

A STUDY OF ATTRACTIVENESS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS, MUSEUMS AND IMAGES

Fernanda Maria Oliveira Araujo, Mackenzie University | LABCINE, Sao Paulo, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an investigation about the attractiveness on social networks in the museum context. The online platform Museum Analytics was used as sources of information from social network Facebook and besides the social network itself and sites of museums selected for the study. The results observed was: Artwork popularized among the general audience, the renowned artist and supplemented with brief biography, it is attractive but sometimes is not strong research trigger. Images with full description exhibitions or local activities promote visits to the physical museum or raise the interest for. Images associated with trivial factors (such as rainy day, holidays, weekend, for example) promote public appreciation. Even with links to the site of the museum they trigger little online library research. Attractive images with intriguing question (like a riddle, an attribute of the work, a little unknown historical fact, for example) directed to the public of the social network, raise the interest in venturing into little-informed or structured responses. Moreover the proposition of an activity, promotes public interaction with the museum and a bigger public involvement in structured and informed responses. Positive images that do not bring texts or any other resources promote audience appreciation. When negative or ugly, they instigate questions.

MUSEUMS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In digitalization times, Internet and social networks, the museology, as well as other knowledge areas, has the constant challenge of adapting to technological advances and new forms of communication and the appropriation of information. Museums and / or cultural institutions envision promising resources to get closer to their audiences. It is fact that there is a growing interested online audience to museums, particularly the younger generations, ready for innovation and waiting for breaks in visual presentation.

Museums and cultural institutions have invested considerable resources in online solutions, such as institutional websites, digital collections and social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The digitalization is sometimes understood in a simplistic way as converting analog information into digital format. However, digitalization is more than a technical and systemic process that involves a sequential and particular set of actions that can result in organizational and functional changes. When the decision to digitalize a collection, the institution must pay attention to digitization standards, metadata standards, systemic impacts, technological advances predicting the demands of planned obsolescence and essentially must be clear about the objectives of digitalization and impacts of these on the function of the institution.

The informatization process of museum's collections and/or cultural institutions implies in archival activity changes and especially in the museological context as a whole. The construction

of digital collections becomes an increasingly growing, accessible, financially viable and, along with this scenario, frequent debates about policies and standards emerge until then consolidated about copyright and information management. These discussions include new elements from the new digital practices such as interoperability, open data, semantic web, data visualization and social networks, for example.

The technology impact on institutions responsible for the preservation of artworks can be illustrated by the Rijksmuseum based in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), which renewed its website in 2013 and released their online digital collection in high resolution. To manage the information flow from more than one million digital objects was hired a data manager, common position in technology companies and never before considered as an integral part of the professional museum / cultural institutions. The museum not only innovated the online availability of its collection in high resolution but especially with Rijksstudio resource that represents an incentive to creation and creativity. The user can download images of artwork, print them or apply them to objects. It can be concluded that with the digitization of its collection Rijksmuseum had at least three adaptations:

- (a) systemic
- (b) organization, with new positions and departments created to meet the demands of digital technology
- (c) functional, that is, a repositioning of museum functions toward the democratization of information, access and freedom of expression of their audience.

The Rijksmuseum is also present and active on social networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In social network Facebook has over 200,000 page likes, over 50,000 followers on Twitter and over 2000 Instagram followers (Data obtained directly from social networks in October 2014). The digitization of artworks goes beyond the inherent issues in digitalization text documents, both in reproducibility of the visual object as in the representation of digital object produced in a virtual environment like the internet. Visual objects, with their aesthetic potential, must be thought from reproduction and visualization processes that consider these elements, as through aesthetically designed interfaces that involving the users.

