
177 Ibid., 44-45.

## Online content of the Ludwig Museum<sup>173</sup>

The state owned, national museum Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art presents pieces of modern and contemporary art. Founded in 1989, after the donation of Irene and Peter Ludwig.<sup>174</sup> Alongside its presence on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, the museum also offers various online contents on its website. Among the different virtual experiences there are virtual exhibitions, with video interviews and exhibition presentations; museum education programs, artist interviews and video messages, a subjective diary of the Ludwig Museum, and digitized collections.<sup>175</sup>

## The YouTube channel of Eesti Loodusmuuseum – Estonian Museum of Natural History<sup>178</sup>

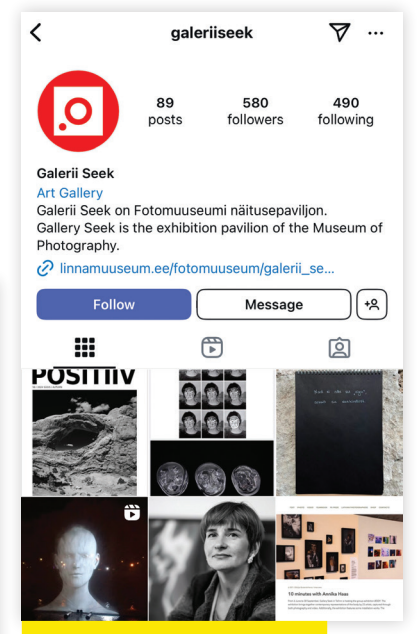
The museum, located in Tallinn, Estonia, was established in 1944 with a mission to preserve the country's natural diversity and inspire the public to protect the environment. Its extensive collection includes botanical, mycological, geological, zoological, historical, photo, and multimedia items.<sup>179</sup> Digitally, the museum is active on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter). Since joining YouTube in 2014, the museum has gained 572 followers and uploaded 62 videos, accumulating 241,955 views. It semi-regularly posts short videos (up to 10 minutes) every two months, focusing on educational topics related to its collection and often featuring insights from its expert staff.<sup>180</sup>



Source: The YouTube Channel of the Eesti Loodusmuuseum

## The Instagram page of Gallery Seek by the Museum of Photography<sup>181</sup>

The exhibition space, located in Tallinn, is part of the Museum of Photography and focuses on showcasing both contemporary and historic Estonian photography.<sup>182</sup> It maintains a digital presence with a website, as well as Facebook and Instagram pages. The Instagram account, created in 2023, has quickly grown to feature 84 posts and 476 followers. The gallery shares



Source: The Instagram page of Gallery Seek by the Museum of Photography

178 “Eesti Loodusmuuseum,” YouTube, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWSoygvtwQP4rLeAVDUCQtg/videos>.

179 “About the Museum,” Loodusmuuseum, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://www.loodusmuuseum.ee/index.php/en/mission%2C-vision-and-values>.

180 “Eesti Loodusmuuseum,” YouTube, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWSoygvtwQP4rLeAVDUCQtg/videos>.

181 “Galeriiseek,” Instagram, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/galeriiseek/>.

182 “Gallery Seek by the Museum of Photography,” Visit Estonia, Accessed 14 October, 2024. <https://visitestonia.com/en/gallery-seek-by-the-museum-of-photography>.



a few posts each month, highlighting pieces from its collection, sharing engaging facts, and providing updates on exhibitions and related events. Posts are consistently bilingual, written in both Estonian and English, and make extensive use of hashtags to reach a wider audience.

The case studies mentioned earlier demonstrate that great ideas and successful initiatives do not always require significant financial or human capital investments. Drawing from this research and our own experiences, we have developed recommendations to support the digital transformation of Georgia's cultural and creative sector:

1

### Visual aesthetics

Every organization has a unique appearance shaped by its mission, profile, and the tastes of its team. As I see it, the first step of the digital transformation is establishing a clear “digital identity”. This identity must be present on the website of the organization and on social media platforms, but also be reflected on-site, within the very walls of the institution.

2

### Build a digital identity strategy (SWOT)

If the organization appears online, especially on social media platforms, it is important to look both inside and outside the institution. A successful social media strategy should be grounded in the unique strengths and opportunities of the organization—whether it's an archaeological museum, an art gallery, or a theater. Institutions need to assess what they can offer on each platform and clarify the messages they want to convey. Additionally, it is important to observe how similar organizations use social media, learning from both their successes and their mistakes.

3

### Be brave

One of the biggest challenges in the cultural and creative sectors is the hesitancy to be brave and think outside the box. Take European museums, for example, many of them are 200-year-old institutions soaked in tradition, history, and with highly skilled professionals. While this long heritage is a source of pride, it can sometimes act as a barrier to change and innovation. The digital world may be new and unfamiliar, but its benefits are impossible to ignore. Therefore, be brave and take small, steady steps toward digital transformation. Embracing change does not mean losing tradition; it means finding new ways to keep it alive and relevant.

4

### Connect and engage with other organizations

Social media platforms are full of trends that cultural and creative organizations can adapt and make their own. It is worth checking, for example International Days, which offer a great opportunity to link an institution's collection and events to global conversations. Similarly, every organization has its own special days and anniversaries that are worth celebrating and sharing through engaging posts and images. Using hashtags is one of the best ways to connect with other organizations, join ongoing discussions, and ensure your content reaches a wider audience. By highlighting these occasions with well-chosen hashtags, institutions can make their voice heard and become an active part of the digital community.

5

### Unleash your creativity

Social media platforms are mostly about trends and visuals. Of course, it is important to represent your institution and keep its integrity, but embracing creativity and flexibility is key. One effective way to make your organization more relatable to the public is by introducing your staff and presenting the daily operations behind the scenes. Audiences love seeing real faces and hearing about various activities from people who are passionate about them. This personal touch can build a stronger connection with your followers.

