Building your digital strategy
Notes to accompany PowerPoint slides

NPO requirements

Audiences
- Audience planning and reach
- Usability and accessibility
- Effective use of data

Distribution and Platforms
- Online
- Broadcast
- Cinema

Content Creation
- Long form capture
- Short form content
- Immersive and interactive
- Cultural learning content
- Preservation and archiving

Using technology to create content for online or offline engagement: e.g. creative content, captured content, cultural learning content

Organisational
- Operations, resilience and sustainability
- Income generation
- Rights and management
- Leaderships and skills

Using technology to drive organisational efficiency/sustainability

Questions and suggestions

See Arts Council England Digital Policy and Plan Guidelines co-authored by The Space and MTM. These provide more detailed insights on the principles that underpin effective digital policies and plans.

NPO requirements

Digital Policy requirements
- Link to overall mission
- Current status of digital practice
- Opportunities for digital to support mission and objectives
- Key digital principles and commitments
- Responsibility for policy and review process
- What will success look like?

Digital Plan requirements
- Digital objectives
- Key activities to meet each digital objective
- Targets: set clear, ambitious but realistic targets
- Budget/resources for each activity
- Deadlines: include a clear timeframe and milestones
- Responsibilities: identify who will oversee and who will deliver each activity

How much/how long etc. Given the span of digital activities and their relevance to different scales and types of arts organisations it is hard to be prescriptive. The answer to many questions about e.g. budgets and timescales is 'how long is a piece of string'.

We will focus on some key principles illustrated by practical examples

Principles for a good digital strategy

- **Integrated** with business plan: mission/objectives, creative/curatorial, marketing, education, staffing and budget
- **Focused** on strengths or opportunities specific to the organisation rather than spreading efforts too thinly
- **Audience-led**: puts audience reach and engagement at heart of the plan
- **Realistic**: recognises current starting point, skills and resources available and importance of effective advocates, partners and suppliers
- **Adaptable**: digital landscape changes rapidly so plan should be top-level and have scope to iterate, learn and evolve
- **Senior stakeholders** involved in policy and plan rather than e.g. limited to digital marketing function

The planning cycle

Your digital policy sets your broad, strategic use of digital and will be driven by your organisation's mission and objectives. Whilst it should be reviewed annually it's unlikely to change substantially each year. It should consider current digital status, key digital commitments and objectives and who is responsible for the policy and its review. The

digital landscape is likely to change significantly in the timeframe of the policy so it should be broad and versatile.

Turning to the digital plan, this should be realistic about your current starting point. You might be in the early stages of digital activities or unsure how best to proceed. An audit of your current activity is a perfectly acceptable first step which you can then use to refine you plans. There are a number of benchmarking tools for digital which, although not perfectly tailored to all arts and cultural organisations give some pointers to consider in how digitally advanced your organisation is:

- Third Sector Digital Maturity Matrix: http://www.digitalmaturity.co.uk/

- Collections Trust benchmarking tool: http://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/digital-benchmarks-for-the-culture-sector/ (Downloadable XLS)

- NHS digital assessment tool: https://www.england.nhs.uk/digitaltechnology/info-revolution/maturity-index/

In your plan, you should focus on SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Time-bounded). You can probably be somewhat prescriptive in the first year about activities but then need to show in the plan how you will review and consider options to build on these activities in future years. So, for example, don't commit to a series of projects – commit to one and then learn from it. Use the plan to outline the review process. Individual projects should ideally be delivered iteratively: low risk prototype, review and use learnings to shape the next stage.

Audiences

Audiences: who and why?
- **Starting point**: do you have a good understanding of your current online reach/engagement?
- **Segments**: are you targeting activities to specific audience segments (e.g. Audience Spectrum) or by behaviour/interest?
- **Think laterally** about who might be interested in your work

Are your plans based on a clear understanding of your audiences?
- **Audience outcomes**: are activities focused on achieving clear outcomes (e.g. building brand awareness, marketing creative programme, engaging with creative content, building brand loyalty, generating online income, gaining feedback)?
- **Audience interests**: have you considered different audience needs/interests (e.g. new audiences vs existing, traditional arts audiences vs others, in area vs out of area, diverse audiences, children and young people)?

Look at your organisation's existing audiences and activities. Online, this could include website visits, social media interactions etc. What do you know about what has worked well so far?