The discussion about the reproducibility of the artwork is old, already known about photography and cinema, mostly by German author Walter Benjamin: "In its essence the artwork has always been reproducible. [...] even in the most perfect reproduction, one element is missing: the here and now of the artwork, its unique existence [...]." [1]

According to Walter Benjamin in *The Artwork in the age of mechanical reproducibility* technical reproduction of a work of art [...] can, for example, in photography, accentuate certain aspects of the original, accessible to objective – adjustable and able to arbitrarily select your angle of view, but not accessible to human eyes [...]. On the other hand, the view of the object produced, the digital object, should take advantage of the possibilities of technology and break with the organization of its themes into discrete categories, as exemplified by Lev Manovich in his essay *NURBS Theory: Books and museums devoted to art, design, media and other cultural areas continue to arrange their subjects into small numbers of discrete categories: periods, artistic schools, -isms, cultural movements. The chapters in a book and rectangular rooms of most museums act as material dividers between these categories. A continuously evolving cultural “organism” is forced into artificial boxes.* [2]

Visualizations that break with traditional views and point to a dynamic and interactive digital scenario, such as William Kentridge *Five Themes* exhibition at MoMA that happened in 2010 and today still can be seen on the museum’s website at MoMA Multimedia section and through interactive tool (Fig. 1) navigate the themes of the artist’s practice presented in the exhibition. [3] The big advantage of a view as this is the curatorial connections, involving the selection and organization of the artist’s works, can be exposed without the temporal logic of the timeline that does not represent the importance and connections proposed by the artist. In the case *UBU AND THE PROCESSION*, becomes a “node” – “point de capiton” – where other relations depart or other relations are.

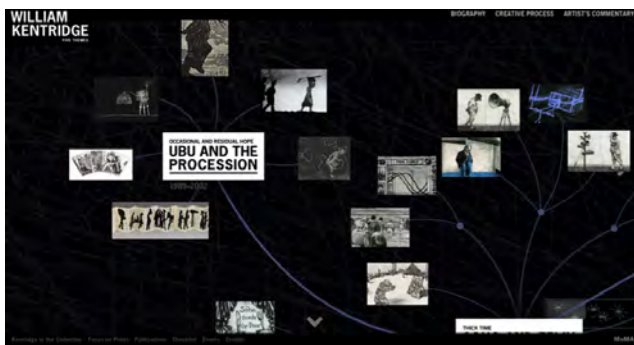


Fig. 1. William Kentridge, *Five Themes*, MoMA Multimedia.

According to Andrea Witcomb in *The Materiality of Virtual Technologies: A New Approach to Thinking about the Impact of Multimedia in Museums* “[...] the use of emerging digital technologies to enable, engage and transform the cultural heritage is accompanied by changes in organizational culture and practice of institutions charged with their care.” [4] Contemporary discussions on the impact of technologies on museums tend to assume an extreme position between the virtual world and the material “The material world carries weight (aura),

evidence, the passage of time, the signs of power through accumulation, authority, knowledge and privilege [...] Multimedia, on the other hand, is perceived as ‘the other’ of all these – immediate, surface, temporary, modern, popular and democratic.”

Technologies represent a threat to established practices or an opportunity to reinvent themselves and ensure their own survival in the twenty-first century. The loss of institutional authority, the loss of ability to distinguish between the real and the copy, the death of the object and a reduction of knowledge to information represent major concerns and resistance to new technologies at the expense of possibilities as the emergence of new associations democracy around the museums. Despite discussions and varied positions, digitization of art collections and collections available on the Internet come up with the most varied purposes, the source of inspiration to enjoyment, bring make art accessible, democratic, as the main motivation for considerable investment of time and resources.

SOCIAL NETWORKS

After a huge investment to digitalize a collection, the museum usually joins a social network to increase website visits. This is a justifiable reason to join in a social network, nevertheless not the only one; this initiative can help the institution to fulfill its organizational mission. According to the ICOM Statutes, adopted during the 21st General Conference in Vienna, Austria, in 2007: A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. [5] The information democratization, knowledge dissemination, access and public approximation are reasons for the use of social media by museums.

