

Digital Innovation Group – Digital Organizational Change Research

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Delivered to



DIGITAL INNOVATION GROUP



Canada Council
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Executive Summary

The report contained herein explores how the Digital Innovation Group (DIG)¹ can respond to digital acceleration and leverage digital tools to transform how the arts councils of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands operate, collaborate, and communicate. The project involved primary and secondary research, including interviews with DIG's member arts councils, a community roundtable, and a strategic foresight session. In order to assess relevant practice, the Project Team conducted an extensive literature review and an environmental scan of digital trends, tools, and best practice.

The Context

Five themes emerged from the literature review into current trends at the intersection of digital technology and the arts, described below:

Modern audiences and the “attention economy”

There is ever-increasing competition to capture the attention of audiences, as cultural consumers' interests, habits, and expectations shift in response to digital technology. More specifically, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 33% of cultural consumers in Canada indicated that they were interested in digital experiences as part of an art/design museum or gallery experience.²

The value of the arts

The arts have long been long recognized as having intrinsic and symbolic value. Nonetheless, the arts and culture sector is under increasing pressure to evaluate its economic value and demonstrate positive social impact. Collecting and reporting on digital data is a powerful and under-utilized way for arts practitioners and cultural organizations to demonstrate impact. Organizations are able to build on existing data and frameworks such as Statistics Canada's [Canadian Framework for Culture Statistics](#); CAHSEIM's [Culture, Arts, Heritage and Sport Economic Impact Model](#); Canada Council for the Arts' [Qualitative Impact Framework](#); and, Arts Council England's [Impact and Insight Toolkit](#).

Impact of COVID-19 and innovation in the arts

The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the adoption of digital technology and the appetite for online programming. Digital is no longer an optional extra for any organization, but a necessity. Although the impact of COVID-19 on the arts sector has been debilitating, there are new opportunities to increase innovation, expand online reach to connect with audiences, and to foster a stronger sense of community, locally and internationally.

Digital organizational change

Digital should be considered a mainstream part of organizations' operations, and not a 'nice to have' extra. This can require a shift in mindset, including taking a step back to look at the organization's mission and aims, and day-to-day operations. There are many free guides available on how to lead digital change within arts and culture organizations, including Nesta's [Making Digital Work: Digital Toolkit for Arts and Culture](#) and [Making Digital Work: Business Models \(Digital R&D Fund for the Arts\)](#) reports as well as Arts Council England's [Digital Culture Compass](#) and [Digital Culture Network](#).

¹ The DIG group comprises the Ladysmith Arts Council, Hornby Island Arts Council, Cowichan Valley Arts Council, Salt Spring Arts Council, Comox Valley Arts and The Old School House in Qualicum Beach.

² Culture Track: Canada 2018 <http://www.businessandarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/CT-Canada-Report.pdf> Survey of 6,444 respondents nationwide (over 1,000 of which in BC) administered by Business / Arts in 2017-2018. All respondents were 18 years or older and had participated in at least one cultural activity in the past 12 months.

Digital programming

For digital experiences to be successful, they must feel authentic, enriching, and be simple to use. Cultural consumers are especially interested in experiences that offer community, connection, and discovery. Digital programming can include online lessons, live tours of galleries, sharing photos or videos of work-in-progress content, or live Q&A sessions with artists. Additionally, there are organizations posting never-before-seen recorded performances, hosting online silent auctions, and even facilitating digital competitions. Arts practitioners and organizations need to see offline and online cultural creation as two sides of the same coin, where each adds value to the other.

Key DIG Findings

The main findings from Nordicity's primary research identified DIG's Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities and Threats, in the table below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A collaborative mentality, being open to sharing and learning from one another. ▪ A strong foundation of committed members who support the council in various ways, including as volunteers. ▪ High engagement from members in response to digital communications (such as email newsletters). ▪ At least one member of staff or board member with a strong understanding of digital tools or an appreciation for digital's potential. ▪ A strong base of diverse earned income streams – between 40% and 80% of income is earned, largely through art sales and membership fees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited resources and funding to support digital transformation. ▪ Lack of time to reflect on what is/is not working or missing with digital activities. ▪ Being stretched too thinly across too many digital tools – especially for digital marketing – with a lack of integration between platforms. ▪ Difficulty 'making the case' for investment in highly integrated digital software systems that could help save time, such as Customer Relationship Management software (CRMs). ▪ Lack of familiarity with data collection tools or methods to assess impact and value. ▪ Resistance to change from some members or key community stakeholders who prefer the status quo.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To build upon regional interest in the DIG initiative and general support for the councils. ▪ To collaborate with the tourism sector to ensure cultural attractions are seen as valuable contributors to visitor experience. ▪ To celebrate island First Nations arts and traditions under the leadership of Indigenous leaders. ▪ To build upon the Island's grassroots, authentic, natural, and vibrant arts community as a key community benefit. ▪ To engage growing number of island youth and new Canadians to further diversify community programming. ▪ To share data and resources to understand and bolster community impact, sharing the story of Vancouver Island arts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A lack of diversity in the communicates served by the DIG arts councils. ▪ An aging population on Vancouver Island and within the membership of many of the DIG arts councils. ▪ Uncertainty regarding the future of funding that support arts activities. ▪ Falling behind other organizations (arts or otherwise) that are able to adapt faster to digital transformation.

DIG Strategic Framework

Foundational Priority: Sharing Knowledge

Objective 1: Formalize knowledge exchange

Knowledge exchange could be supported by formalizing sharing sessions where DIG members or outside experts host a session on a specific theme, and by establishing a dedicated cloud platform to streamline resource and knowledge sharing.

Objective 2: Explore opportunities for shared resources

This objective could involve enlisting a shared 'digital coach' or expert(s) to help guide DIG through specific digital challenges or innovation opportunities. The group could also explore pooling resources for shared digital tools to be used by all group members.

Growth Priorities

Growth Priority 1: Optimizing Operations

Objective 1: Streamline membership and volunteer management

This objective could involve exploring the use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to help manage both activities, and/or using cloud-based software for remote collaboration.

Objective 2: Minimize resources spent on managing ticketing or sales platforms

DIG could also be supported with a robust 'all-in-one' digital platform to manage ticket sales alongside CRM, volunteer management, e-commerce store management and digital communications. Although software like this can be costly, having just one system could minimize pay multiple separate fees for different platforms.

Growth Priority 2: Expanding Audiences

Objective 1: Build online presence and discoverability

Expanding audiences could involve establishing a shared voice online (e.g. @IslandDIG) and a memorable, cohesive narrative about what artistic creation means locally to entice those who are unfamiliar.

Objective 2: Leverage partnerships to further reach

Leveraging partnerships could involve collaborating with economic development groups, and tourism operators to engage visitors both domestic and international. It could also involve exploring partnerships and collaborations that help advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

Growth Priority 3: Assessing Impact

Objective 1: Utilize tools that make it easy to assess your own impact

Assessing impact could involve first establishing a plan to identify the right data metrics and what is needed to collect data assess metrics. Once the data is being collected, a single digital platform could be used to pull together data from different digital platforms to view it in one place, gaining insight to help show impact and inform strategic decisions.

Objective 2: Share data to find harmonized and replicable means for collection

The group could define common key performance metrics and indicators to enable benchmarking, comparison, and shared learning between arts councils. Data could include footfall, website analytics (such as number of online views) and ticket sales metrics.

DIG Action Plan

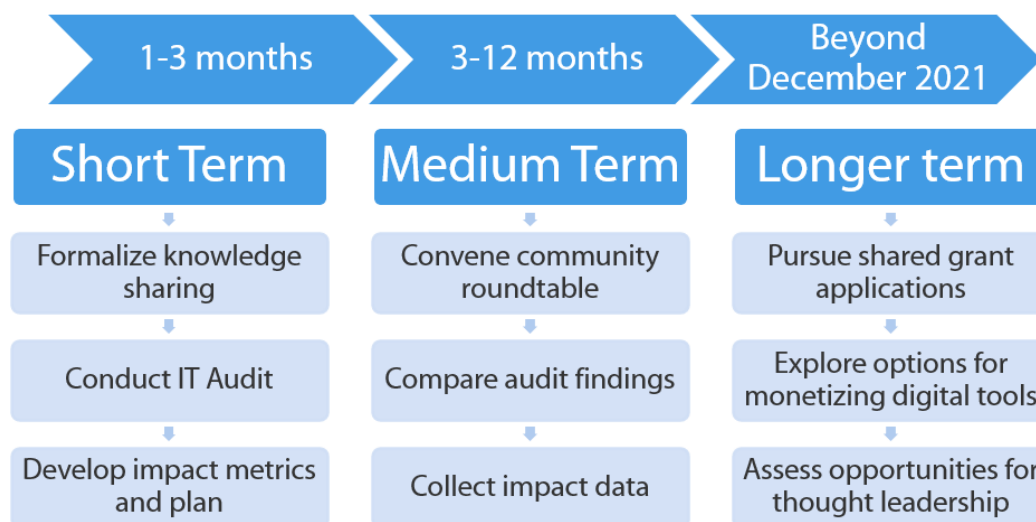
While the Strategic Framework above provides a high-level guide for shared DIG activity as well as potential use by each council, a feasible action plan for the group was also developed. As detailed below, 9 sequential recommended actions are proposed for DIG to action in the short, medium and longer term.

In the immediate term, DIG will build on a strong collaborative foundation and focus on strengthening processes to ensure success. In addition, it will work with external contractors to provide the specific capability needed to take the next steps as a group (i.e., IT auditor and impact assessment expert).

In the medium term, DIG will focus on building sustainability and community relevance by supporting its members to continue executing the processes established in the short term. In addition, it will continue to explore opportunities for community collaboration and partnerships.

Beyond December 2021, DIG will look to secure continued financial support (e.g., grants or social enterprise development) required to act as an umbrella organization for island arts going forward.

Figure: DIG Action Plan



1. Introduction

The Digital Innovation Group (DIG) commissioned Nordicity to research digital readiness and actionable solutions for member arts councils.³ Funded by Canada Council for the Arts Digital Strategy Fund, the project aims to transform how the arts councils of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands operate, collaborate, and communicate now and into the future.