"It is possible to target certain types of audiences very accurately via social media promotion in terms of e.g. areas of interest. It is also sometimes possible to map your online audience segments to segments you are using to identify physical audiences. For example, the Audience Agency's Audience Finder allows any participating organisation to cross-reference their physical audiences with web audiences in Audience Spectrum for free. The Audience Agency also offers more detailed analysis on a bespoke paid-for basis: https://www.theaudienceagency.org/products/digital-tools/audienceview."

When audience planning, try to think about audience outcomes - who am I trying to reach and why? E.g. are you aiming to build brand awareness, generate ticket income or perhaps engage audiences to give online feedback through comments or submit user-generated content? Whatever the audience objectives for your activity, you need to consider how you will track success. Also, think laterally about the types of audience that might be interested in works rather than generically about your traditional art-form audience or 'new' or 'young' audiences.

Audiences: channels
- **Have you focused on realistic channels for your audiences and content?**
- **Sustainability**: do your plans support regular content/communication on each channel or do you risk spreading efforts too thinly?
- **Platform demographic**: have you selected channels where your audience segments already consume content?
- **Content usage**: does content work with the devices those audiences use and typical interaction patterns (duration, frequency)?
- **Usability and accessibility**: does the plan consider audience access (e.g. mobile vs other devices, subtitling of dialogue, user testing of significant builds)?

Creating good, high quality content is difficult and can be labour intensive and expensive. Think about what can you do to keep a regular pulse of content and how you might sustain this. The right channel is determined by your audience demographic and the type of content you have available (long-form or short-form, video or still, suitable for desktop screen or mobile screen etc.).

Avoid a tick box mindset to accessibility compliance. E.g. achieving comprehensive W3C AA compliance is very challenging, depending on type of content, but there are many simple practical steps you can take to make content significantly more accessible if you plan in advance and ideally combine a technical accessibility standards compliance review with user testing. Good accessibility and usability will benefit all audiences not just those with specific needs.

Audiences: marketing
- **Content discovery**: have you considered how the audience will find the content?
- **Social media**: paid for promotion of content (can be very targeted and cost-effective e.g. budgets in the £10s per promoted post)?
- **Influencers**: using your contacts network to promote content via social media (e.g. trustees, friends, high profile talent)?
- **Search engine optimisation**: ensuring text has key search terms and new websites are optimised
- **Marketing budget**: is the budget/resource allocated to marketing at least 10% of content/production budget (ideally greater, especially if there's a high expectation of new audience acquisition)
- **Retention**: does your marketing plan include driving repeat engagements with existing audiences (cheaper to retain than to acquire new)?

Audiences: effective use of data
Do you have realistic targets for reach, engagement and audience outcomes?
- Are targets set from a useful baseline? Be wary of metrics like social media "impressions" and Facebook video views which don't necessarily mean the content has been engaged with
- Do you know the current level and growth rate for your target metrics? Plans which assume greater than a 30% improvement in growth rate on mature channels are ambitious
- Does the plan identify a coherent set of actionable, shareable metrics e.g. website sessions, YouTube subscribers?
- Does the plan include regular sharing the insight from this across your organisation?

Meaningful metrics are important. Here are some useful free/low cost tools for gaining audience insight:

Alexa: http://www.alexa.com/ website popularity
Buzzsumo: http://buzzsumo.com/ content analysis, social and web
Followerwonk: https://moz.com/followerwonk/ twitter analytics, identifying key opinion formers
Quintly: https://www.quintly.com/ social media analytics
Similarweb: https://www.similarweb.com/ SEO tool for competitor analysis

Example projects

Project Adrift
- Artists Cath Le Couteur and Nick Ryan created a project around space debris, consisting of 3 elements - an electro-magnetic musical instrument, a short documentary film and online twitbots that tweet information to their followers in real-time.
- The project launched at the Royal Astronomical Society, generating national and international coverage and has appeared at numerous Science Museums, arts festivals and film festivals. So far, 350,000 people have engaged with the project online.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas
- The Space worked alongside Northern Ballet to produce a suite of short-form content designed for Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to promote the organisation's new production.
- A 3-minute trailer produced by the team has now been seen by almost half a million people.