However, the accession of museums to social networks is also not an easy activity for the institution, especially when decided by social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Do not just create a Facebook page, a Twitter account and / or Instagram: the published content should be planned, structured and committed to the mission, goals and curatorial initiatives of the institution, as well as aligned with the best practices suggested by social platforms for better use of their resources. For example, Facebook has published some best practices, three of which are listed below:

- Keep text short
- Be timely
- Use engaging images and videos

Keep text short: Be succinct and conversational and keep your posts short whenever possible. We recommend posts between 100-250 characters to attract more engagement.

Be timely: Your audience will be most likely to engage with your posts if you create content that is top of mind, such as current

events, holidays or recent news. Use engaging images and videos: Rich media like photos and videos get more attention and help your message stand out in news feed. Use quality and relevant images.

The best practices of Twitter are not radically different from those referred by Facebook. The main difference is that Twitter is less visual than Facebook. The activity of updating a social network with interesting content, aligned with the institution's strategies, appropriate to the new forms of communication and information ownership is not a simple activity, is time consuming, must be planned and it is fundamental that their effectiveness be analyzed.. Given due consideration to the best publications practices, aligned to the institution goals and curatorial strategies, the question arises: How to measure the effectiveness of social networks?

Facebook suggests reviewing the performance of your posts and their recommendation is to monitor the Page Insights to better understand the profile of your audience and see which content is working best to reach and engage them. [6] Through this feature, you can monitor the success of the Facebook page, another feature to measure, specifically the attractiveness is the Museum Analytics Platform. [7] Museum Analytics is an online platform for sharing information about museums and their audiences. For each museum, a report is provided with information about the online and offline public daily. The reports are used by the communication areas of museums for monitoring and evaluating the status and progress of the attractiveness of the institution to its audience. A user can subscribe to receive a report on the page of a specific museum, city or country. The weekly report brings the 10 most engaging content items for the period, from both Facebook and Twitter.

THE STUDY

This paper presents an investigation into the possible causes and effects of social network phenomenon in the museum context as regards the attractiveness of the public. The online platform Museum Analytics was used as a source of information from social network Facebook and besides the social network itself, sites of museums selected for the study. Samples that were considered minimally met the best practices suggested by the social network Facebook, such as photos and video content, succinct texts and weekly updates, which were organized according to previously designed combinations defined by the present study.

Figure 2 illustrates a publication of Saatchi Gallery, which makes use of an image and a short text. Saatchi Gallery updates daily their Facebook page with brief publications and attractive images as shown above; nowadays it is an institution of strong engagement with the public through social networks. Criteria for evaluating were also suggested: the attractiveness (mainly represented by "likes") and the strengths and weaknesses of the comments and possible research triggers and content deepening. The "like"

option is a feature of social networking service Facebook, where users can appreciate content published, such as photos, videos, comments, links and status updates. The comments box is a feature that lets people comment on content published.



Fig. 2. Saatchi Gallery Post, Facebook.

Figure 3 is an example of a Facebook publication:



Fig. 3. Art People Gallery Post, Facebook, Art People Gallery, *Intricate Egg Carvings* by Franc Grom.

This publication received 1635 likes and comments such as: "So beautiful," "Wow," "Very nice," "Lindo" (*lindo* is beautiful in Brazilian Portuguese). Comments such as these mentioned above strengthen the appreciation already demonstrated with the use of the Like button. However, it is sometimes used as the opposite of appreciation, for example: "that's just ridiculous."

Considered in this study:

Comments that reinforce the appreciation or non- appreciation of publication as weak comments.

Comments (at least one) that add content / information for publication as strong comments, i.e., possible research triggers and content deepening.

Figure 4 is an example of strong comment.



Fig. 4. Museo Nacional del Prado Post, Facebook, Museo Nacional del Prado ¡Feliz Navidad!, “Adoración de los Pastores,” El Greco (1612-1614).