The project is taking place within the context of increasing competition to capture audiences' attention, as cultural consumers' interests, habits, and expectations are shifting in response to digital technology. As described in Section 2, 33% of cultural consumers are interested in digital experiences as part of an art/design museum or gallery experience, according to the [Culture Track: Canada 2018](#) survey. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the adoption of digital technology and the appetite for online programming. Digital is no longer an optional extra for any organization, but a necessity.

The report is structured as follows: firstly, this section outlines the project mandate and process.

Section 2, the literature review, describes shifting trends in cultural engagement in Canada, and considers the value of the arts sector today and how organizations are seeking to demonstrate impact. The literature review then considers how COVID-19 is impacting the sector, and introduces innovative ways that organizations are responding. Furthermore, this section describes the need for organizational change and a shift in mindsets in order to integrate digital as a core part of cultural activities. This overview is followed by an introduction to key publications and toolkits designed to help arts and culture organizations make digital work effectively.

Section 3 outlines DIG group members' digital strengths, challenges and opportunities based on Nordicity's interviews. A new Strategic Framework is introduced in **Section 4**, which articulates how DIG can integrate digital activities going forward while also exploring potential opportunities for future funding and strategic integration.

The Strategic Framework in **Section 5** illustrates four priority areas: Sharing Knowledge, Optimizing Operations, Expanding Audiences and Assessing Impact. Each of the following Strategic Priority sub-sections includes two objectives, followed by relevant digital tools and case studies. **Section 6** provides an action plan for the DIG group to pursue in the short, medium and longer term. Finally, **Appendix 1** describes three detailed case studies of comparable cultural organizations.

1.1 Mandate and Approach

Nordicity was engaged by the Digital Innovation Group to provide research help achieve DIG's goal to identify and leverage digital tools to change how arts councils collaborate and communicate with each other. By achieving this operational change at a regional level, it is believed that the **sustainability** and **relevance** of the Councils' work will be furthered in the face of the ever-changing digital landscape and shifting island demographics.

To achieve the mandate described above, Nordicity leveraged a 5-phase approach that included extensive primary research through interviews, planning sessions, and an external roundtable. In addition, a comprehensive review of leading practice and digital tools was undertaken to inform the final report and action plan.

³ The DIG group comprises the Ladysmith Arts Council, Hornby Island Arts Council, Cowichan Valley Arts Council, Salt Spring Arts Council, Comox Valley Arts and The Old School House in Qualicum Beach.

2. The Context

As part of Nordicity's mandate, the Project Team conducted an extensive literature review of current trends at the intersection of digital technology and the arts. As described further in the sections below, 5 key themes emerged from the research:

- Modern audience and the attention economy
- The value of the arts
- Impact of COVID-19 and innovation in the arts
- Digital organizational change
- Digital programming

2.1 Modern Audiences and the “Attention Economy”

We are living in an “attention economy”, where leisure time is limited and there is increasing competition to capture audiences' time and interest. Canadian and global audiences are spending ever more time online, and increasingly on mobile devices (Figure 1).

Audience expectations are shifting. They want to engage with content digitally. They want to have integrated digital experiences in all aspects of their lives. They want easy access to digital content, for free. And they want to be able to use that content without restrictions.

Young people are more connected than any other generation, with nearly 100% of Canadian youth aged 15 to 30 using the internet on a daily basis or owning their own smartphone.⁴ This number is broadly similar across all provinces and across all household income groups. One half of those aged 20-30 years old conduct online transactions at least weekly – almost twice that of older Canadians – and 93% of young Canadians aged 15-30 use social networking sites.⁵ However, older Canadians' internet use is also rapidly growing. From 2007 to 2016, internet use doubled from 32% to 68% among Canadians aged 65 and older,⁶ and 88% now use the internet daily.⁷

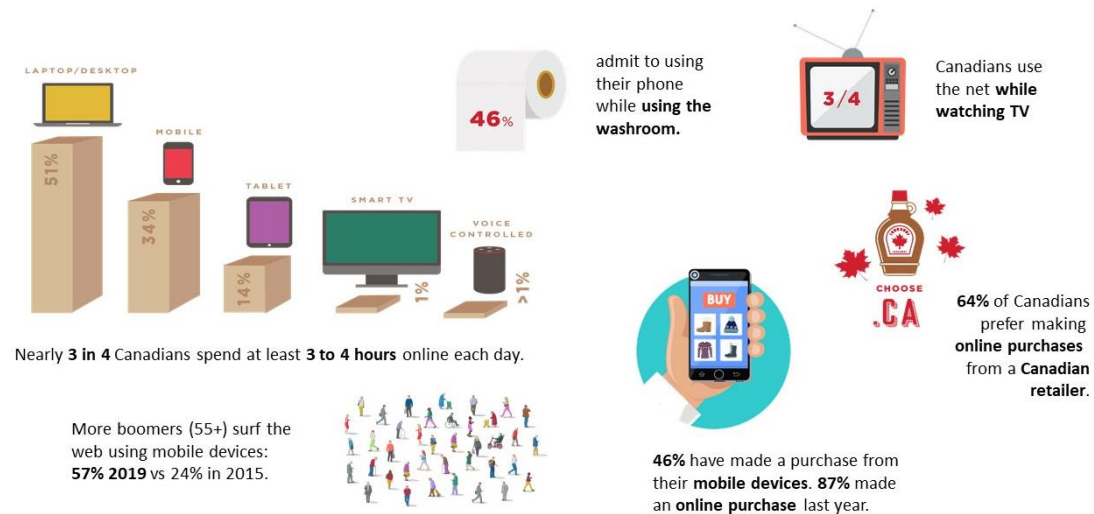
4 Statistics Canada, A Portrait of Canadian Youth: March 2019 Updates <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2019003-eng.htm>

5 Ibid.

6 Evolving Internet Use Among Canadian Seniors, Statistics Canada, 2019 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2019015-eng.htm>

7 AGE-WELL and Environics Research survey, July 2020 <https://environicsresearch.com/insights/canadian-seniors-turn-technology-ease-covid-19-worries/>

Figure 1: Canadians' Online Behaviours



Source: CIRA Canada's Internet Factbook 2019

Consumer adoption of digital technology has accelerated further due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has led more Canadians aged 65 and older to adopt new technologies: smartphones and video calling apps are on the rise; and one-third of Canadians aged 65 and older are now on social media.⁸ According to new research from Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), [Canada's Internet Factbook 2020](https://www.cira.ca/en/canada-internet-factbook-2020), **54% of Canadians say they are working at home specifically because of COVID-19**, and the same number say they feel they now have a better work-life balance. 66% say they are saving time in general. 66% say they now spend at least 1 hour per day streaming videos or audio online, and another **one-quarter of Canadians say they spend three to four hours per day streaming content online**. Netflix remains the most popular subscriber-based online content provider in Canada, with 53% using the platform.⁹

⁸ AGE-WELL and Environics Research survey, July 2020 <https://environicsresearch.com/insights/canadian-seniors-turn-technology-ease-covid-19-worries/>

⁹ Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), Canada's Internet Factbook 2020

In this context, cultural organizations need to respond to audience demands and embrace integrated digital engagement to maintain relevance and successfully build relationships with younger audiences. From the initial web search to ticketing, digital tie-ins with the live performance, and social media posts, there are many opportunities for audiences to engage with the institution through various digital touchpoints.

The Canada Council [Arts in a Digital World](#) study (2017), conducted by Nordicity, explores the ways artists, arts organizations and arts funders from Canada and internationally have adapted to, and helped shape, the digital world. The report highlights the need for many if not most Canadian arts organizations to undergo substantial transformation; for example, to create, perform or showcase new works, to engage with audiences and build stronger relationships in the community, and generally to compete for scarce funds and audience mindshare and attention. Some key principles described by the report are that it is important to embed digital principles throughout the planning cycle, and to focus on the problem that digital is trying to solve, rather than the technology itself. Furthermore, digital responses should be flexible and improve by iteration, with the performance measured ongoing.

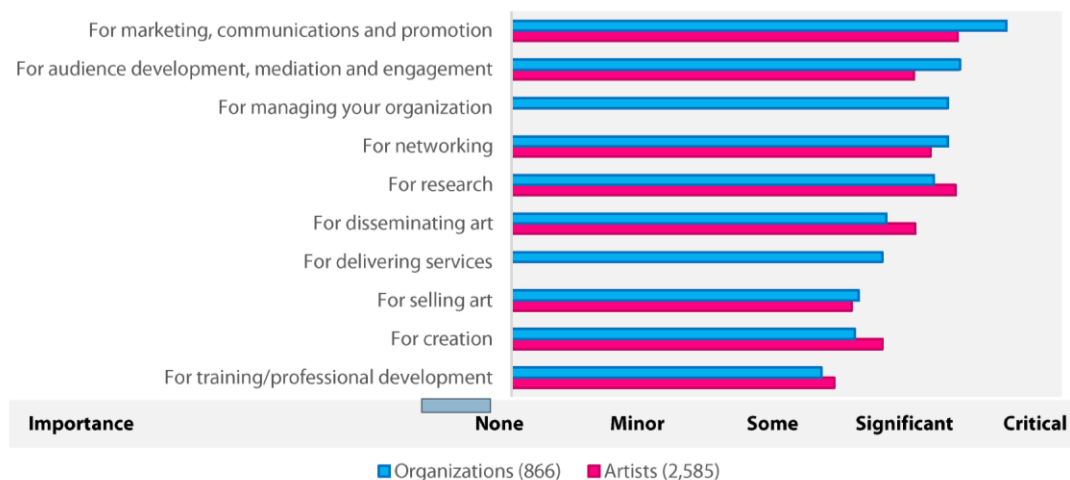
The 'Arts in a Digital World' project included a bilingual national survey of 907 arts organizations and 2,677 artists across Canada. The findings present a snapshot of how various digital technologies were being used in 2016. Overall, the survey showed that respondents were using a wide range of digital technology, with websites and social media the most common tools; 98% of organizations used social media and 97% had websites, with figures falling to 85% for social media and 89% for artists. Digital technologies were being used for a range of purposes by both organizations and artists, with both organizations and individuals viewing marketing, communications, and promotion as the most important applications (Figure 2). Although audience development and engagement were the second most important activities for arts organizations, those with a lower level of digital comfort were significantly less likely to see value in digital tools for creation, dissemination, and organizational management.