If there is someone within your team who can step forward and represent the institution through engaging, informative short videos—like the examples from the Hungarian Aquincum Museum or the Estonian Museum of Natural History, you have to let them shine. Their enthusiasm can become a powerful tool to bring your institution closer to the community.

## 4.2. Overview of Georgian Museums

The history of museums in Georgia dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, characterized by two significant influences. On the one hand, the Russian Empire supported the establishment of new museums in Tbilisi, which housed extensive ethnographic, zoological, and botanical collections. On the other hand, the Georgian elite worked diligently to create national institutions that preserved archaeological finds. These museums served different purposes: the Russian Empire aimed to modernize Transcaucasia through an “enlightening” mission inspired by Western European models, while the Georgian elite sought to foster national identity and consciousness. In later years, nationally minded intellectuals played a vital role in enhancing museum work.<sup>183</sup> During the Soviet era, the korenizatsya process led to the establishment of more museums and research centers across the country, although these institutions were heavily politicized and aligned with Soviet national policy objectives.

After gaining independence, Georgian museums encountered significant challenges similar to other sectors, including crumbling infrastructure and insufficient funding. Following changes in cultural policy, museums began a rehabilitation process supported by international organizations like ICOM and UNESCO. Currently, they are making notable progress considering the past experiences and attempting to adapt to digitalization, although the level of success varies among institutions.

In this study we focused on the museum as a space for education, enjoyment, reflection, and the exchange of knowledge. Our interest lay in how digital platforms and tools have been utilized to foster and enhance these functions within the museum environment. This involved evaluating whether the development strategies adopted by these museums align with contemporary museum practices and definitions. This comprehensive approach helps ensure that the research offers valuable insights into the practical enhancement of museum operations.

<sup>183</sup> Tsereteli, “At the Origins of Museum Work,” <https://gfsis.org.ge/my-world/38>.

As the Easter European cases have shown, the museum's digital strategy focuses on brand development and is closely linked to the organization's digital transformation. Creation of the brand means the development of distinct identity and values, effective customer engagement, consistent communication, high-quality offerings, and a robust online presence. Furthermore, it should be able to adapt to evolving market trends while staying authentic. The primary goal of a museum's strategy is to develop a brand that is closely tied to the museum's digital identity.

Among the surveyed museums, the Union of Tbilisi Museums and the Georgian National Museum stood out for their strong digital identity, excelling in both online presence and the use of digital tools. These institutions have established themselves as well-known cultural brands through their engagement on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and their website. The Union employs a PR specialist and designer to create a unique and engaging visual identity that is both recognizable and easily shareable. In addition to its PR unit, the Georgian National Museum also has a dedicated department for services and new technologies, highlighting its commitment to prioritizing digital initiatives.

However, the content created by the Union of Tbilisi Museums differs significantly from that of the Georgian National Museum. This institution employs appealing colors and designs in its content creation, with a focus on delicacy that enhances its attractiveness. This aesthetic approach not only draws users in but also connects them to the museum's identity through their online interactions. By engaging users in this way, the museum fosters a deeper connection and appreciation for its offerings.

It creates digital content aimed at engaging both active museum visitors and passive internet users. This content primarily revolves around works by famous Georgian intellectuals, exploring significant details of their lives and the eras they influenced. These themes resonate well with a large segment of the community, boosting the museums' popularity.

In addition to its digital presence, the Union of Tbilisi Museums collaborates with educational institutions such as schools and universities. It conducts educational and social projects and participates in innovative development programs, contributing to the growth of interactive and modern museum experiences. This multifaceted approach has helped solidify the Tbilisi Museum Association as one of the key creative players in Georgia.

The museum also provides entertainment activities for visitors, including games accessible via a mobile application. Additionally, visitors can enjoy board games associated with the Open Day, such as "Flirt," which was quite popular in old Tbilisi.<sup>184</sup>

N.S., the director of the Union of Tbilisi Museums, shared her vision about the concept of modern museum: "A Museum should recognize its role as a vital initiator in public life and responsibly provide contemporary context and relevant themes to their audience {...} "The contemporary museum should establish its own mission that aligns with its content, purpose, and the needs of the public, considering the social and economic contexts. The museum should actively participate in cultural policy and help shape its direction. This vision and positioning of the museum in Georgia represent a relatively new approach". She also adds that "traditional focus on preservation and care a prevalent post-Soviet mindset often dominates discussions and can lead to controversy".<sup>185</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Facebook page of Union of Tbilisi Museums. post October 8, 2:34. <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=947508724078836&set=pcb.947518030744572>.

<sup>185</sup> N.S response, 30 September, 2024.

In addition to the functions mentioned above, the Union of Tbilisi Museums exemplifies success in the Georgian museum scene by employing a wide range of digital tools, including digital installations, screens, audio guides, and applications. Some of these tools have been highlighted in earlier chapters. By leveraging these resources, the Union of Tbilisi Museums provides visitors with a rich and diverse experience.

N.S the director of the Union of Tbilisi Museums noted about integrating digital trends into the museum: "The primary objective of the rehabilitated museums within the Union of Tbilisi Museums is not merely to utilize digital technologies, but to employ them as tools for crafting an exhibition context and enhancing storytelling". She believes that the social channels represent "the organization's institutional memory and archive, serving as a portfolio that showcases its achievements and resources".<sup>186</sup>

The National Museum of Georgia is another successful example named after Simon Janashia. Established in 2004, this institution is considered one of the largest museum unions in the country, featuring 10 museums, a national gallery, 4 house-museums, and 2 research centers. Its diverse collections include ancient human remains, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, natural history specimens, Christian cultural heritage items, oriental monuments, numismatics, and jewelry from ancient Kolikheti, as well as works by Georgian and European artists.