Complicite's The Encounter
- The production had toured very successfully and the team wished to host a live stream and an on-demand version of the show.
- YouTube was chosen as the primary channel to host the content and on the night of the live-stream around 200 partners took the YouTube embed, including The Guardian and The Barbican. Complicite also devised some very short-form content with high profile advocates including Benedict Cumberbatch and Laura Dern encouraging people to see the show.
- The show was seen by online audiences in the US and Australia, prompting promoters to offer to tour the show.

Distribution and Platforms

Distribution: Online distribution
- Growing range and type of distribution opportunities e.g. social channels/platforms - from Facebook Live to YouTube and Instagram
- Traditional ways of being represented in the broadcast media are dwindling and arts scheduling is becoming increasingly squeezed
- Opportunities to share your content and engage audiences online.
- Online distributors include Nowness (which broadcasts content up to 15 minutes in duration) and the Opera Platform (which programmes opera and ballet). There are a wealth of others depending on art form, audience interests, geographical reach etc. Also, the landscape constantly changes so keep channels under review in case new ones emerge or existing ones prove less effective over time

Think about partnerships opportunities and identify which ones you think might be important for you. However, do not forget the channels that you already own and, if placing content on third party sites, think about the ways in which you can convert the audience across to your owned channels where you will have greater editorial control and be better able to retain and engage with them further.

Distribution: Broadcast opportunities
- The Space works with the BBC on a non-exclusive basis for TV, but also collaborates closely with the online platforms (iPlayer, BBC Arts Digital). There are wider broadcast opportunities as well e.g. Sky Arts, Arte etc.
- Opportunities are arising for arts programming on platforms such as iPlayer, and even Netflix or Amazon. Think about how a particular work could fit into a season or programme of work for the broadcaster
- If you are considering broadcast or online distribution then rights will need to be cleared. It is much more cost and time-effective to negotiate an option for this upfront with rights holders when you are clearing e.g. performance rights, than to try to do this down the line

Cinema: Live event cinema
- Much like the broadcast category, live event cinema such as that in NT Live or the ROH programme requires well known, big ticket performances which can fill cinemas
- Broadcast will require an experienced director for the live event or broadcast capture element. This is worth considering if you have high profile, high quality programming

Cinema: Cinegi- public screenings of filmed content - https://www.cinegi.com/
- Digital service for public screenings to reach audiences in e.g. village halls, community centres, arts centres and pubs
- Filmed theatre, dance, ballet, opera and music – from the major arts companies to the mid-scale and smaller
- Content of varying lengths – from 3 hours to 10 minutes – venues can create programmes of multiple titles
- Service is relevant if you have content that will be of interest to venues but also if you manage a venue and are looking to screen work of a particular type or theme:

Content Creation

Content creation: principles
- At the outset, plan for a sustainable and regular output of content, in order to acquire and retain audiences
- Any online presence needs to be constantly refreshed

Captured content
Content creation: long-form capture

Drawn from your existing live practice in the concert hall, museum, on stage etc.
- Produce one at a time to gain learning and apply to next project
- Allow 3 month+ pre-production timeframe minimum
- Ensure you secure rights early on
- Clear audience targets, distribution channels and marketing approach
- Cross-departmental and senior buy-in (e.g. creative/curatorial in conjunction with educational and marketing)
- Long-form capture typical budget range £25k to £100k

Example long form capture – [Artichoke - London 1666](#)
- Extending high profile live event with on-site audience to online and broadcast
- Multi-site capture with multi camera crew and capture director
- How to manage a live, high profile broadcast online
- FB live and YouTube, visitlondon.com, BBC Four

Long-form capture: [Talawa - King Lear](#)
- Talawa wanted to bring its new production of Lear to as wide an audience as possible
- Filmed in the Round at Manchester's Royal Exchange
- Shown on BBC Four Christmas Day and on BBC iPlayer as part of Shakespeare Lives season
- Cinema screenings as part of Black History Month

Content creation: short-form content
- Online audiences don't make the distinction between marketing, educational and artistic content, therefore..
- Consistency of quality, tone of voice and approach
- Joined up publishing schedule across the organisation
- Review and evaluate how content is being used and shared regularly
- Budgets: up to 5 minutes of content assume a budget range of between £250 to £5k

Example – short-form content – [Miracle Theatre](#)
- Part of a series of 'lo-fi extends' from The Space
- Using social media to market and extend reach of live performances/events
- Short-form content and promotion on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Use of support from The Space including freelance associates to establish a model for future low-cost project support

