Key strategies and contents on digital skills for hybridization of jobs in the arts, entertainment and culture sector

KEY MESSAGES

The workers in the sector are not low-skilled and the sector appears to be equipped with the digital skills for management, marketing, social networks, etc. What the sector needs are digital skills for the creation of new products and services based on new technologies.

It is about being innovative in the contents that we offer, opportunities for the sector around metaverse, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, etc.

The sector needs a digital transformation, especially some subsectors. People in the sector in general do not have a digital mindset. We need to think about our projects from a digital point of view.

When workers list their skills gaps, they identify the basic ones, because they are not aware of the technologies that could transform their products and services.

CONTEXT

This policy paper presents the conclusions of the workshops held in the framework of the ACSOL Erasmus+ project by the Arts and Culture triple helix stakeholder working group in the region of the Basque Country, Spain.

This is a regional proposal at sectoral level with recommendations and strategies to better approach workers to train them on digital skills that the technological changes and the COVID-19 crisis effects on jobs and labour market conditions has revealed as critical for maintaining jobs on this sector.

The paper includes the identification of opportunities, needs and risks of digital transformation as well as key digital skills and proposals for promoting training within our target group.

DIGITAL SKILLS IN THE SECTOR

Digital skills for management tasks:

• use a computer
• MS office software
• social media management
• use digital device operating systems
• plan digital marketing

Digital skills for product/ service development:

• Creative suite software
• Web development software such as WordPress
• Photo and video editing software such as Adobe Photoshop
• Music/video in streaming
• Online gaming
• Social media for contents (especially Instagram and Twitch)
• Auto edition techniques
• 3D printing
• Immersive technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality to design and develop virtual performances, visits, tours.
• Interactive tools
• Avatars
• Crowdfunding techniques
• Blockchain
• Crypto-art
• Metaverse

CHALLENGES

The Arts, Culture and Entertainment sector is very wide and diverse. In Spain, we have focused on the cultural and creative industries, which are still very wide because they group together 6 cultural subsectors (performing arts, visual arts, audiovisual, publishing and print media, music and cultural heritage) and 9 creative subsectors (architecture, crafts, digital content, design, gastronomy, language industries, fashion, advertising and marketing, and video games).

The nature of these subsectors is as diverse as the needs to be addressed to attain a digital transformation. The digital skills needed for subsectors such as videogaming or audiovisual activities have nothing to do with the ones needed for performing arts, for example. Moreover, the digitalization of the performance could go against its very nature, that is the face-to-face experience. The performing arts subsector is concerned about technology cutting down jobs.

The sector in general is very conservative and has a traditional mindset. There is in general a lack of motivation to explore new opportunities and a protectionism against the digital. Challenges depend of course on the age of the worker and the subsector.

There is a resistance to change but, as the representative of the book industry explains, once, the book industry was very concerned about the e-books but both traditional books and e-books are coexisting, and the market is still profitable. We must not be afraid of new technologies, we need to adapt to the new digital demands, resistance to change only harms the sector.

Other challenges are that some subsectors are a bit precarious, and many workers need more than one job to make a living. The lack of time is perceived as one of the biggest barriers to acquiring new skills. There are high rates of instability and work-life balance is very difficult in the sector.

We are, generally speaking, not thinking in the long term.

REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Professionalisation of the sector

In Spain, the Arts, Culture and Entertainment sector is in general quite precarious. Historically, in order to promote arts and culture, the government has subsidised these products/ services and has offered them for little money or even for free. The consumer is not used to paying and therefore does not value enough the sector. Digitally speaking, in Spain there is a lot of piracy, there is a lot of digital content consumption but much of it is not legal. This is a situation that fortunately is slowly changing.

There is unfair competition when some people (or government) offer free contents and services, the sector should not encourage this kind of activities.

Accreditations/ Certifications in Performing arts are not recognized by some public bodies and therefore cannot access financial aids or subsidies.

Training and professionalization of the sector must go hand by hand

Value chain

We need to implicate all stakeholders in the value chain.

The main client in the sector is the public administration. Public organisations, City councils, Government, public television, radio, they are the ones consuming more cultural products and services. They are the trailblazers, if they demand it, it will be done.

The audio-visual sector could lead the other sectors because they are very advanced in digital skills

There is also a need for companies to collaborate with each other, to network, to build strong alliances and identify synergies. Subsectors could work together, share information and good practices.

Financial aid programmes are already in place to help in the digitalisation process of companies.

Generational replacement

There is also a need for a generational replacement, as the sector is ageing and young people must take over, workers who in general are more digitally skilled than the generations that leave. New generations count with a very high-level education offer and are usually very well prepared. These new-comers will have the digital skills that the current work force is lacking.

Work/ jobs

It would be important to identify new jobs and occupations that are being created in the sector, new market niches and needs. For this, it is important to survey the labour market and analyse the job vacancies. Moreover, to analyse the future challenges of the sector. Strategies to improve employability, most workers need two or more jobs, it is not possible to make a living in this sector unless you are in the audio-visual subsector for example.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING IN THE SECTOR

The training of the sector should go in the lines of "How to develop a digital mindset for digital transformation". To do this, the recommendations are:

(1) Provide advising and coaching to accompany companies in their reflection plan to a digital transformation. How to think in digital terms.

There is a need to do a reflection on what needs to be done and how it can be done. The training could help in the accompanying of this reflection. We need a transformation of the processes, a methodology to do the digital transformation.

(2) Showcase the opportunities and possibilities that the technologies could bring to the sector.

Raise awareness about certain technologies and trends that are more useful in the sector than what we first think: virtual and augmented reality, crypto-art, blockchain, metaverse…

There is enough information and still, companies do not move forward, why? They think it is for the bigger companies not for SME's or self-employed.

The training should target smaller companies.

3) The sector needs good practices in the sector and are always very helpful.

They could be about:

- • How to create a web presence
- • Social media use for contents
- • Shift to virtual performance
- • Youtube channels, podcasts
- • How to price the product/ services offered online

About the Acsol project

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