The museum features a website that offers updates on news, projects, and services, as well as a Facebook page that shares information about educational activities, exhibitions, interviews, and video content related to events. The Facebook profile has an informative focus, primarily highlighting the museum's activities.

Digital tools are utilized across various branches of the museum. In 2018 the Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery created the "Area" app for virtual engagement with art pieces. This application features text and audio details about 50 works by Niko Pirosmanashvili, Davit Kakabadze, and Lado Gudiashvili displayed in the National Gallery.<sup>187</sup>

Museum of Georgia named after S. Janashia frequently organizes technology-enhanced exhibitions. In 2019, it hosted the multimedia exhibition "IMMAGICA - A Journey into the World of Beauty" and introduced a touch screen for exploring works from the Uffizi Gallery.<sup>188</sup>

The Museum of Occupation, located in the same building and visited by the Georgian researcher of this report on October 2, also incorporates digital elements, featuring screens that display important documentary footage.

Since 2023, the National Museum has housed the first state laboratory for researching and examining works of art in Transcaucasia, located in the Art Museum building. Spanning 542 square meters, the lab is equipped with modern, internationally standard equipment, primarily aimed at conducting comprehensive expert research on artworks from Georgia and the surrounding region. The laboratory enhances scientific and restoration efforts at the art museum, facilitating the research, attribution, and dating of exhibits. The Irakli Parjiani Research and Expertise Laboratory at the Shalva Amiranashvili State Art Museum of Georgia received a Carl Zeiss polarized light microscope with an

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Georgian National Museum official Facebook page, post: August 15, 2018. Accessed October 29, 2024. <https://shorturl.at/4P5T2>.

<sup>188</sup> Georgian National Museum official Facebook page, post: July 30, 2019. Accessed October 29, 2024. <https://shorturl.at/bVgkH>.



integrated video camera from the Carl Zeiss representative office in the Caucasus. This microscope significantly streamlines the routine tasks of museum staff and serves as an effective tool for studying research materials.<sup>189</sup>

Deputy head at the Department of services and new technologies B.A., discussed the need for modern museums to evolve. He pointed out that traditional exhibitions no longer attract visitors like they did 20 years ago; today's audiences seek engaging experiences that convey the stories behind exhibits through interactive and digital methods".<sup>190</sup> He also noted that "while the Georgian National Museum has been implementing digital tools for some time, the rapid pace of technological change makes it difficult to keep up. Ongoing development is essential, as a static approach can diminish exhibition quality. Success in these initiatives depends on both state support and the active efforts of the museum team".<sup>191</sup>

A digital art museum also operates in Tbilisi. Opened in 2019, It has offered visitors a range of installations and digital exhibitions. Since its launch, the museum has hosted numerous events on various thematic topics. The museum is located in a commercial building within Tbilisi Gallery and attracts interest from both local youth and tourists. Its concept is entirely captivating and centered on providing new experiences.<sup>192</sup> The museum features four distinct spaces: Main Hall: Hosts a digital exhibition with a total area of 850 sq. m., showcasing themes like the cosmos and underwater worlds. Mirror Room: An immersive space filled with thousands of colorful LED dots and an infinity mirror, enhanced by AI Georgian Room. The museum also innovates in film, featuring a cinema hall that screens three Georgian films dubbed using cutting-edge technology and presented in Screen X format. Van Gogh's Bedroom. A nearly exact reconstruction of Van Gogh's iconic bedroom painting. This combination of art and technology makes the museum a unique cultural destination.<sup>193</sup>



Source: **The Georgian National Museum's Official Web.page**

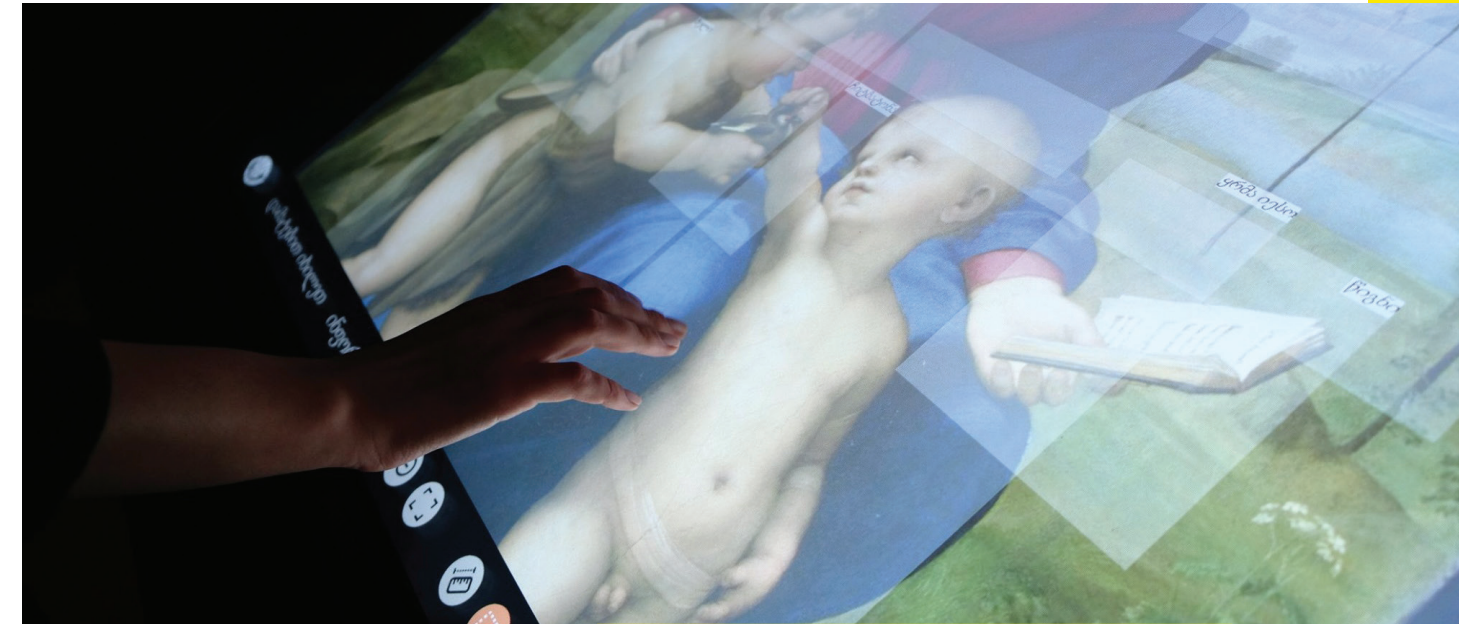
<sup>189</sup> Georgian National Museum official Facebook page, post: July 9, 2024. Accessed October 29, 2024. <https://shorturl.at/X2zBN>.