Example – short-form content – Stadium, Birmingham Rep

The Rep aimed for new audiences for their work through subject matter and presentation

Creative content

Content creation: immersive and interactive experiences
- In thinking about creative content, don't begin with the technology. Instead, think about the story you wish to communicate and the type of experience you want the audience to have. The most appropriate technology, combination of technologies (or even a choice not to use technology) should then be the outcome of considering story and audience experience
- Ideally the work should be an extension of your existing live practice or area of specialism rather than seeing digital a separate set of activities driven by new content, new technologies, and new audiences, which will necessarily be high risk and less likely to succeed
- R&D phase is always recommended for complex digital projects and you should try to have an audience-facing proposition to user-test as early as possible in the process so you can refine your approach
- Consider cost and resource you have at your disposal versus the audience reach you hope to achieve (or other benefits that you might gain) so that you have some sort of cost/benefit analysis before committing to a major activity. Recognise that some technologies, such as Virtual Reality, will necessarily have a very limited audience reach owing to availability of headsets etc.

Example – 59 Productions – [My Name is Peter Stillman](#)
- A VR prologue to an existing theatre production of Paul Auster's City of Glass
- Extended the theatre experience in the foyer before the play, but also a standalone experience for anyone to try
- Good example of how the technology and approach to using it was chosen because it worked well with the overall creative purpose: 59 Productions didn't want to disrupt the on stage performance by interrupting it with physical requirement to put on headsets. So instead they built a prologue experience; there were elements of digital tech in the staged piece also, so this felt like a natural extension, not an add on; the visual graphic novel style of the production also lent itself to the VR experience

Example - Abandon Normal Devices: [In the Eyes of the Animal](#)
- Taking a site specific VR experience and extending to engage with audiences online
- Exploring the visual world of different animals in the forest they inhabit
- Distribution: forest installation, festivals, YouTube 360
- Learnings from the project were
    - Consider how you will be using digital assets on different platforms and then design your approach to creating them accordingly. So the very high resolution assets that were used to great effect in the VR experience were problematic when it came to optimising them for web distribution

- Consider the context in which the audience accesses the work using different technologies. The VR experience in the forest had assistants on hand to explain to the audience what they were about to experience and how it had been created. This had to be approached differently online with additional contextual information added

Example - Interactive: The Playhouse, Derry/Londonderry- [Playcraft Live](#)
- World's first play in Minecraft
- Extending a live theatre performance to new audiences, reconceiving and writing a play for a young audience where they already exist i.e. Minecraft
- The audience will help build the production- set build, costumes etc.
- Use of Minecraft YouTubers with large followings to deliver calls to action for users to generate content for the experience, thus building up audience engagement prior to the main event

Example - British Museum: [Great Shrine of Amaravati](#)
- Gallery visitors can use their smartphones to interact with projected character actors that explain the exhibits. This uses local wi-fi connection to avoid data roaming costs for international visitors plus additional mobile handsets in the venue for those who can't or won't want to access content using their own devices
- Web-users can interact with hi-res 3D model of carved relief and [Sketchfab](#) is used for online delivery of 3D and VR content. This showcases how 'off the shelf' digital products can be used to repurpose assets into multiple formats without the project itself having to pay for a bespoke approach

Example - Detroit Institute of Arts: [Lumin](#)
- Uses [Google Tango](#) technology with [GuidiGO](#) augmented reality platform creator: again the cost benefits of using existing commercial products
- Tour stops include e.g.
    - X-ray view of the skeleton inside a mummy
    - Reconstruction of gates of ancient Babylon in front of a section of wall
- The recently launched ARKit for iOS 11 will remove some technical barriers to augmented reality apps on iPhone and iPad and significantly increase the volume of consumer devices that can support such experiences. This means a likely proliferation of AR experiences in the next few years. But again focus first on audiences and experiences before gravitating to a particular technology

Content creation: new website build
- Planning phase to consider: user journeys, accessibility, mobile optimisation, SEO, content migration/redirecting from old site where applicable
- Clear schedule with time for testing, content population and iterative development (3 months minimum)
- Plan for ongoing content management responsibilities, maintenance and hosting requirements

- Simple website with open source CMS from £10k. E-ticketing additional £5k to £10k for separately hosted solution or from £30k to £100k for something seamlessly integrated into the main website
- Assume site will require substantial reinvestment/replacement every 3-4 years