Comment: “Un cuadro maravilloso, del Greco, Domenico Teotokopulus, nacido en Creta, venido a España a la corte de Felipe II, en la que no fue muy bien acogido como lo demuestra que su cuadro del Martirio de San Mauricio no fuera el que se expone principalmente. A mí es un autor que me gusta mucho, y que además este cuadro sale también en un libro pequeño de su autobiografía de editorial 100, que adquirí en el instituto, en la parte de atrás del libro. Dónde cuenta toda su vida, y las disquisiciones que había con su pintura, porque a muchos

críticos de la época no les gustaba, debido a su incipiente manierismo dónde las formas se van hacia el aire que se puede ver aquí en los cuadros de la Asunción, Anunciación, Natividad. Y esos colores destacados del amarillo, el azul lapislázuli que parece salido de cómics. Y sobre todo se habla en el libro de las guerras que había entre las escuelas de Roma y Venecia ya que el Greco se formó en la de Milán y se ve influencias de las dos escuelas, como aquí las influencias de Tintoretto en lo oscuro, que precede el próximo estilo barroco, lo nacarado de los cuerpos, escuela de Venecia y la de Botticelli en la de Roma.”

The translation:

“A wonderful picture, del Greco, Domenico Teotokopulus, born in Crete, came to Spain to the court of Philip II, which was not well received as evidenced by his picture of the Martyrdom of St. Maurice was not that exposed mainly. To me it is an author I really like and also that this table also comes in a small book publishing his autobiography 100, I acquired in high school, in the back of the book. Where has all his life and the disquisitions he had with his painting, because many critics of the time did not like, because of their budding manierismo where forms go into the air which can be seen here in the pictures of the Assumption , Annunciation, Nativity. And those featured colors of yellow, blue lapis straight out of comics. And mainly spoken in the book of the wars that existed between the schools of Rome and Venice as the Greco formed in Milan and influences of the two schools, as here the influence of Tintoretto in the dark is that next preceding Baroque pearl of the bodies and the Venetian school of Botticelli in Rome.”

THE OBSERVATION

The observation period and data collection was from August 2013 to December 2013. During this period, the weekly report about the most engaging Facebook content provided by Museum Analytics platform was the basis for the research. The number of likes received by a post is the variable used by the platform to generate the weekly report.

Figure 5 is a report example.

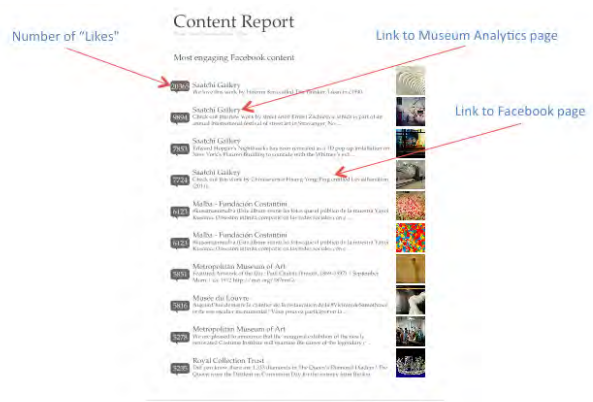


Fig. 5. Museum Analytics Report (Weekly).

Below are some characteristics of the weekly report of the platform Museum-Analytics:

- Posts are displayed in descending order.
- The gray balloon contains the number of likes received by posts in the period.
- The museum name contains a link to the museum page at platform Museum-Analytics.
- The description of the post contains a link to the Facebook museum page.

In this study, 22 reports, 220 posts and numerous comments were analyzed. A sample of 220 messages is not large enough to generate statistically significant results, but it was possible to map similarity between the posts, which are exemplified below:

On August 17, 2013 MoMA posted on their official Facebook page a post that contained an amazing image that brings a dramatic and mysterious scene. Additionally, the public was invited to know details of the artwork on the museum site (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. MoMA Post, Facebook, MoMA The Museum of Modern Art, Andrew Wyeth. "Christina's World" (detail). 1948, View the full work here: <http://bit.ly/14ldKyc>.