<sup>190</sup> B.A.,response, October 28, 2024.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Tbilisi Digital Space, Official Facebook Page, Accessed October 28, 2024. [https://www.facebook.com/TbilisiDigitalSpace/?locale=ka\\_GE](https://www.facebook.com/TbilisiDigitalSpace/?locale=ka_GE).

<sup>193</sup> Tbilisi Digital Space, Official Facebook Page. Accessed October 28, 2024. <https://digitalmuseum.ge/gallery/>.



Source: **The Georgian National Museum's Official Web.page**

However, these successful examples do not provide a comprehensive overview of Georgian museums. Most of these institutions, specifically in rural areas, face many challenges in the digital field, which is shown by the responses sent by the municipalities City Halls or museums themselves.

The primary challenge lies in the shortage of staff specializing in public relations and social media management. Although these institutions receive funding from municipal and Ministry of Culture budgets, most lack dedicated personnel in these areas. Without dedicated PR specialists or social media managers, museum employees take on these roles without compensation, which impacts content quality and audience engagement. Our research has shown that due to a lack of specialists, museums often struggle with determining what to share on their pages, how to engage effectively with online users, rekindle public interest, and clearly articulate their brand identity.

Another important factor is the qualifications and expertise of PR specialists, as well as their experience in managing digital platforms. Museums are often part of larger associations that employ PR staff, who assist these museums in managing their social media pages. An examination of the Facebook pages of museums managed by the PR specialists revealed that the content quality remains subpar. These pages either overwhelm users with excessive information, some of which is unrelated to the museum, or provide insufficient content to effectively engage the audience. It is advisable to pursue further training and acquire practical skills to build a strong brand identity for the museum and boost its visibility.

Another key factor is low engagement, which is closely tied not only to the museum's branding and design elements but also to the substance of its content. The museums' Facebook pages, launched in different times, but no later than four years ago, have likes and followers ranging from 50 to 1,000. Their efforts to engage the audience go unnoticed because the content fails to capture online visitors' interest. Museums primarily focus on sharing information about events and projects but struggle with branding and establishing a strong digital identity. Their use of social media channels is not optimized, with limited event promotion and content that lacks appealing design elements, colors, and concepts, making it less shareable to the public. Some of these pages tend to prioritize sharing



religious and cultural heritage content from other organization's pages, over promoting their own activities, including projects with international or local scholars. Others choose to be less active, sharing only their name and contact and very basic information.

Our survey revealed that museums focus primarily on preserving memorial items, archival materials, and engaging in educational activities. While rural museums acknowledge the importance of engaging the public by using digital means such as social media and digital tools, they lack a specific strategy for managing their Facebook pages or websites. The adoption of digital tools and reimagining the museum concept are not immediate priorities and remain challenging for them.

Museums in Georgian regions hold significant potential to attract more visitors, both domestic and international. The key lies in developing a new concept that highlights the museum's heritage while fostering a connection with the public through digital means. For instance, institutions linked to the names of national heroes can draw visitors of all ages by curating exhibitions that present the era and its context from fresh perspectives. Additionally, the regions of Georgia are home to museums of international significance that can attract foreign visitors and promote cultural tourism.

According to information from 15 municipalities, there are 49 museums situated within their boundaries. These institutions are affiliated with cultural organizations – such as the *Union of the Museums* or *Culture Centers*. The organizations oversee the popularization of these museums through their PR specialists. The internationally significant museums located in Dmanisi and Vani—the Dmanisi Museum Reserve and the Vani Archaeological Museum Reserve—are part of the National Museum, which promotes them via its website and Facebook page.

Museums connect with their target audience and promote activities primarily through Facebook. Additionally, cultural centers and associations that include museums also utilize other social media platforms, such as the Gurjaani Library and Museum Association's Web 2.0 and TikTok accounts, and the Tsageri Cultural Center's presence on Instagram and TikTok alongside Facebook.