Purpose is Paramount

"When planning any sort of digital activity, whether it is an ambitious live experience, a small functional change to a website or a long term commercial product, you should be clear from the outset what it is that you are developing and why it helps your organization achieve its mission."

Nesta, Making Digital Work:
Business Models

Figure 2: Importance of digital technologies



The Canadian arts and culture sector has been on a journey of digital transformation since the launch of Canada Council for the Arts' Digital Strategy Fund, which aims to address some of the digital needs highlighted by the 'Arts in a Digital World' study. That journey has been impacted in 2020 by the international COVID-19 pandemic situation, as discussed further in **Section 2.3**.

2.2 The Value of the Arts

Arts and culture have been long recognized for their intrinsic and symbolic value. As described by the philosopher and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu: "All the calculations in the world have no hope of even remotely improving our understanding of what exactly makes a work of art valuable and desirable."¹⁰ However, over the last 20 years, the Canadian arts ecosystem has been under increased pressure to evaluate its value in relation to the economy. The arts and culture sector has had to argue not only its intrinsic value but also its contribution to GDP, demonstrating return on public investment.¹¹

In parallel with the pressure to demonstrate economic value, there are increasing attempts to assert the value of arts and culture in terms of wellbeing and positive societal outcomes. UNESCO, for example, developed the 2009 [Framework for Cultural Statistics \(FCS\)](#) as a framework that includes the social impact of the arts and culture sector, beyond economic only terms.¹² More recently, in December 2019, UNESCO launched [Culture 2030 indicators](#) as a framework of thematic indicators to measure and monitor the progress of culture's enabling contribution to the Goals and targets of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). UNESCO's Culture 2030 Indicators aim to help make the transversal role of culture in development more visible, tying culture (and its value) more closely with the SDGs.

In terms of the economic value of the arts and culture sector in Canada, Statistics Canada estimates that the direct economic impact of culture products was \$53.1 billion in 2017, including \$10.2 billion

¹⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Social Structures of the Economy*, 2000, p. 24, as cited by Statistics Canada (2018). *Literature review on the Canadian art market and the socio-economic conditions of the visual arts market*, published April 2018 <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/copyright-policy-publications/literature-review-visual-art-market.html>

¹¹ Connell, A. (2020). *Towards an Intersectional Approach: Rethinking Arts Ecosystems*. An analytical paper in conjunction with Mass Culture Digital Gathering, September 28, 2020 https://massculture.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020-Arts-and-Culture-Sector-Analysis_AConnell.docx.pdf

¹² Ibid.

from visual and applied arts. Furthermore, between 2010 and 2017, the GDP of culture products increased by 16%.¹³

From the industry perspective, the direct economic impact of culture industries was estimated at \$58.9 billion in Canada in 2017, or \$1,611 per capita, contributing 2.8% to GDP. The GDP of culture industries (\$58.9 bn) is larger than the value added of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (\$39 billion), accommodation and food services (\$46 bn), and utilities (\$46 bn). However, the value added of culture industries is less than that of transportation and warehousing (\$94 bn), educational services (\$108 bn), and construction (\$153 bn).¹⁴ In 2017, there were 715,400 jobs directly related to culture industries, or 3.8% of all jobs in the country.¹⁵ Artists (136,600) represent 21% of all cultural workers, and women 50%.¹⁶

Regarding wellbeing and positive social outcomes, numerous studies have also found that life satisfaction, quality of life or happiness indicators are positively linked with participating in arts and culture activities. In Canada, cultural participation is thought to contribute to the connectedness of Canadians, the promotion of wellbeing; the empowerment of citizens, identity formation, social cohesion, value and behaviour change and community development.¹⁷

2.2.1 Demonstrating Impact

As grant applicants and recipients know, it is essential to demonstrate impact. However, there remain significant challenges when looking to define, measure and evaluate social impact in general, and especially in relation to arts and culture specifically. Collecting and reporting on digital data is a powerful and under-utilized way that arts practitioners and cultural organizations can do so, as explored in **Section 4.4**.

Statistics Canada's [Canadian Framework for Culture Statistics](#) (2011) suggests measures to assess the social impact of culture, such as measuring demand through time spent on cultural activities, spending, attendance, availability of culture content, the impact of new technology on culture participation, reduced barriers to cultural participation and a number of other measures.¹⁸

The Policy Research Group at the Government of Canada's Department of Canadian Heritage developed [CAHSEIM: The Culture, Arts, Heritage and Sport Economic Impact Model](#). CAHSEIM calculates the direct, indirect, induced as well as the total impacts of labour income, gross domestic product (GDP), employment (total jobs, and number of full-time equivalents) and revenues for taxes

¹³ Hill Strategies (2019). Estimates of the Direct Economic Impact of Culture in Canada in 2017 <https://hillstrategies.com/2019/06/19/estimates-of-the-direct-economic-impact-of-culture-in-canada-in-2017/>

¹⁴ Hill Strategies (2019). Estimates of the Direct Economic Impact of Culture in Canada in 2017.

¹⁵ Hill Strategies (2019). Estimates of the Direct Economic Impact of Culture in Canada in 2017.

¹⁶ Statistics Canada (2018). Literature review on the Canadian art market and the socio-economic conditions of the visual arts market, April 2018 <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/copyright-policy-publications/literature-review-visual-art-market.html>

¹⁷ Government of Canada (2016). Social Impacts and Benefits of Arts and Culture: A Literature Review. Department of Canadian Heritage, February 2016 http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2018/pch/CH4-187-2016-eng.pdf

¹⁸ Government of Canada (2016). Social Impacts and Benefits of Arts and Culture: A Literature Review. Department of Canadian Heritage, February 2016

on products and taxes on production incurred by the expenditures attributable to an organization, festival or event.¹⁹

In 2019, Canada Council for the Arts published a [Qualitative Impact Framework](#) to help the arts community explore its impact on communities. The Council is now planning to launch a number of research projects under this framework including one on the effects of the Canada Council's funding on first-time grant recipients and an exploration of how organizations across Canada can articulate the broader impacts they have on their communities. The framework aims to be holistic and reflect the full range of intrinsic or inherent impact arising from art.

Regarding "off the shelf" guidance on assessing impact, Arts Council England designed an [Impact and Insight Toolkit](#) to help arts and cultural organizations to collect data and insights from audiences to assess the impact of their work. The toolkit aims to encourage the organizations to use consistent metrics to collect their data, making it easier to measure over time and to help demonstrate the value of the arts and culture sector as a whole. While the Toolkit is designed primary for Arts Council England-funded organizations, many of the resources are openly available [via the website](#).

2.2.2 Canadian Cultural Consumers

Data on art sales and art customers is difficult to find, as highlighted by a recent literature review by Statistics Canada, and it is believed that visual arts buyers prefer their transactions (and their value) to remain private.²⁰

Regarding engagement with arts and culture as a sector, research for Statistics Canada suggests that **around half of Canadians participate in arts and culture activities, and young people are more likely to participate than older people**. On average, 59.5% of Canadians aged 15-30 years old across income levels participate in arts and culture activities, compared to 48.3% of adults aged 31-49 and 47.8% of those aged 50 or older. Higher incomes correlate with slightly greater participation for young (age 15-30) and older people (50 years plus), whereas the opposite is true for adults aged 31-49 years old who participate slightly less as income levels rise.²¹

The Culture Track: Canada survey (2018) indicated that many cultural consumers may be willing to donate to culture, but that organizations are currently not inviting them to. Although **47% of Canadian cultural consumers donate money to causes or organizations** that they care about, **only 5% donate to culture**.²² The main reasons cited were the perception of government support – 30% responded that 'my taxes already help' – but 28% also responded that they simply hadn't been asked to by cultural organizations.

Canadians who do donate to culture are primarily motivated by one key factor: Social impact (Figure 3). Findings from the Culture Track: Canada survey indicate that individuals value empathy and

¹⁹ Government of Canada, Department for Canadian Heritage <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/general-publications/culture-arts-heritage-sport-economic-impact-model/user-guide-culture-arts-heritage-sport-economic-impact-model.html>

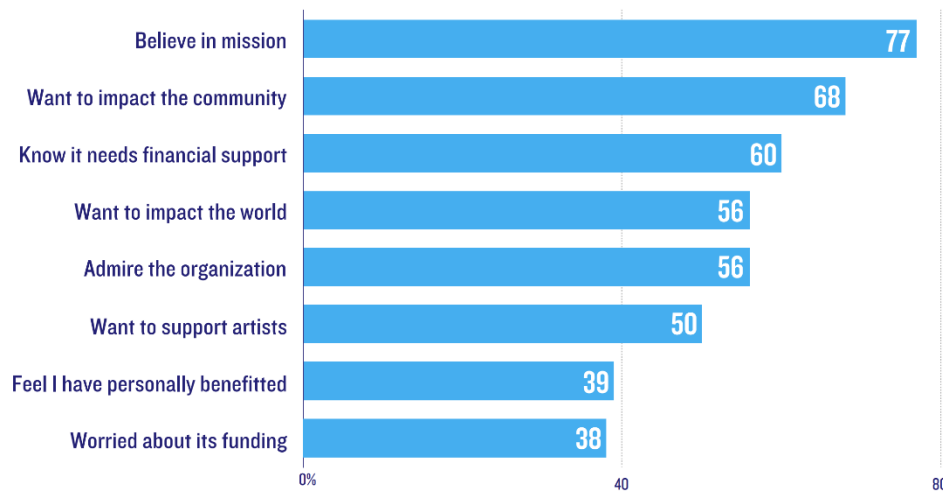
²⁰ Statistics Canada (2018). Literature review on the Canadian art market and the socio-economic conditions of the visual arts market, April 2018.