Cultural learning content
Glyndebourne- opera guides
- 5 different interactive guides with re-usable, mobile friendly framework
- Concise text with embedded video content
- Teacher resources tailored to subject, key stage and learning format
- Audiences: access to digital material before and/or after educational visits

Boy Blue Entertainment – Emancipation of Expressionism
- Cultural learning content can come in many different forms e.g. Boy Blue were commissioned by The Space to capture Emancipation of Expressionism, a 10-minute dance piece, which had been chosen for the AQA GCSE syllabus
- The approach to filming was planned to reflect the different requirements of the educational audience and the more general arts audience with two different versions created
- Boy Blue also focused PR activity on the fact that the capture was directed by Danny Boyle, - his first dance film. There can be significant benefits in how you work with the high-profile talent involved in your project

Preservation and archiving
- Useful resources at Collections Trust 'Digital isn't Different' and Museums Computer Group
- Consider the audiences for archives projects, from museum staff, trustees and sponsors through to public audiences
- Consider the use cases from free use, social sharing to commercial exploitation
- Ensure systems have technical standards to support a Create Once Publish Everywhere (COPE) strategy
- For archiving of digital creative projects there are challenges around future access to works that depend on hardware/software that may then be unavailable. Video walk-throughs are a low cost reliable way to archive aspects of an experience

Organisational
Operations, resilience and sustainability
- Have you adopted a holistic approach to digital in the organisation (i.e. not just marketing or standalone software)?
- Have you considered using lower cost software-as-service providers rather than investing in bespoke systems?
- If making large investments have you looked at options to cost share with other organisations or to build systems that can be reused in future?
- Have you considered long-term costs (e.g. hosting, maintenance, updates)?

- Do your timescales and budgets allow for prototyping and then refining and iterating (i.e. agile development)?

Income generation
Are any online income assumptions realistic and is there a plan B?
- For existing revenue opportunities (e-ticketing, online shop etc.) are your projections realistic based on past levels and growth rates?
- For new opportunities have you researched likely income levels (e.g. very few apps generate significant income on app store)?
- Have you considered opportunities for in-kind support (e.g. from technology providers who may be willing to provide equipment or other support in return for you showcasing features of their software/hardware or from digital agencies who may be willing to work at discounted rates in order to showcase new approaches with your creative content to have in their portfolio)?
- Event cinema model: no advance and revenue split 25% content provider 25% distributor, 50% venue. Rights payments come from content provider's 25%

Rights management
- Are you thinking about future digital exploitation of new physical pieces (e.g. ensuring digital rights are clearable even if not any immediate plan for online publication)?
- Have you considered rights ownership for any bespoke digital production (e.g. for a new website have you considered ownership of code, design and content)?
- The Space is exploring with industry stakeholders the potential to develop more standardised digital rights frameworks for non-commercial UK arts and cultural projects

Leadership and skills: organisation planning
Is there a clear plan to gain and/or <u>sustain</u> the following skills either in-house or through partners/suppliers?
- Board/trustee experience with digital?
- Skills in data tracking and analysis?
- Digital marketing skills?
- Digital production skills?

Your digital skills requirements will need to be continually refreshed as landscape evolves and your requirements change, so make sure your plan doesn't just allow for hiring and/or getting people up to speed but also enables you to keep those skills up to date. And remember that many skills can be most cost-effectively accessed by using partners, suppliers, freelancers and/or by sharing resources with other organisations who have similar requirements.

Training providers

- The Space!
- [Audience Agency](): digital marketing for arts organisations
- [Chartered Institute of Marketing](): digital marketing
- [Creative Skillset](): funding for training and accreditation
- [Decoded](): from coding to digital leadership
- [Digital Action Plan](): digital skills training for charities
- [E-marketeers](): digital marketing and project management
- [General Assembly](): design, marketing, technology, data
- [Webcredible](): all aspects of digital training

Online resources

See links in 'Useful Resources' p.21 of Digital Policy and Plan Guidelines
- The Space: [online resources]() e.g. case studies, how-to guides
- Audience Agency: [Digital Snapshot newsletter]()
- Chris Unitt: [Cultural Digital newsletter]()
- [Capacity Interactive](): New York arts digital marketing consultancy. Articles and email newsletter
- [IPA](): best practice guides on e.g. finding and briefing an agency
- We Are Social: [social media blog]()
- [Thinking Digital](): annual conference on technology, ideas and future