International research cooperation can increase the demand for digital tools, enabling institutions with such experience to develop them more effectively. A notable example of this is the Chkhorotsku Historical Museum, which collaborates with leading global research institutions, including Oxford and Harvard, on archaeological excavations focused on ancient iron workshops. It also works closely with top genetic centers, using electronic tools for cooperation. Together, they studied five endemic species from the region and contributed to the International Symposium of Geneticists held at the museum. Notably, the museum facilitated sending samples of the Megrelian mountain gray bee to the University of Illinois for DNA analysis, confirming it as a distinct subspecies. The findings were published in *Bioinformatics*, with the museum's involvement highlighted in 2024. Additionally, the museum organizes regular expeditions with speleologists from Poland, Bulgaria, and the Baltic countries to explore local natural monuments.<sup>194</sup> The Vani Museum Reserve also exemplifies this, benefiting from international collaboration and modern facilities that meet international standards. It is essential to clarify the type of international cooperation involved, as joint programs requiring museums to actively contribute to research present a different dynamic. Some museums lack developed digital infrastructure and tools, for example museums of local Lore and history museums, which collaborate with foreign archaeologists involved in excavations across Georgia, with the discovered materials being transferred to the museums and integrated into their collections. However,

<sup>194</sup> Chkhorotskhu Municipality City Hall response, October 23, 2024.

the collaboration is often limited to this, with the museum acting as a passive recipient rather than an active contributor to the joint project.

Another key factor driving the adoption of digital trends is the interest of local researchers in museum collections. Researchers' interest in historical materials from the Lechkhumi and Lower Svaneti regions stimulated the Tsageri History museum to digitize its archives and exhibits and establish a digital ethnographic laboratory that archives activities like conferences and exhibitions.<sup>195</sup>

Museums cited insufficient financial resources as the primary obstacle to developing digital tools, with inadequate infrastructure also posing a major challenge for many.<sup>196</sup> The research highlighted technical issues specific to certain museums, such as those in the Shuakhevi municipality. Poor internet coverage in Upper Adjara further limits access to social networks, hindering digital engagement.<sup>197</sup>

Museum staff expressed a strong interest in increasing their knowledge of digital trends. They recognize the importance of digital transformation and the role of digital tools and platforms in engaging with today's audience.

The international experience, particularly from Eastern Europe, can guide Georgian museums in developing effective digital strategies. By adopting successful practices, museums can cultivate a strong organizational identity that stands out in a competitive cultural environment.

The Aquincum Museum effectively engages its audience through its Facebook page by offering video performances that showcase historical themes and special attributes. Additionally, it provides old recipes, creating a creative and appealing experience, particularly for history enthusiasts. This example illustrates the extensive reach of creativity and how captivating content can be generated by harnessing imagination. This example can be inspiring to numerous historically significant museums in Georgia, linked to national heroes and key eras that are foundational to modern Georgian identity. These museums can bring to life historical epochs, figures, crafts, traditional costumes and other items, making them tangible and accessible to the audience.

The Hungarian Museum of Fine Arts serves as an inspiring example by utilizing user-generated content to foster interactions. It engages online users through questions and games, effectively attracting more visitors to the museum. Moreover, the museum provides a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the processes of exhibition curation and restoration, fostering a sense of connection between the public and the space. Georgian museums can adopt these strategies to engage online visitors and generate greater interest in museum activities and the behind-the-scenes processes.

Two methods used by the Ludwig Museum and Hungary's National Museum are particularly appealing for the Georgian museums with international significance, targeting both non-Georgian online users and Georgian émigrés. The Ludwig Museum offers diverse online content, including virtual exhibitions, video interviews, educational programs, artist interviews, a subjective diary, and

<sup>195</sup> Tsageri History Museum response, October 16, 2024.

<sup>196</sup> Chkhorotskhu Municipality City Hall response, October 23, 2024; Tsageri History Museum response, October 16, 2024; Shuakhevi municipality City Hall response, October 22, 2024; Chokhatauri municipality City Hall response, October 24, 2024; Gurjaani municipality City Hall response, October 24, 2024; Dmanisi Museum Reserve response, October 24, 2024; Kutaisi municipality City Hall response, October 23, 2024; Vani municipality City Hall response, October 23, 2024; Tianeti municipality City Hall response, October 22, 2024; Chiatura Cultural Center Local Lore Museum response, October 18, 2024; Terjola municipality City Hall response, October 18, 2024; Khargauli History Museum response, October 17, 2024; Adigeni Municipality City Hall response, October 16, 2024; Union of Zestaponi Museums response, September 30, 2024; Culture, Sports and Youth Center of Dedoplistskaro Municipality response, October 3, 2024.

<sup>197</sup> Shuakhevi municipality City Hall response, October 22, 2024.

digitized collections. Meanwhile, the National Museum provides two immersive VR experiences: one allows users to explore a Middle Paleolithic site with interactions in a prehistoric environment, while the other takes visitors into the Villa Romana Baláca, showcasing Roman architecture, furnishings, and replicas of artifacts for an in-depth look at that era. The Jakob Gogebashvili House Museum in Variani can also benefit from these methods by showcasing significant items and artifacts to émigré children.

Another notable example from Estonia is the Estonian Museum of Natural History, which posts short educational videos (up to 10 minutes) every two months, featuring insights from its expert staff. The Museum of Photography highlights both contemporary and historic Estonian photography, sharing several bilingual posts each month in Estonian and English. These posts showcase collection pieces, share engaging facts, and provide updates on exhibitions and events, utilizing hashtags to broaden their audience. These examples can inspire museum staff in Georgia to create videos covering various aspects of the museum's history, collections, and artifacts, while also inviting experts to share their insights. Utilizing hashtags is a beneficial strategy, as it can attract more visitors to the museum's social media platforms and enhance the visibility of the museum's brand.

### 4.3. Case of Jakob Gogebashvili House-Museum

The inclusion of a subchapter on museums' digital identity in the study is essential due to the practical application of the research findings within the museum sector. The primary focus of the research was on the Jakob Gogebashvili House Museum in village Variani, which operates under the Ministry of Culture of Georgia. Our focus was driven by the project's objective to create a training module for the museum workers and align their understanding with the national approach to museums. We also were guided by the goal to help the museum strengthen its digital identity and visibility online.