²¹ Statistics Canada, A Portrait of Canadian Youth: March 2019 Updates <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2019003-eng.htm>

²² Culture Track: Canada, 2018, p. 37 <http://www.businessandarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/CT-Canada-Report.pdf>. The Culture Track survey was conducted from December 21, 2017 to January 11, 2018 with a total of 6,444 respondents nationwide in an online questionnaire administered in both French and English. Over 1,000 of the respondents were residents of British Columbia. All respondents were 18 years or older, and were screened into the survey based on two criteria: their participation in at least one cultural activity in the past twelve months and their definition of that activity as a "cultural" activity (page 7).

reciprocity from organizations, rather than transactional relationships. These findings suggest that **cultural organizations could attract more donors if they can demonstrate their positive social impact**, while letting supporters know of the need for non-governmental funding. Offering **cultural loyalty programs** or memberships can also offer another funding stream. According to Culture Track: Canada (2018), the main motivators for joining a cultural loyalty program are the chance to access new experiences (40%), because money goes to a good cause (38%), or that it offers entry deals or benefits (32%). Parents are 60% more likely to be members of cultural loyalty programs.

Figure 3: Canadian consumers' motivators for donating to culture



Source: Culture Track: Canada survey, 2018

In addition to identifying donation motivators, the Culture Track survey also identified trends regarding frequency of participation in culture. **Millennials were identified as more frequent participants in culture** (3 times a month) than any of the older generations (2.2-2.3 times month). While most of the DIG membership notes serving an older audience, this indicates an important opportunity to try to engage younger participants.

A Profile of Canadian Cultural Consumers

The research study [Culture Track: Canada](#), commissioned by Business / Arts and conducted in 2018, investigated the attitudes and behaviours of Canadian cultural consumers. The report is based on a bilingual national survey of 6,444 cultural consumers on their attitudes, motivators, and barriers to participation. Here are some highlights.

Motivators for Canadians to connect with cultural activities:

- The most popular cultural activities for Canadians centre around three core principles: Community, Connection, and Discovery.
- The single greatest motivator is having fun; the characteristics of an ideal cultural activity are that it is social, lively, and interactive.

Barriers to cultural participation:

1. 'It's not for someone like me'
 - a. Indigenous Peoples and people of colour are 65% more likely to stay away because activities do not reflect people of a range of backgrounds.
2. 'The cost is too high'
3. 'The location is too far'
4. 'I didn't think of it'
5. 'The timing is inconvenient'

Why digital appeals for cultural activities:

When the study was conducted in 2018, most respondents had still not yet embraced technology as an integral part of the cultural experience. Nonetheless, 33% of respondents were interested in digital experiences as part of an art/design museum/gallery experience. The top reasons were:

- To access to more detailed information
- To gain a deeper understanding of content
- The ability to revisit the experience later
- It makes the activity feel new

When consumers prefer analogue experiences, they reported that it feels more authentic and simpler, with more focus on the activity. The report underscores that **the opportunity is to reframe digital as a relevant tool to foster deeper connection**. The main considerations when planning a digital activity (e.g., opportunities to interact with a digital gallery) are to ask:

- Does it enrich or distract from the intended experience?
- Does it simplify the experience, or add unnecessary complexity?
- Does it feel authentic?

2.3 Impact of COVID-19 and Innovation in the Arts

According to statistics shared by UNESCO, 95% of the estimated 60,000 museums worldwide closed their doors during the COVID-19 pandemic.²³ With traditional access to cultural institutions put on hold, digital engagement has exploded; the Louvre, for example, has seen a four-fold increase in virtual connections, now at 400,000 per day.²⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating digital trends, and especially the acceptance of virtual and augmented reality for the art world. **Digital is no longer an optional extra** for any organization, but a necessity. As a result of closures due to COVID-19 and their lasting effects on public opinions, artists and arts organizations around the world have rapidly pivoted to new approaches, **innovating with new content strategies on new platforms**. Arts organizations around the world have found themselves creating new content for distribution on digital platforms they might never have used pre-COVID. It seems that they will need to continue doing so for the near future.

The pandemic and the rapid, enforced shift to digital platforms has created numerous challenges. Many artists, especially performing artists, have found themselves out of work. Although there is a need to innovate digitally to create and connect in new ways, it is not always easy or even clear how this should take place. There are also practical difficulties in what is or is not feasible. Furthermore, there are challenges in knowing **how to make content discoverable** both to new and existing audiences, and **how to monetize digital activities**.

Amid the difficulties, there are also real opportunities. The benefits include increased innovation, expanding reach and the potential for deeper audience engagement, and fostering a **sense of community** – including among international arts sectors. **Collective solutions** have emerged that showcase international talent to formerly unreachable audiences online, providing exposure for artists into new markets.

Case Studies: Artists and galleries respond to COVID-19

Artist Support Pledge

British artist Matthew Burrows set up the Artist Support Pledge (#artistsupportpledge), a mutual help initiative that seeks to alleviate financial stresses through generosity. Participating artists post work for sale on Instagram for under £200 (\$249 USD). Each time their sales reach £1,000 (\$1,244 USD), they commit to buying another artist's work. The hashtag has been used over 25k times.

#MetTwinning

Instigated by Dutch Instagram account Tussen Kunst & Quarantaine, The Getty in Los Angeles, The Met in New York and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam are inviting their homebound followers to recreate famous artworks in their collections. Photos are being shared using the hashtags #MetTwinning, #betweenartandquarantine and #tussenkunstenquarantaine.

²³ UNESCO, Culture and COVID-19 Impact and Response Tracker, 6 May 2020
https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/issue_4_en_culture_covid-19_tracker-8.pdf

²⁴ UNESCO, Culture and COVID-19 Impact and Response Tracker, 6 May 2020

2.4 Digital Organizational Change

Digital activities have often been siloed within organizations, taking place in parallel to core activities rather than enhancing them. When digital is not a key consideration and viewed only as an add-on, this can lead to ineffective outcomes. Implemented properly, however, digital technology has the potential to save time, grow income streams, and reach new audiences.

There is a need for a shift in mindset for organizations to see **digital as an intrinsic part of activities** rather than as a “nice to have” extra. This shift requires taking a step back to look at the organization’s mission and aims, as well reviewing how operations work day-to-day. Where are things not working as well as they should? Where are there gaps, or where do activities overlap or duplicate each other? This could indicate areas where the right digital tools and processes could add value.

Digital can assist almost everywhere, from how volunteers are recruited and how programming is delivered, to how money is raised. Furthermore, many of the software platforms are free or low cost and easy to implement. However, **it is important to plan and decide which digital tools are right for your organization** and to ensure that the team is on board before setting up accounts, otherwise this can add to complexity and they may not be used. Ideally, digital platforms will integrate with each other, sharing information between themselves automatically so there is no need to update things manually. For example, if someone unsubscribes from your newsletter, this should be recorded automatically in your Customer Relationship Management database as well.

It is common for staff to perceive digital as being complicated, or something for “digitally savvy” people only. This mindset also needs challenging, as it is not the reality. Even simple skills like using apps, responding to emails, or editing Word documents all require a level of digital literacy, and these are all skills that can easily be built upon. There may be a need to work staff members and volunteers to build upon their existing skills, reassuring them that they can grow their digital capacity.

There are many **useful, free guides available online** on how to lead a digital shift in your organization. Nesta and Arts Council England have developed several useful reports and toolkits to help arts and culture organizations to embrace digital:

- **Nesta**, [Making Digital Work: Digital Toolkit for Arts and Culture](#):

The Need for Agile Thinking

"Ultimately, organizations that are fit for purpose in the 21st Century can continually question their value and reposition accordingly. They are fluid, they can think about their relevance. They work out how to connect people. And they do this by letting go of control. They become pathfinders by opening the doors and rolling with things. They have a healthy relationship with risk: they constantly carry out measured, well-planned experiments. They make enquiries, they forge new ground to explore. They're more than happy to try something out and then to say it didn't work, let it go, move on."

Nesta, 'Making Digital Work: Business Models', page 7

- A “toolkit” of useful resources on how arts and culture organizations can approach improving existing digital products²⁵ and services or develop new ones.
- The report guides organizations through relevant processes, from knowing why and when to develop a digital product, to defining the audience(s) and building user personas, to creating a Value Proposition, preparing a brief, and getting stakeholders on board. It also explains how to prepare a product roadmap, how to develop digital content and content strategies, how to set objectives and evaluate results and how to approach fixing something that appears broken.
- **Nesta, [Making Digital Work: Business Models \(Digital R&D Fund for the Arts\):](#)**
 - The report describes a business model as the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures value; for companies, value is usually revenues earned, whereas for arts and culture organizations the value is primarily the public good created. Other highlights of this report include:
 - How business model innovation for existing arts organizations is usually one or two types: 1. Extending the existing model based on skills and expertise that already exist in the organization, e.g. a gallery gaining a new exhibition space; or 2. Developing a whole new area of practice, such as an arts venue opening a cafe or digital-only programming.
 - One of the most powerful ways to start thinking about business model innovation is not to start with the gaps in your budget or in your audience but to start the other way around; **start by conducting an audit of your organization’s assets to highlight strengths which are being underused or not used at all but could be reframed and recognized as a source of value** (see Section 5.1 for recommended action. These assets can be in all sorts of categories such as data, existing audiences, physical space, brand value, partnerships, talent network, archives, and staff. Any business model innovation process should involve a strong research process that can measure and evaluate the resulting external and internal impact.
 - Distribution: For most arts organizations building proprietary platforms to distribute content digitally is not even an option. However, those that do take a risk and invest resources stand to reap the benefits if their platforms prove to be successful. However, the report highlights that although expense is a barrier for most organizations, creating bespoke digital platforms has a potential for strong impact as it enables them to control their own content.
- **Arts Council England, [Digital Culture Compass:](#)**
 - A new, free online toolkit launched in February 2020 to help arts, culture, and heritage organizations to get the most out of digital by integrating it into their work. The Compass portal includes a Charter of best practice, and an interactive tracker that helps organizations to assess and measure their digital capabilities and strategy.

²⁵ In this context, “digital products” refers to using digital technologies for a range of purposes, from delivering immersive online experiences linked to live events, to useful services for learners, interactive displays in physical spaces and many other applications. The report emphasizes that when developing your concept into a product it is good to remember that the best digital products harness new technology to solve old, existing problems or challenges in new ways in order to delight and engage users.