It was the eighth most liked post of the week of August 12 to August 18, 2013. There were more than 100 comments, among them many comments suggesting deepening of structured content and research by the public, for example:

"The woman crawling through the tawny grass was the artist's neighbor in Maine, who, crippled by polio, "was limited physically but by no means spiritually." Wyeth further explained, "The challenge to me was to do justice to her extraordinary conquest of a life which most people would consider hopeless." He recorded the arid landscape, rural house and shacks with great detail, painting minute blades of grass, individual strands of hair and nuances of light and shadow. In this style of painting, known as magic realism, everyday scenes are imbued with poetic mystery."

In this study the post was categorized as:

Artwork / Artist renowned or popularized among the general audience	Link to the museum website	Attractive post and comments strengthens
---	----------------------------	--

In the same week, Post number 1, the most liked, belonged to Saatchi Gallery. The post had an image, a succinct text, but did not have a popular author or link (Fig. 7). Over 300 comments were analyzed. The most comments of admiration were "Good art," "Really nice," "Love it."



Fig. 7. Saatchi Gallery Post, Facebook. Saatchi Gallery Check out this work by Japanese artist Aida Makoto called AZEMICHI or a path between rice fields.

The comments in the example above were considered weak comments that do not represent the exchange of information and increasing knowledge.

Positive / beautiful / nice image - Succinct text - Attractive post, but weak comments.

During the week of September 16 to September 22 (2013), the MET published a work of Gustave Courbet associated with the autumnal equinox and the public were invited to enjoy the last days of summer and visit the Pinterest page (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. MET Facebook Post, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Sunday is the autumnal equinox. Enjoy the final days of summer with depictions of the season on our Summer Pinterest board. <http://met.org/1eVkJ10> Gustave Courbet (French, 1819–1877) | The Calm Sea | 1869.*

The comments in the example above were considered weak comments that do not represent the exchange of information and increasing knowledge.

Trivial Factors / Routine - Description
 Link to Pinterest.- Attractive post but comments weak.

In the same week, the most attractive post was a Saatchi Gallery publishing (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. Saatchi Gallery Post, Facebook *Saatchi Gallery / We love the graffiti birds of Brazilian artist Luis Seven Martins, aka L7m. Look out for them on the streets of Sao Paulo.*

The comments in the example above were considered weak comments that do not represent the exchange of information and increasing knowledge.

Attractive / interesting image - Proposition - Attractive post and comments strengtheners

A user, for example, added the link to the page of the artist in the comments.



Fig. 10. Facebook Comment.

Another publication about a renowned artist, but without details or links is presented below (Fig. 11):



Fig. 11. Saatchi Gallery Post, Facebook, *Saatchi Gallery, We love this work by Picasso called La Soupe (1903).*

The analysis of the comments shows that even being a known work of a renowned artist in a remarkable period in his career, there were no strong comments, only appreciation comments. Therefore, in this study, this post was categorized as attractive, but not so stimulating for deeper understanding.

Artwork / Artist renowned or popularized among the general audience - Succinct text - Comment weak

Upon the death of Nelson Mandela, Saatchi Gallery published a tribute to the great leader (Fig. 12). A photo by Adrian Steirn and the phrase: "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin or his background or his religion. People learn to hate and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite" triggered a strong effect on users of the social network, making the post one of the most attractive 10 posts during the week of 02 to 08 December 2013.



Fig. 12. Saatchi Gallery Post, Facebook.

Sad - Succinct text – Comments Strengtheners

Below a comment:



"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Fig. 13. Facebook Comment.