In addition to this, we also explored other municipal museums, assessing how the concept of a modern museum is perceived across different regions, and the extent to which they adopt digital transformation. The overall landscape of the museum sector provided us with insights into the general context and where the Jakob Gogebashvili House Museum in Variani fits with. The choice was shaped by its considerable symbolic significance for the citizens of Georgia and its potential to serve as a cornerstone for identity formation and a space for education and engagement for young Georgian immigrants.

Jakob Gogebashvili (1840-1912) is closely associated with the Georgian national movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the foundation of scientific pedagogy in the country. Born into a poor priest's family, Jakob graduated from the Tbilisi Theological Seminary in 1861 and later from the Kiev Theological Academy. After returning to Georgia in 1864, he became a teacher at the Tbilisi Theological Seminary and was appointed its inspector in 1868. However, he was dismissed in 1874 due to being considered politically unreliable for the Caucasian administration of the Russian Empire. Gogebashvili passionately advocated for the establishment of public schools in Georgia and made significant contributions for the Promotion of Literacy among Georgians. His works were instrumental in developing and establishing the modern Georgian literary language, forming the basis for the Georgian language

textbooks currently used in primary schools. Additionally, Gogebashvili is regarded as the founder of Georgian children's literature.<sup>198</sup>

Jakob Gogebashvili House Museum was founded in 1958. Currently, it comprises two buildings: a school established by Jakob Gogebashvili and a replica of the original family home, situated on the site where Jakob's father, Svimon, settled after fleeing from another village. Jakob was born in a small hut that Svimon built after being granted land by the local community. Later, Svimon became a priest at a nearby church, and Jakob replaced the hut with a two-story house financed by his book royalties. In this house, he initially opened a one-year school for local children, which evolved into a four-year school in 1901. Following Jakob's death, his brother's descendants resided in the house until it was converted into a museum in 1958. The original structure was damaged in a 1920 earthquake but was renovated to maintain its Jacobean style in it.<sup>199</sup>

Since its establishment up to the present day, the museum is especially popular among school pupils in grades 1-4 and their teachers, who organize excursions to Variani at the end of each studying year specifically to visit the site. According to the director of the museum, from the past two years, the museum attracts around 30,000 visitors each year. She believes that the visitors are drawn in by their increased online engagement. The museum's presence on the social network was not prompted by the state and it was not a part of any official policy. The museum staff created the Facebook page on their own initiative. After observing the overall situation in the museum sector, they decided to follow a general trend.<sup>200</sup>

One of the employees is responsible for managing the Facebook page since the museum's budget does not allocate resources for employing a public relations specialist. Information is posted exclusively in Georgian, and all museum activities are shared. Additionally, interesting stories related to the museum and the life of Jakob Gogebashvili are also shared periodically.

Museum visits can be arranged online through the museum's Facebook page, making it easier to handle visitor traffic and organize scheduling - according to the director N.A.<sup>201</sup>

A guide at the museum welcomes visitors and communicates with them in the appropriate language. She shares information tailored to the interests of different age groups. Visitors are introduced to both the classroom environment of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and various period artifacts. However, few memorial items have survived. Jacob struggled with tuberculosis during his life, and after his death, some of his personal belongings were burned by his relatives.

Museum employees lack familiarity with digital technologies and are unaware of the potential opportunities in this area and how their integration could transform museum services. During the interview, the director mentioned that the museum needs an audio guide, as some visitors find it challenging to listen to live presentations and prefer short recordings or informational videos. She expressed that, if given the chance, she would create slides on a screen based on Jakob's stories.<sup>202</sup>

198 National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, "Biographical Dictionary of Georgia: Jakob Gogebashvili," accessed October 24, 2024. <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/bios/ka/00000815/>.

199 National Agency for Cultural Heritage Protection of Georgia, "Jakob Gogebashvili House-Museum," Facebook post, May 3, 2018, Accessed October 24, 2024. [https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1646937652050598&type=3&comment\\_tracking=%257B%2522tn%2522%253A%2522O%2522%257D&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1646937652050598&type=3&comment_tracking=%257B%2522tn%2522%253A%2522O%2522%257D&_rdr).

200 Facebook Interview with N.A, October 2, 2024.

201 Ibid.

202 Ibid.

The museum not only welcomes visitors but also offers educational and entertainment initiatives, although educational sessions are rarely held. An entertainment project aligns with the start of the school year, allowing teachers to conduct their first lesson in Jakob Gogebashvili's classroom. The museum provides 19<sup>th</sup>-century educational items for this purpose and permits teachers to bring their own exhibits. Exhibitions featuring characters from Jakob Gogebashvili's books are also held periodically.

Throughout the conversation, the museum director emphasized her eagerness to stay informed about developments in the museum sector and to have the opportunity to visit other museums to learn about the changes occurring in the sector. She believes that the environment has evolved and that today's visitors expect museums to provide offerings. Creating these offerings necessitates an understanding of visitor interests and the capabilities of modern museums.

She also noted the interest from Georgian immigrants and the challenge of managing the increased online demand. This initiative was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia during the pandemic, which provided immigrant children with the opportunity to tour the museum. However, due to the absence of necessary digital tools, the museum director and staff had to rely on their personal mobile phones to navigate the museum space and showcase exhibits. She also mentioned that she had never heard of digital museum tours and that the concept of allowing online users to explore a replica of the museum independently was a new idea for her.<sup>203</sup>

Visiting the museum and having an in-depth conversation with the director highlighted several important issues: the need to raise employees' awareness of digital tools, the significance of identifying alternative funding sources for their implementation, and the necessity of acknowledging and leveraging the museum's potential. The costs associated with digital tools can make their integration intimidating for many institutions, as they often struggle to recognize the cost-effectiveness of such investments and to realize that this is an opportunity to create and promote new services for online users. For the Jakob Gogebashvili House Museum in Variani, creating a service—a digital tour of the museum—would be a truly innovative and transformative offering in the Georgian landscape. This initiative can be promoted at multiple levels—by appealing to the state, seeking support from private donors, or establishing and executing it through civic engagement and effort.