- The underlying maturity model can be used in “offline” discussions, strategy development and planning between colleagues so that they can come to a common understanding of what “digital” means for their organization.
- **Art Council England, [Digital Culture Network](#):**
 - An online network which includes a wealth of free resources for arts and culture organizations. There are guides on a wide range of topics, from how to implement digital leadership and strategy, to how to grow audiences, making the most of data and how to create new income streams.
- **Culture24, [The Digital Transformation Agenda and GLAMs report for Europeana](#)²⁶**
 - The report explores the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAMs) and considers how arts and culture organizations can be supported to achieve digital transformation.
 - Culture24 notes that COVID-19 accelerated digitization, with many GLAMs republishing and repackaging existing digital content, and some creating new content and shifting to online events and storytelling. The report argues that there is now a need to learn from, and build on, the experience of being thrown in the digital deep end, as well as an urgent need to address digital skills gaps and a lack of digital infrastructure everywhere, including old, digital legacy systems.
 - The report stresses that innovation applies to people, processes, and skills (i.e. digital literacy), not just technology and digital competence. The concluding section outlines a useful set of recommendations for arts and culture sector workers and organizations on how to start thinking about digital transformation, no matter their current levels of digital literacy or capacity.

²⁶ Europeana is a web portal created by the European Union which contains digitalized museum collections from over 3,000 institutions across Europe.

2.5 Digital Programming

Cultural institutions need to respond to audience demands and embrace integrated digital engagement to maintain relevance, and especially when seeking to build relationships with younger audiences. As highlighted by the Culture Track: Canada 2018 survey, **33% of cultural consumers in Canada are interested in digital experiences** as part of an art/design museum or gallery experience. For digital experiences to be successful, however, they must feel authentic, enriching, and simple to use. Cultural consumers are especially interested in experiences that offer **community, connection, and discovery**.

The COVID-19 related shutdowns beginning in February and March 2020 prompted a wave of digital engagement from museums and galleries around the world. In some cases, institutions promoted existing digital programming and experiences. In other cases, institutions developed rapid-fire digital programming and experiences to bring their collections and institutions into audiences' homes.

Artists are becoming teachers on social media, galleries are devising fun challenges, and design institutions are launching free courses for university students. As organizations make more frequent use of their social media platforms, they began engaging with audiences in new, more personalized ways. Feeds once primarily filled with ticket promotion posts are now populated with more grassroots content, including conversations with artists, behind-the-scenes insight into organizational happenings, and never-before-seen recorded performances.

Post-pandemic and ongoing, arts practitioners and organizations and cultural institutions need to see offline and online cultural creation as two sides of the same coin. They should not be considered as two separate and parallel streams of activities, but as one integrated initiative where each adds value to the other.

Artistic Innovation

"In the sixteenth century, it was the invention of canvases. In the nineteenth, photography. And today, it's 3D printing, algorithmic art, VR, AR, AI... Technology has always presented both challenges and opportunities in the art world, and the industry today needs to be more adaptable than ever."

Raconteur, New Frontiers:
Art in the Digital Age, 2019

Case Studies: Digital programming in response to COVID-19

Sooke Fine Arts Show

Vancouver Island's longest-running fine art show was reimagined as a virtual exhibition in 2020 in response to the pandemic. The online Sooke Fine Arts Show offered a variety of events July 23 through August 3, 2020.

The virtual show kicked off with an opening night "Purchasers' Preview Event" on July 23 to a small group of keen art lovers, and opened publicly the following day. It included an online main gallery, youth art gallery, sealed bid auction and virtual [guest book](#). The e-commerce online galleries remained open for 3 months until September 23.

Interactive online programming took place alongside the online galleries. Online guests enjoyed video demonstrations from exhibiting artists, live talks, music links, [kids activities](#), and a chance to vote for their favourite art works. There was also an Artist Celebration online event on Zoom announcing 2020's award winners. The event was streamed on Facebook Live and is [still available to view](#). The [video demonstrations](#) and [artist talks recordings](#) are also still available online, giving virtual visitors a taste of what to expect for next year.

The Show's [website](#), made by Vancouver Island web design agency [Geeks on the Beach](#), has a high-quality design that is clear and user-friendly.

Art Basel's Online Viewing Rooms

The art fair Art Basel presented its Hong Kong show via [Online Viewing Rooms](#) between June 19-26, 2020, after the main fair was cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Online Viewing Rooms were open via Art Basel's website and app. The rooms provided gallerists with the opportunity to exhibit and sell the pieces that were planned to be shown at the real-life festival, at no extra cost. Over 90% of the original line up contributed to the digital platform and 250,000 people visited the virtual event, which was promoted online with the hashtag #artsbaselovr.

Like the physical fair, the festival opened firstly with a preview for VIP card holder only. Afterwards, the online fair opened to a wider network of patrons, as well as new collectors and buyers. The online fair displayed over 4,000 works from 282 galleries, and collated directional pieces with thematic artworks, reflecting on current vital sociopolitical themes. In the future, participants will be charged to display works in the digital showroom, which will run simultaneously to Art Basel's international art shows.

MoMA's Come Together (Apart) Festival

On March 28, 2020, MoMA PS1 hosted the online festival [Come Together \(Apart\)](#), a virtual version of its annual music and art event. The remote festival included live-streamed DJ sets, online documentaries and video workshops, and in-event shopping opportunities also kept the dialogue going.

In between live events, virtual festival attendees could buy featured indie records on online music store Bandcamp, or shop a music-themed reading list from local bookstore e-retailer Bookshop via a dedicated landing page. The online stores remained accessible following the event, to drive further sales.

3. Key DIG Findings

The section below summarizes key findings from the primary research that included interviews with each arts council, a community roundtable, and a strategic foresight session. While interviews included a discussion about each council's digital usage, the findings focus on shared strengths and challenges as they relate to DIG collaboration. The findings also directly inform the design of the Strategic Framework described in Section 4.

3.1 Strengths

As a core strength, the 6 arts councils have **collaborative mentality**. Interviews revealed that members are happy to share with each other and excited to learn from each other. The councils share many comparable contexts and often similar challenges (e.g., limited funding or staff) that make sharing a very valuable opportunity. In addition, the rapid digital transformation accelerated by the pandemic gives further fodder for shared experiences. More specifically, each council indicated several ways their organizations have innovated as a result of the pandemic with all but Ladysmith launching online programming for the first time in the Spring of 2020 (ACLD had launched an online gallery *before* the onset of the pandemic).

"I find the meetings very useful, just hearing that other people are going through the same thing, fighting similar challenges is very useful."

DIG Member Interviewee

Each council indicated having a strong **foundation of committed members** who support the council in various ways including as volunteers. This support is an important strength as it helps alleviate challenges resulting from limited staff resources. A related strength is that all of the councils have space and use it to present visual art exhibits. While space-based programming has of course been disrupted by the pandemic, having a space to create or show art is a key strength of each council.

"Lots of people read our newsletter, we have a great click-rate. However, we do also know that it is basically the same people reading it each time so it's not a great way to reach new audiences."

DIG Member Interviewee

The councils each noted a strength as it relates to **digital communication with membership** and existing audiences. It was noted by each council that they find using newsletters to be very effective with most indicating very impressive click rates. That said, most also noted that there was room for improvement as it relates to reaching new audiences.

It was also observed as a strength that each of the councils seem to have at least one **staff or board member with a strong understanding of digital tools** and the potential benefits it could bring their organization. While this may not seem important, many organizations of similar do not have anyone with strong digital skills. However, it was also noted that they did not have 'enough' of these people to reach the full potential that digital has for their organizations.

Lastly, as noted in the Organizational Scan by Lynda Baker and discussed further in interviews, each of the councils have a strong base of **diverse earned income streams**. More specifically, the councils range between 40% and 80% earned income, largely through art sales and membership fees. This is an important strength as it allows the councils to be more resilient to potential shifts in government support or funding cuts.

3.2 Challenges

There were numerous shared challenges amongst DIG members. Key words are visualized below followed by further analysis.

Figure 4: DIG Shared Challenges



The most foundational challenge indicated by each council was **limited resources and funding** to support digital transformation. As small organizations with operating budget under half a million dollars, staff time and funding are spent on basic operational needs and programming that are more core to the mandates of the council, leaving very little time or money for digital. It was frustrating to many interviewees when recognizing that if they had the time and/or money to learn more about potential digital solutions and leverage their potential it would indeed save them time (and often money).

Despite the limited resources, the organizations have all created online programming and have seen broader digitalization in the last 8 months. While incredible progress has been made, the busy times have meant that the councils have struggled to find the **time to reflect on what is working and what is not or missing**. This is a missed opportunity as interviewees noted that they have been trying lots of new things with success and challenges across different digital initiatives.

Similarly, the organizations are stretched thin across **too many tools for digital marketing**. It was identified in the interviews that most of the councils are using several means for communicating with members or trying to reach new audiences. While it is advisable to communicate through various channels, it is likely the councils are trying to do too much. More specifically, by using so many channels the organizations are not able to focus their (limited) time on using fewer tools more effectively missing some of the potential these digital tools could bring the organizations.

Operationally, each council noted a **lack of integration** across systems. Some of the more advanced councils cited a lack of integration capabilities across different digital solutions while others were facing challenges in their integration of different analog/paper-based processes with more efficient digital ones. Each

“We communicate using so many different means ranging from Instagram videos to paper-based advertising around the community with everything in between.”

DIG Member Interviewee

interviewee identified numerous ways that investment (of time and money) into digital processes could make their operations more efficient. However, they also noted challenges regarding ‘making the case’ for digital investment as many highly integrated operational software (e.g., Customer Relationship Management software (CRMs), Business Intelligence Tools) can be cost prohibitive.

“We don’t tell our story very well, because we don’t have the data to show our impact. Breweries did it very well, now everyone sees the value of breweries and they are everywhere”

DIG Member Interviewee

It was also noted that the councils do not feel equipped with the tools or methods necessary to collect **data to assess their impact**. Interviewees noted challenges with regards to telling the story of their value and impact to funding agencies or other stakeholders such as potential private donors. Many noted that they weren’t sure what data to even be collecting (i.e., what metrics would be valuable) while others felt that they had some useful data, but they were not sure what to do with it.