On September 30, 2013, Museo del Prado published a picture of the artwork *Prometheus Bound* by Peter Paul Rubens with the following caption:

Museo Nacional del Prado Post, Facebook, Museo Nacional del Prado. Desde hoy se puede ver en la sala 28 del Museo la obra "Prometeo encadenado" de Rubens y Snyders, propiedad del Philadelphia Museum of Art. La obra formará parte de la exposición "Las Furias" que se inaugurará en enero de 2014. Más información en: <http://bit.ly/1fVHrVN>

This publication aroused the public's interest in obtaining more information about the exhibition.

Exhibitions / Local Activities - Succinct text – Comments Strengtheners

The comments indicate that the public researched details of the exhibition on the museum's website. Through the analysis of 220 posts, it was possible to map the constancy of certain features and consequent actions of the social network user. Figure 15 is a spreadsheet example of how the mapping was done.

CONCLUSION

Through the study, it was possible to map similarities and constancies between posts, even using a small sample.

RESULTS:

- Artwork that is popularized among the general audience, by a renowned artist and supplemented with a brief biography is attractive and sometimes is not a strong research trigger.
- Images with full descriptions at exhibitions or at local activities promote visits to the physical museum or raise public interest.
- Images associated with trivial factors (such as a rainy day, holidays, the weekend) promote public appreciation. Even with links to the site of the museum, they trigger little online library research.

Appendix
05 Aug - 11 Aug / 2013

		Dramatic painting	Strong comments	(6)
		Nice picture	Weak comments	(5)
		Celebrating the birthday of a renowned artist	Strong comments	(1)
		Commenting routine / trivial factors	Weak comments	(5)
		Commenting routine / trivial factor	Weak comments	(5)

		Ahead popular work	Weak comments	(1)
		Commenting routine / trivial factors Link to museum website	Weak comments	(5)
		Attractive / Interesting image Invites the audience to share your photo	Strong comments	(4)
		Celebrating the birth of a special person / social event	Weak comments	(5)
		Invited to an exhibition	Strong comments	(2)

Fig. 15. Mapping.

- Attractive images with intriguing questions (like a riddle, an attribute of the work, a little unknown historical fact) directed to the public of the social network, raise interest in venturing into little-informed or structured responses. Moreover, the proposition of an activity promotes public interaction with the museum and a bigger public involvement in structured and-informed responses.
- Positive images which do not bring texts or any other resources promote audience appreciation.
- When negative or ugly, they instigate questions.

Table 1 presents an overview of the results:

Image Video	Succinct texts Links	Categorized
Artwork / Artist renowned or popularized among the general audience	Succinct text	Comment weak / Strengtheners
Exhibitions / Local Activities	Succinct text	Comments Strengtheners
Trivial Factors / Routine	Succinct text	Comments weak
Attractive / Interesting	Intriguing question / Activity proposition	Comments Strengtheners
Positive / beautiful / nice / happy	Succinct text	Comments Weak
Negative / ugly / dramatic / sad	Succinct text	Comments Strengtheners

Table 1. Results .

The next step of the study is to validate the results from the institutions.

REFERENCES

1. Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. New York: Penguin Books, 2008.
2. Manovich, Lev. *Teroia dos Nurbs*. São Paulo, Imprensa Oficial, 2009.
3. William Kentridge – Five Themes, MoMa website. Accessed September 20, 2014. <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/williamkentridge/flash/#21>
4. Cameron, Fiona and Kenderdine, Sarah (Ed.). *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage. A Critical Discourse*. MIT Press. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2010. p. 465.
5. ICOM Statutes, adopted during the 21st General Conference in Vienna, Austria, in 2007. ICOM website. Accessed September 20, 2014. <http://icom.museum/the-organisation/icom-statutes/>
6. Facebook PageInsights. Facebook help. Accessed October 01, 2014. <https://www.facebook.com/help/336893449723054/>
7. Museum-Analytics Plataform. Accessed August 20, 2014. <http://www.museum-analytics.org>