The most crucial step is to empower museum workers to be courageous and pursue progress. The advancement of digital identity is an integral part of this process.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

## Summary

The study employed a two-phase approach to investigate the digital transformation of cultural industries both worldwide and in Georgia. In the first phase, a comprehensive review of international literature was conducted, aiming to provide a theoretical foundation and identify practical examples and case studies that could model digital transformation for cultural organizations. Additionally, international policies were analyzed to understand the benefits of digital transformation and formulate recommendations for Georgia's creative industries and cultural sectors. The second phase included two parts: an overview of the Georgian creative sector, highlighting modern digital trends and their varying levels of adoption, followed by the development of three distinct questionnaires for different target groups—experts in the creative sector, representatives of creative organizations, and Georgian municipalities. The responses from these questionnaires were analyzed in separate subchapters to create a differentiated understanding of the sector.

This study explored general trends in digital transformation in the creative sector worldwide and in Georgia, focusing on the development of digital identities for creative organizations and artists and their adaptation to changes in the digital landscape. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing that digital transformation is vital for driving advancements, integrating sectors, and creating sustainable services and products. Such awareness is essential for enhancing connectivity, audience engagement, and monetizing creative content in the new digital era.

The findings reveal significant variability in digital engagement across the creative sector, influenced by factors such as status, available resources, workforce, infrastructure and awareness within the digital field.

This work is addressing the current lack of data in Georgia. While it captures the state of most organizations and projects, it does not encompass all. The research highlights significant disparities, especially between urban and rural areas, as well as among state-funded and private organizations. This underscores the necessity for customized approaches to tackle the unique challenges faced in different contexts.

The report found that state-run organizations generally have greater opportunities to improve their digital presence. However, two key challenges persist: 1) digitalization is optional, leaving its adoption to the discretion of individual organizations, and 2) many state-run organizations lack awareness of recent digital developments and are unsure what to advocate for to influence budget priorities. Additionally, budgets are allocated to specific objectives, and the absence of strategic vision within creative organizations hampers the adoption of digital tools and the development of social media platforms.

Conversely, some state-funded organizations have achieved notable success in developing a robust digital identity, driven by their strategic vision and ability to attract supplementary funding.

Self-financed organizations, while often more motivated to grow and sustain themselves, show varying degrees of success in building their digital identity. The key to effective digital adaptation lies in understanding the concept of digital transformation, staying informed about relevant developments within their creative fields, and knowing how to access funding, donors, or alternative resources.

The survey also revealed that digital tools are increasingly utilized in art education, particularly in areas like directing, cinematography, animation, and illustration. For several years, these technologies have also been integrated into the performing arts, aiding rehearsals and theatrical performances. Digital



platforms in the educational sector enhance access to learning materials, streamline communication, and save time for students. They no longer need to visit the library every day, as learning materials and visuals are now accessible from home. This shift has made it easier for them to study and find resources at their convenience, enhancing the overall learning experience.

One of the focuses of this research was specifically on museums, reflecting its practical dimension. This study serves not merely as theoretical knowledge but as a supportive resource for promoting the effective digital representation of museums in Georgia, aiming to inspire and motivate the adoption of digital tools within the museum sector.

Specifically, the report explores how innovations like VR, AI, and big data have revolutionized museums, by offering immersive experiences and expanding online presence. The shift from traditional to modern museum practices, including the concept of “new museology,” reflects a focus on community involvement, inclusivity, and digital innovation. As cultural organizations increasingly adopt digital tools, they not only preserve heritage but also evolve to meet the needs of 21st-century audiences.

In Georgia, the perception of museums as mere repositories of artifacts is evolving. Curators across the country recognize the need to adapt to social and technological changes, embracing a more dynamic approach that positions museums as spaces for communication, education, and engagement. Our research highlights this shift within the museum sector and reveals efforts by museum professionals to adapt to these changes, though the outcomes vary in effectiveness.

The Georgian creative sector, including museums, can draw on several valuable experiences from Eastern Europe, particularly in establishing a strong organizational image and its representation on social platforms. This approach enables consumers to understand the creators behind products or services from a unique perspective, fostering brand recognition. For this to be effective, organizations should introduce themselves and all team members involved in product or service development, facilitating personal communication that builds trust and familiarity with consumers. Additionally, utilizing hashtags in shared content can enhance brand awareness. It's crucial for organizations to identify their internal strengths and capabilities, as these can drive significant changes in product or service creation. This pursuit should be approached incrementally; often, the resources needed are not solely technological but rather focused on developing a step-by-step plan and envisioning the organization's future trajectory.

# Recommendation to the Creative Organizations

1. **Establishing a Clear Digital Identity** - Cultivating a unique and genuine image of the organization on various social media platforms is essential. The organization's digital identity should be consistently reflected across its website, social media channels, and physical spaces.
2. **Aligning Digital Strategy with Mission and Vision** - Ensuring that the organization's mission, vision, and core values are reflected in its digital strategy. This helps maintain consistency across all online communications and strengthens brand identity.
3. **Understanding Digital Possibilities and Raising Awareness** - Attending workshops or training sessions will enhance staff awareness on modern digital platforms, tools and trends. Staying updated on digital advancements will allow the organization to leverage opportunities for growth and engagement.
4. **Developing a Digital Identity Strategy** - Conducting a SWOT analysis to assess organization's internal strengths and external opportunities. Using this analysis to clarify messaging and determine unique offerings for each online platform.
5. **Using Budget-Friendly Digital Tools** - Exploring simple and affordable digital tools to streamline content creation, social media management, and audience engagement.
6. **Addressing Challenges with Strategic Responses** - Identifying specific digital challenges faced by the organization and developing tailored solutions, such as creating flexible online engagement plans or enhancing social media presence to better connect with target audiences.
7. **Embracing Innovation** - Overcoming hesitancy to innovate by taking small, confident steps toward digital transformation. Leveraging an organization's heritage as a foundation for embracing change while keeping traditions alive.
8. **Engaging with Broader Conversations** - Utilizing social media trends, such as International Days, to connect an organization's collections and events to wider discussions. Employing hashtags effectively to expand the reach.
9. **Enhancing Content Creation Skills** - learning and improving content creation skills, including graphic design, video editing, and copywriting. Understanding online user preferences and tailoring content to their interests can significantly improve engagement.