Lastly, many noted that even when they can overcome the challenges noted above, they often face **resistance from their membership or key community stakeholders** who prefer the status quo. This was noted both as it relates to volunteers as well as program participants. For example, more than one council cited challenges getting volunteers to agree to track their time using basic digital tools. In addition, many cited barriers getting the community to participate in digital programming as many believe engaging with art is an in-person activity that is inherently tangible.

3.3 Opportunities

Another key strength identified was **regional interest in the DIG initiative** (as evidenced by sold out community roundtable on September 22nd) and general support for the councils. The Island region is home to more artists per capita than anywhere else in Canada, with activity taking place across the creative and cultural spectrum.²⁷ Relatedly, the tourism sector has also enjoyed significant gains in recent years, becoming one of the highest earning industries in British Columbia.²⁸ A greater demand for authentic cultural and tourism experiences (including indigenous experiences)²⁹ offers unique opportunities for the Island Region to seize. With this context in mind, key opportunities for regional collaboration, from the community roundtable and interviews, are listed below:

- Build around island’s grassroots, authentic, natural, and vibrant arts community as a key community benefit.
- Collaborate with the tourism sector to ensure cultural attractions are seen as valuable contributors to visitor experience and economic impact.
- Celebrate island First Nations arts and traditions under the leadership of local first nation stakeholders.
- Engage growing number of island youth and new Canadians to further diversify community programming.
- Share data and resources to understand and bolster community impact, sharing the story of Vancouver Island arts.

²⁷ <http://www.art-bc.com/vancouver-island/#>

²⁸ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/business-industry-trade/industry/tourism>

²⁹ https://www.indigenousofbc.com/drive/uploads/2018/10/REPORT-ITBC-Audit-2012-2017_FINAL.pdf

Figure 5: Response to “When you think of the Island arts ‘brand’, what comes to mind?”



3.4 Threats

At the same time, there are some external threats that could bring future challenge for the group. While the threats listed below are more structural or systemic, they are important to be aware of, especially in view of longer-term goals for the group. Notable threats include, inter alia:

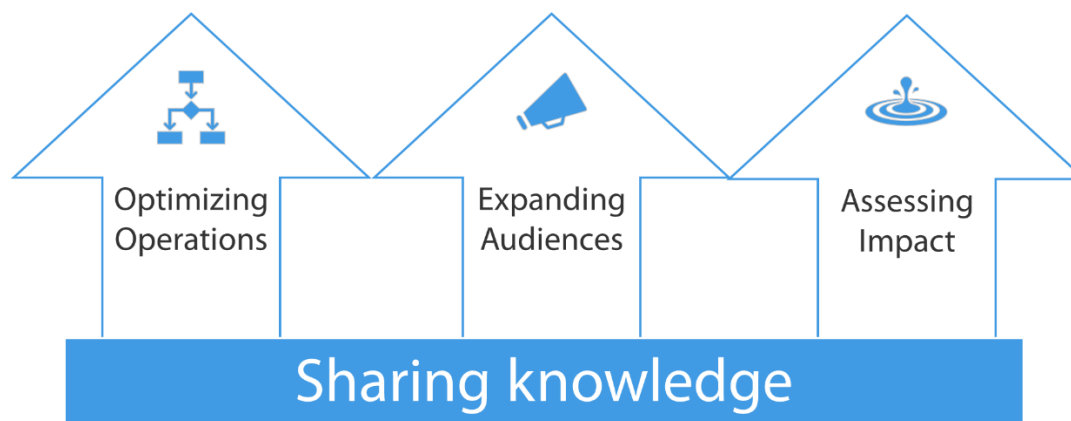
- A lack of diversity in the communicates served by the DIG arts councils.
- An aging population on Vancouver Island and within membership of many of the DIG arts councils.
- Uncertainty regarding the future of funding that support arts activities.
- Falling behind other organizations (arts or otherwise) that are able to adapt faster to digital transformation.

4. DIG Strategic Framework

To guide DIG's work going forward and to highlight potential opportunities for future funding and strategic integration, a framework has been developed with four strategic priority areas, each including 2 objectives. In addition to case studies for the Foundation Priority, each of the 3 Growth Priorities include sections that include examples and potential tools to help realize the objectives.

While Section 5 presents actionable steps specific to opportunities for the DIG collective, the framework presented below is designed to be high-level and aspirational, presenting opportunities for the group to pursue, and concurrently, for potential integration into individual council-level planning.

Table 1: Framework Overview



4.1 Foundational Priority: Sharing Knowledge

The foundational strategic priority is to continue sharing knowledge across DIG members and with the community. This priority builds on a key strength of the group which is a continued commitment to sharing and peer learning.

Objective 1: Formalize knowledge exchange

Objective 1 could include formalized sharing sessions where DIG members or outside experts can host a session on a specific theme. While outside technologists can bring immense benefit, the knowledge and experiences of the group should be explored first as it was found in the interviews that each arts council did something 'very well' that may be of specific interest to the others. In addition to formalizing the knowledge sharing activities, establishing a cloud platform or a dedicated knowledge sharing platform for more streamlined resource sharing would benefit the group.

Objective 2: Explore opportunities for shared resources

Objective 2 could include investigating options for a shared 'digital coach' or expert(s) to help guide DIG through specific digital challenges, or to help in the pursuit of transformation opportunities. In addition, the group could explore digital tools that can be used by each of the councils, such as a DIG member CRM. By exploring opportunities for shared resources, the group can pool resources and help make the case for investment in digital tools.

4.2 Growth Priority 1: Optimizing Operations

This section explores how arts and culture organizations can streamline and optimize operations using digital methodologies and tools, to save time and improve efficiency.

Objective 1: Streamline membership and volunteer management

This could include exploring the use of CRMs, cloud-based software or other digital tools. Potential benefits include: enabling remote teams to collaborate on the same documents together in real time; managing and updating contact record databases more effectively; tracking and managing volunteers' hours; streamlining online payment platforms and gathering useful data on online sales, and assessing the impact of digital communications.

Objective 2: Minimize resources spent on managing ticketing or sales platforms

This could include exploring different software or methods for minimizing fees when selling tickets. One alternative approach could be to use a single software platform to manage ticket sales as well as other functions such as digital communications and e-commerce store management to avoid paying two lots of fees.

4.2.1 Optimizing Operations Tools

Digital tools offer a great opportunity to make to make internal operations run more efficiently. However, it is important to selectively choose applications (apps) that will genuinely save time. Typically, for internal digital operations to run smoothly, all team members need to be using the same platforms. Different digital platforms should also integrate with each other (i.e. "talk" to and automatically update each other) wherever possible so that there is minimal or no need to update information manually.

Here are some examples or useful digital operations platforms for organizations.

Cloud-based Storage and Collaboration

A secure, low-cost and effective approach to internal operations is to save content in shared online drives, which also enable staff to collaborate together on the same documents in real time. The most popular options include:

- [Microsoft Office 365](#) package which offers SharePoint cloud storage, Outlook email, shared calendars, Microsoft Office suite to collaborate on documents in real time, and Teams – the chat and collaboration platform that also offers Zoom-like webinar functionality.
- [Google Workspace](#) which integrates Gmail and calendars, Google Drive storage and Google documents (as a free alternative to Microsoft Office), and Google Hangouts/Meet for online meetings, chat, and webinars.
- [Slack](#) is another popular collaboration software option, offering team chat, video and voice calls and file sharing via one platform. Slack is considered a little easier to set up and administrate than some of the other business tools and integrates with over 1,500 other software applications. Slack is free for up to 10,000 messages, and then USD \$12-15 per month per user. A discount is available for non-profits.

Project Management Tools

Project management tools enable one or several users to coordinate projects or tasks. They are especially useful for managing larger scale projects, or virtual teams. Project managers can assign tasks to colleagues, and colleagues can indicate when tasks are in progress or finished.

One of the benefits of online project management tools is that numerous team members can work on the same platform or page at the same time, so that there is no need to work into separate spreadsheets.

Popular project management tools include the following:

- [Trello](#)
- [Asana](#)
- [Monday.com](#)
- [Notion.so](#)

Databases, Volunteer Management and Event Ticketing

As noted in Section 3, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and other integrated operational platforms were identified as a gap for the councils. It is important to first note that there can be a lot of crossover between types of software that relate to managing interactions with contacts and customers – e.g. CRM databases, volunteer management software and event ticketing platforms. Some platforms offer one main function, while others offer an all-in-one solution that can do many things, keeping all the data in one place.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) databases

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) refers to software or systems that manage an organization's contacts, including current and potential customers. CRMs record an organization's interactions with customers and other contacts, aiming to improve relationships. They can save time as there is no need to manage and update multiple contact spreadsheets. CRMs are also beneficial in numerous other ways; for example, they can ensure that you do not contact the same person several times about the same thing by accident, and enable the personalization of content to people according to their previous buying history or event attendance.

Many CRMs integrate directly with volunteer management systems, event ticket sales platforms, as well as other platforms such as accountancy software and online payment platforms. Although some CRM platforms offer basic databases that simply store contact information, others specialize in different industries and offer specific functionality such as art inventory management, or large-scale event ticketing.

How to select the right CRM

CRMs vary greatly in terms of capability and price. As CRMs play a key role in managing customer data and other important operations, it is important to choose the right one.

There's a myriad of options catering to different functionality requirements and budgets. Before selecting a CRM, it is important to first specify your organization's needs, budget and criteria. As customizing or personalizing CRM systems can be very expensive, it is advisable to prioritize choosing

The importance of CRMs

"It's humanly impossible to do what galleries are trying to do: maintain countless relationships and try to keep track of them through a variety of non-centralized methods like referencing spreadsheets, scattered documents, or just trying to keep a mental tab on who you've spoken to at all the art fairs, exhibitions, and events you've ever attended. You need a way to effectively communicate one to many, but in the most personalized way possible.

- Sean Green, Founder Artnal,
Medium article, 26 July 2018

a CRM based upon the most common or highest priority needs of the organization. For example, if a museum has a large team of volunteer staff but rarely hosts events, then it would be advisable to choose a CRM that has volunteer management functionality, even if its event ticketing capabilities are limited. Other platforms – such as event ticketing software like Eventbrite – can often integrate (or be “plugged in”) later so that they automatically update the main CRM.

