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

KEY MESSAGES

The development of digital competences of employees requires an organisational process of self-reflection.

The prerequisites for the digital transformation lie above all in the development of a digital strategy in the institutions and companies, the creation of infrastructure and a participatory approach.

A central aspect of the digital transformation for cultural institutions is the initiation of virtual relationships and digital networks that enable added value for all participants.

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 Saxony Anhalt, Germany (including actors form other regions in Germany).

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

- basic digital skills (ability to write email, use MS-Office tools, search for information on the internet)
- use communication tools (Microsoft Teams; Zoom)
- ability to use tutorials to further education independently
- use digital plattforms for internal accounting
- use software to digitally process grant applications

Skills for product/service development e.g.:

- snipping tools
- tools to send large amounts of data (e.g. WeTransfer, Nextcloud)
- visualisation tools (Miro)
- in the museum context (ability to create videos; design guided tours online).

CHALLENGES

There are now over 3 million people employed in the private, public and non-profit segments of the cultural and creative sector in Germany. In Germany and at the European level, the generic term of cultural and creative industries has become increasingly established to cover organisations and institutions of the culture-influenced sector.

However, the sector is characterised by a great heterogeneity of industries, with different submarkets, professional fields and the difficulty to distinguish the private sector from public and non-profit cultural and media activities.

It can be stated that the cultural sector in a broad sense has been expanding and is becoming more differentiated. The reasons for this lie above all in a significant expansion of the state cultural infrastructure, the emergence of new cultural institutions, the culturalisation of markets and even the dynamic development of a commercial cultural sector.

For a long time, the cultural and creative industries were, so to speak, immune to digital developments. But in the meantime, digitalisation has grown into a holistic development that affects all areas of life. It influences the cultural and creative sector in many ways.

The creative potential of the industry and the diversity of technologies make it possible to develop an infinite number of new formats.

Before, but especially during the Corona crisis, the cultural sector significantly expanded its digital competences. Beyond that, however, there is a need for further action. It concerns the understanding of the values of digital cultural change and ranges from strengthening reliability, availability and assets among creatives and cultural institutions to improving mediation and networking.

Organisations from the cultural sector must therefore increasingly engage in a process of self-reflection. What does digitalisation mean for our institution, our products and services and our field of business? There is a need to clarify what framework conditions need to be created for this and how actors and staff can be involved in this change. The creation of structures of networking and self-organised learning seem to be a central building block for this.

REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Building a digital strategy

Cultural institutions must be able to successfully participate in the digital structural change in order to continue to be perceived in the digital world. For this, strategic questions have to be answered and must be implemented conceptually. This implies that organisational aspects have to be considered individually for each institution e.g. clarification of the needs of the target groups (Customer Journey); building an internal participatory approach. Associations and regional partners should support small cultural institutions in particular, for example with infrastructure, workshops or by taking on tasks in the context of digitisation. Enabler - „Digital pilots" can accompany transformation processes.

Support measures in the areas of digital equipment and infrastructure

An often-mentioned barrier to digitisation in the cultural sector is inadequate infrastructure. Often the infrastructural conditions for the use of digital tools do not exist (slow internet; restrictions in the choice of tools by the employer; no financial resources). Especially for small institutions and companies, the selection and implementation of new tools can fail due to financial issues. Hardware and software are subject to constant updating. Content must be migrated frequently. The digital cultural change is also an ongoing task in this area, which requires a great deal of financial, human and strategic resources from all involved.

Building alliances and networks for regular exchange

In cultural institutions, the situation of digital transformation is very different. Some institutions already have advanced digital strategies, others are still at the beginning, theatres had different expertise and expectations than, for example, museums or the self-employed. Alliances should be forged between two or more cultural institutions with previous digital experience and partners with digital expertise who share their knowledge and support each other in experimentation and digital profiling. At best, the insights gained can be shared in a straightforward way. Via open access, open, content and open source approaches, content of digital applications as well as insights gained can be made transparent and available.

Measures to increase the competences of employees

Overall, due to the heterogeneity of the cultural sector, more information is needed on developments, needs, new job profiles and the corresponding requirements. Recommended the establishment of analytical structures to regularly identify specific needs in the cultural and creative sectors. On the one hand, strategies can be derived from this as to how the sector can be further developed and which framework conditions are necessary at regional level. On the other hand, specific training offers for certain activity profiles can be derived from the needs, which can then be offered regionally or locally by the network partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING IN THE SECTOR

Within the cultural sector, it appears that there is a lack of funding, guidance, measurement tools and long-term strategies for the use and development of digital skills development training. A central aspect of the digital transformation for cultural institutions is the initiation of virtual relationships and digital networks that enable added value for all participants. Basically, there is a need to provide online structures that make it possible to get an overview of what training offers and support services exist. Such a digital platform should serve to connect different actors in the cultural sector with each other.

(1) Provide transparent overview

There are already a lot of offers online as well. But the structure and overview for potential users is missing. An overview of links is desirable; where can one get information on certain topics, tools e.g. Office tools; Social media training, funding in the cultural sector/application masks? One idea could be regional competence centres with a focus on the cultural sector that receive state funding. In Germany, similar structures already exist that focus on medium-sized enterprises. Offers could be made here for managing directors and HR managers who want to develop new qualifications in their workforce. Strategic and methodological support can be provided to find customised solutions for individual learning types and training needs. users can determine the status of their own company in the area of digital training in advance. On this basis, they then receive a detailed evaluation including best practices and concrete recommendations for action. With the materials and recommendations, users receive answers to the relevant questions in the continuing education process - for example, on a corporate culture conducive to learning, financial support options or on the evaluation and transfer of what has been learned.

(2) Adapt training concepts to the needs of smaller organisations

The cultural sector is largely characterised by small businesses and the self-employed. The development of new digital cultural offerings is often driven in larger and publicly funded cultural institutions. Here, there are usually better financial conditions for using and implementing new digital instruments, tools and programmes. In this process, experiences of the use and development of offers arise, which are often also valuable for smaller institutions. Therefore, successfully implemented concepts should be prepared in such a way that they can have a low-threshold effect as best practice examples.

3) Development of transfer conditions for digital literacy

Fokus on the promotion of digital use (Application of digital technologies within own professional contexts). This leads to a specific choice of digital platforms for individuals, groups or organisations, which is shaped by the situation. This specific choice focuses, for example, on solving a problem or completing a task within one's own professional, disciplinary or domain context. Once digital use has reached a high degree of professionalisation, innovative and creative use of digital platforms becomes possible. Digitally competent users are thus able to share their own data and knowledge with others in digital environments, to constructively evaluate data, to abstract them and to design knowledge through virtual collaboration.

About the Acsol project

2020-1-ES01-KA226-VET-096242

Project title: Acquiring crisis-proof skills through online learning

Project duration: 01.05.2021 – 30.04.2023

Project web page: https://www.lanbide.euskadi.eus/erasmus+/-/acsol/

Project Partnership