10. **Empowering Human Capital** - creating internship positions within creative organizations specifically for students in public relations and communication. Facilitate knowledge sharing between interns and staff, allowing organization's management staff to gain practical experience while contributing to the organization's creative efforts.
11. **Encouraging Team Participation** - Motivate enthusiastic team members to produce engaging content, such as short videos, to enhance community ties and make your organization more relatable.
12. **Promoting Best Practices** - Promoting the sharing of lessons learned from international case studies. Understanding global best practices can provide valuable insights for local organizations seeking to enhance their digital strategies.

## Recommendation to the State and Private Organizations

1. **Capacity Building** - investing in programs that empower human capital within organizations, ensuring that staff are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in digital engagement.
2. **Building Partnerships** - Collaborating with businesses, agencies, and tech startups to share knowledge, resources, and best practices in digital transformation.
3. **Partnering with Educational Institutions** - Collaborating with universities and vocational schools to develop curricula that address the skills gap in the digital economy.
4. **Creating Innovation Hubs** - Establishing or participating in the establishment of innovation hubs or incubators that support startups and entrepreneurs in developing digital solutions.

## Recommendation to the State

1. **Aligning Digital Strategies with Organization Values** - Promote the alignment of digital strategies with organizational mission, vision, and core values by enacting a law mandating digitalization.
2. **Aligning Digital Strategy with National Goals** - It is essential to develop a digital strategy that is in harmony with national policies and frameworks for digital transformation, ensuring that local initiatives support broader governmental objectives.
3. **Encouraging Data-Driven Culture** - Fostering a culture where decisions are based on data insights rather than intuition. Establishment of a data collection system for further use.
4. **International Cases Lessons Learned** - support research initiatives that seek to identify new trends and innovative approaches within creative fields. This involves fostering exploration and development of cutting-edge ideas to enhance creativity and effectiveness in various sectors.

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## Creative Organizations

### Fine Arts

- M.Sh., Initiator of the platform "Colorful Cabriolet", September 24, 2024.
- L.G "Street Gallery" Founder of Street Gallery, October 13, 2024.

### Arts and Cultural Education

- D. Ch., "Human development and culture international school", September 23, 2024.

### Music

- G. J., the initiator of the musical platform "Usmine," October 10, 2024.

### Performing art

- I. K., a member of the independent theater organization "Khvliki," (lizard), October 8, 2024.
- N. Kh., a member of the Independent Contemporary Dance Organization "Metaliki," October 11, 2024.

### Literature and Publishing

- N. Gh., "Publishing and Rights Manager at "Sulakauri Publishing, October 18, 2024.

### Cultural Heritage

- N. K., visual arts expert and film heritage manager, at the National Cinema Center, September 29, 2024.
- N.S., director of "Union of Tbilisi Museums", September 30, 2024.
- N.M., museum specialist from the "Palace of Art - Museum of Cultural History, September 30, 2024.
- N.A., director of Jakob Gogebashvili House-Museum, Facebook Interview, October 2, 2024.
- B.A., Deputy head at the Department of services and new technologies, October 28, 2024.

### Craft

- M.J., director of the crafts organization "Art Universe", October 23, 2024.

## Experts

### Fine arts

- N.E., scholar of arts history, theory and philosophy, October 12, 2024.
- N.G., illustrator and arts professional, October 18, 2024.
- M.G., artist, September 17, 2024.

**Performing Arts**

G. S., manager of contemporary experimental arts projects, September 27, 2024.

**Literature and Publishing**

M.E., literary scholar, October 9, 2024.

**Music**

E. Kh., musical event manager, October 10, 2024.

**Cultural heritage**

M.G., arts historian, September 17, 2024.

**Arts and Cultural Education**

O.Ch., Voice and Diction coach, October 28, 2024.

**Craft**

N.Kh., textile specialist, interview 29 October, 2024.

**Expert of technical education**

T.R., technological educator, September 25, 2024.

## Municipalities

1. Chkhorotskhu Municipality City Hall response, October 23, 2024.
2. Tsageri History Museum response, October 16, 2024.
3. Shuakhevi municipality City Hall response, October 22, 2024.
4. Chokhatauri municipality City Hall response, October 24, 2024.
5. Gurjaani municipality City Hall response, October 24, 2024.
6. Dmanisi Museum Reserve response, October 24, 2024.
7. Kutaisi municipality City Hall response, October 23, 2024.
8. Vani municipality City Hall response, October 23, 2024.
9. Tianeti municipality city Hall response, October 22, 2024.
10. Chiatura Cultural Center Local Lore Museum response, October 18, 2024.
11. Terjola municipality City Hall response, October 18, 2024.
12. Khargauli History Museum response, October 17, 2024.
13. Adigeni Municipality City Hall response, October 16, 2024.
14. Union of Zestaponi Museums response, September 30, 2024.
15. Culture, Sports and Youth Center of Dedoplistskaro Municipality response, October 3, 2024.





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