Cuseum's [Tips for choosing a CRM for your museum](#) is great guide on how to select a CRM, outlining the need to evaluate your needs while remaining flexible, the importance of speaking to peer organizations for recommendations, reviewing the numbers (costs and the number of users you need), and considering scalability and how the platform will integrate with your other digital systems such as ticketing platforms and email sending provider.

Standalone event ticketing platforms

Many CRMs have powerful event ticketing capabilities. However, if events or ticket sales are not an essential part of an organization's activities then it may be preferable to use a standalone ticketing platform. Here are some examples:

- [Eventbrite](#) – The best-known event ticketing platform. Eventbrite helps event organizers to promote and track their events, offering online ticket sales, email invitations and customized registration pages, the ability to scan tickets via a mobile app, Organizing, creating, promoting, and sales data to assess event attendance and profit. Eventbrite integrates with many other platforms including CRMs and email marketing service providers. Pricing: free for free events, and between 7.5-11% commission on paid events. Fees can either be passed on to attendees or absorbed by the host.
- [Ticket Tailor](#) – A direct competitor to Eventbrite, Ticket Tailor offers some extra functionality such as seating maps so that customers can choose where they want to sit for performances. The platform integrates with Stripe and Paypal for payments (all payments must go to the same bank account). The platform can be integrated with numerous other digital platforms using Zapier (described below under 'Integrating Digital Platforms'). Pricing: free for the first five tickets, then USD \$0.65 per ticket. 20% discount for non-profits.
- [Paypal Events for Wordpress](#) – A plugin that enables websites built on Wordpress to process paid ticket sales directly. Pricing: free, with no ticket processing fees.
- [Sidedoor](#) – A virtual booking and ticket platform which also integrates with Zoom for ticketed live events. Side Door was created to match aspiring artists and musicians across North America to hosts who can accommodate and showcase talents in an intimate venue or setting. Side Door calls itself a "marketplace where anybody can perform, host, or curate shows for their communities." Pricing: 10% service fee on transactions.

Example CRM platforms

Here are some examples of CRMs and volunteer management and event ticketing software platforms used by small to medium arts organizations:

- [Neon](#) – A comprehensive all-in-one CRM platform suitable for medium-sized arts organizations and created for non-profits. Neon combines a CRM database with ticketing and email marketing integration, as well as volunteer management, sign ups and scheduling. Starts at USD \$49 p/m.
- [Membership Works](#) – A CRM that is effective and relatively affordable considering the number of integrations it offers for the price (e.g. with QuickBooks and MailChimp). Pricing: USD \$29 to \$239 p/m depending upon the number of database contacts.

- [Wild Apricot](#) – Canadian-based CRM that includes several operational features including website management, member management, payments and event management. The pricing is based on the number of contacts where ~2,000 contacts can cost up to \$120/month.
- [Copper CRM](#) – An easy-to-use CRM for small and medium-sized organizations looking for automate repetitive tasks. Integrates with tools that small businesses often already use, such as Gmail, Mailchimp and Slack. Pricing starts at \$19.00 per month, per user.
- [Hubspot](#) – a CRM that can also send email campaigns and manage and report on social media accounts. Hubspot integrates with over 200 apps, including both Gmail and Outlook for email, and calendars. The calendar integration is particularly useful if you have meetings with donors or other important members of your community. Hubspot also provides other products like marketing tools (some of which are free). Using the different tools via just one platform is simpler and can save time. The basic Hubspot CRM is free to use, and there are additional paid features for more sales, marketing, and customer service. It also has a mobile app.

Specialist CRMs:

- [VolunteerMark](#) – one of the leading CRM and volunteer management platforms. VolunteerMark helps organizations to schedule events, communicate and track the volunteer hours. Volunteers to self-register online or via an app and check in and out of their shifts so that VolunteerMark can record their hours and auto-generate reports. Coordinators can also add or assign volunteers to different events, which is useful for volunteers with limited digital skills. Other features include the option to send emails and SMS messages to recruit and manage volunteers, and the platform can also receive online donations using Stripe, with funds going straight to the organization's bank account. The platform is free for up to 50 volunteers, or from USD \$34 per month for unlimited events and positions.
- [Artlogic](#) - "All you need to run your art business" Online art database software that offers inventory management, a CRM database and built-in marketing tools including website templates and Virtual Viewing Rooms as online exhibition space to help art businesses to improve, simplify and streamline their systems. Pricing starts at USD \$49 per month for artists and \$120 p/m for galleries.
- [Eventive](#) – CRM designed for film festivals with robust ticketing functionality. Unlike many other CRM and ticketing platforms, Eventive offers the option to buy passes as well as tickets, and has advanced scheduling options. There is also an add-on specifically for live online events called Eventive Virtual. Pricing: free for free events, or 5% fee + USD 99c per ticket sale for paid events; USD \$975 set-up fee for Eventive Virtual. Ticket charges can either be absorbed by the organization or charged to the customer.
- [Membee](#) – A well-rated, affordable CRM aimed at employees and volunteers of membership-based organizations. Pricing: USD \$88 p/m for the first admin user, then \$66 p/m for others.
- [DonorSnap](#) – CRM, donation and fundraising software designed for nonprofits. The software is specifically designed to track donors, volunteers, events, and contacts. Pricing ranges from USD \$39 per month for up to 1,000 contacts to \$99 p/m for 10,000.

Case Study: Neon and North Lakeland Discovery Centre

North Lakeland Discovery Center in Wisconsin has been using the [NeonCRM](#) platform since 2010 to manage and record its interactions with donors, volunteers and customers. The organization chose Neon as they were looking for one single database that would automatically sync and update information whenever someone volunteers, donates, or shops with them online.

Previously, the Center maintained two separate Microsoft Access databases - one for donations and one for registrations. Having one platform only made the experience more convenient for constituents, and reduced labour for the center's staff. Neon's online forms collect donations, registrations and memberships and automatically updates the database. It also offers the Center an online calendar, dedicated pages for special events, and member self-management portals. The Center also uses Neon's email sending tool to send targeted email blasts to fundraise and to promote special events.

After using NeonCRM for one year, the Center was able to increase their number of members and experiential learning events by 25% for the next calendar year.

Integrating digital platforms

As noted in Section 3, a lack of integration has been a challenge for the group. It is important to join up digital systems in order for digital tools to be able to effectively save time and make operations simpler. The ideal scenario would be to use a small selection of powerful tools that carry out a range of functions – for example, a powerful CRM platform with a wide range of functionalities. However, this is not always possible, especially if budgets are limited and an organization can only sign up for free accounts which tend to have more limited capacities.

Fortunately, some useful tools have been designed to help with this problem by making apps communicate and update each other automatically. This makes digital processes work more smoothly – for example, removing the need to manually download donor information – and ensures that data is more accurate.

Most integration tools are free or low-cost to use and require minimal technical knowledge to set up. Two strong examples:

- [Zapier](#) – a digital tool that can be used to make many common platforms or apps communicate with and update each other. For example, it can connect Hubspot and several other CRM systems with Mailchimp, Stripe, Squarespace, and a number of other commonly used digital tools and platforms. It can also enable several apps/platforms to communicate with each other at the same time. Free for basic accounts and integrations.
- [IFTTT](#) (If This Then That) – Similar to Zapier but aimed more at individual users rather than companies, and provides a slightly different range of integrations. Free.

4.3 Growth Priority 2: Expanding Audiences

To ensure a strong future for the arts, it is important to expand audiences and reach new people. By doing so, arts organizations can grow their support bases – both locally and internationally, virtually and in physical locations – while also demonstrating impact.

This section introduces the principle of discoverability and key approaches and tools to market arts and culture content online. Furthermore, it describes how user experience design (UX) and experience mapping can be used to make your existing digital platforms more effective at engaging online visitors.

Objective 1: Build online presence and discoverability

Building a digital presence and making content easily discoverable online can benefit your individual councils, DIG as a group entity, and Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands' creative community as a whole. Expanding audiences could involve establishing a shared voice online (e.g., @IslandDIG) and a memorable, cohesive narrative about what creation means in your local communities to entice those who are unfamiliar to learn more.

Objective 2: Leverage partnerships to further reach

This could include exploring partnerships with economic development groups, and tourism operators to engage visitors, both domestic and international. Another important opportunity is to explore partnerships that help advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Diversifying audiences can include meaningful engagement and partnership with Indigenous communities, and looking to connect with newcomers to Canada, and people of different ethnicities, backgrounds and ages who may not previously have engaged with activities. It could also include engaging with international arts organizations or 'sister arts councils' to incorporate global perspectives. Not only could this leveraging of partnerships diversify audiences, but it could also lead to creative and exciting collaborations.

4.3.1 Expanding Audiences Tools

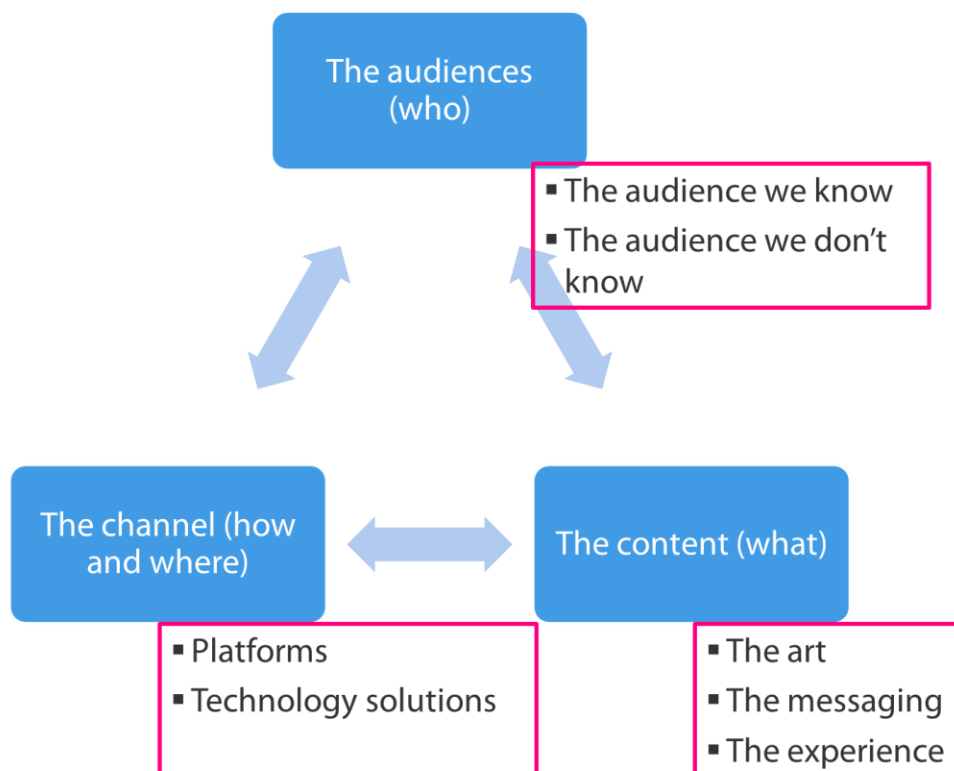
However good content is, its impact will be limited if people are not aware that it exists. It is important to enhance the discoverability of your content, and to ensure a good user experience (UX).

Digital Discoverability means the ability to be found in digital contexts, though the term is understood as the ability to be found by individuals who might not have explicitly been seeking you out. Once users have discovered your content, **the next consideration is Experience Mapping to ensure a smooth experience** as they seek to learn more and engage.

Digital Discoverability

"Discoverability" comprises three key elements: audiences, content, and channels (Figure 6). These elements are interacting forces that impact what is discovered, by whom and how easily. It is about connecting the right people with the right content, in the right place and at the right time. Discoverability does not end once an audience member finds your organization or content online, it is a journey that must be constantly maintained and invested in.

Figure 6: Digital Discoverability's 3 Key Elements



"Discoverability" is the first stage in a wider process that seeks to get audiences to consume and engage with digital content. As the journey progresses, audience engagement with the content becomes deeper and more involved. It is often a cyclical process - content is found, then chosen, then consumed and, if enjoyed, it is usually:

- Shared by audiences with other social networks, or
- Reused in memes or other personal creative projects which then find their way back into the public sphere.

Canadian content consumers would like new relevant content to serendipitously appear rather than to have to go looking for it, and word of mouth (and social media) recommendations from friends is the main way people find new content, but new audiences can also be attracted with bite-sized content and bread-crumb trails.³⁰ The key principle of discoverability is matchmaking audiences with the type of content they want, in the format they want, when they want it, on the platform they use.

³⁰ Ericsson ConsumerLab TV and Media 2015-2018

Previously, discoverability was about documenting, recording, digitizing, and uploading content online, accompanied by basic tagging and search engine optimization (SEO) and improving website navigation. Today, **good discoverability practices involve leveraging targeted audience data, using a variety of platforms, and developing purposeful content, and experimenting with a mix of physical and digital** approaches.

Content marketing gets three times more leads than paid search advertising.³¹ Discoverability planning for key activities and products should be integrated from the outset. Effective content development requires a “discoverability plan” with clear objectives, success markers and projections. The plan should demonstrate how it will be executed and be accompanied by a budget.

When targeting audiences for content and advertising, arts organizations, practitioners, and businesses should look beyond their immediate communities and consider potential tourists as well.

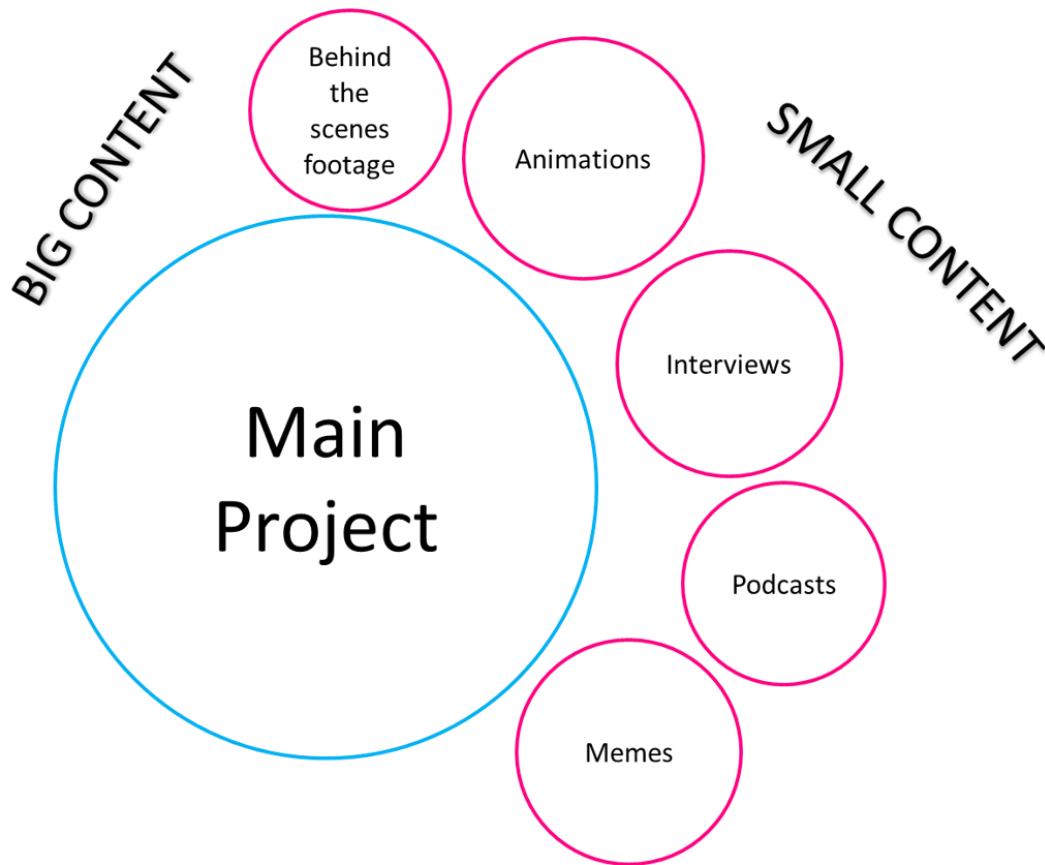
Content should be both big and small (Figure 7). “Big content” refers to the initial project or main work, e.g. the exhibition, work of art, performance, or event. It is usually more substantial and longer. “Small content” or “short-form” refers to bite-sized chunks of digital content that is flashy, fun, and digestible. The more “small content” there is, the more opportunities there are for people to find it and drive people to the main project.

Key questions to answer

- What is your content?
- Who is your target market and how will you build an audience for your digital content?
- How will you amplify its visibility in Canada and around the world?
- What data, tools and platforms will you use to reach them?

³¹ Content Marketing Institute, 2017.

Figure 7: Big and Small Content



Case Study: Google Arts and Culture

[Google Arts and Culture](#) provides free access to artworks from over 2,500 museums and galleries worldwide, including the Moma in New York, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, and the Tate Modern in London. Iconic worldwide landmarks and cultural attractions are also accessible remotely, such as the Taj Mahal.

The platform has become an especially valued resource during the pandemic. Online searches for "Google Arts & Culture" quadrupled in March 2020, according to [Google Trends](#). The [Faces of Frida](#) digital retrospective in particular gained a lot of interest, despite first launching on Google Arts & Culture back in May 2018. It is the largest collection of artworks and artefacts related to the late Mexican artist Frida Kahlo that has ever compiled. Drawing from 33 galleries worldwide, the digital exhibition demonstrates Google Arts & Culture's power.

The app includes an #ArtFilter that matches users' faces with famous artworks. Since Aug 2020, it can now insert users' faces into select paintings using augmented reality (AR).

Case Study: The Linked Digital Future Initiative

The [Linked Digital Future Initiative](#) aims to “enhance the discoverability of the performing arts by building a shared knowledge base (also called a knowledge graph) that is open and searchable”. This will involve collaboration across the arts sector to contribute to a shared open database (which they’ve started at [artsdata.ca](#)).

In partnership with international institutions and experts, CAPACOA has begun working on a standard linked data model for artsdata.ca. This is basically a framework consisting of defined categories and relationship descriptions for its connecting data points.

The project team encourages the Canadian arts community to contribute to this initiative today by creating Wikidata pages on known artists and organizations, which will be used as a data point feeding in the final shared knowledge graph.

The Linked Digital Future Initiative intends to “make performing arts events findable and shareable in the AI-powered web”.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of managing online content in a way that makes it easy for search engines like Google to find and promote to users. An optimized website is more likely to rank higher in search engine listing. The basic principles of SEO require little or no technical expertise. There are many factors that can make webpages higher in search results, including:

- The authority of the website (for example, how many visitors that the website attracts are and how long visitors spend browsing)
- The number of “natural” links (not paid adverts or social media links) pointing to the webpage from other websites
- The age of the domain name
- The website structure and content and whether it is optimized to make it easy to find by search engines (see tips below)
- The website loads quickly and is mobile friendly
- Simple technical considerations – for example, every website should have an SSL security certificate installed (e.g. secure websites display a padlock in the URL search bar) and a sitemap (see [guide on how to create and submit a site map](#))

The simplest consideration to make content more likely to appear on search engines is to name webpages effectively – that is, using terms (keywords) that users are likely to be searching the web for – for example, “modern art gallery vancouver island”. These words should appear in the URL as well as the page’s title and subtitles.

Simple tips to improve a website’s search engine ranking:

- **Keywords** – Although websites should always be written for real readers, not Google, it is beneficial to create and name webpages based upon keywords that are relevant to the website. Keywords are terms that people are searching for online. There are many simple tools available to help research which keywords people are looking for online, including Google’s [Keyword Planner](#) and several [quality, free tools](#). Keyword research can help inform the titles of individual webpages and provide ideas for articles or blogs that are likely to

attract web traffic. Long tail keywords can be highly relevant – these are phrases that people type into search engines, for example, “ceramic artists victoria vancouver island” (rather than just the vague standalone keyword “artists”). There is less competition for long tail keywords considering that fewer people are searching for these terms, and they can also be more valuable in targeting content to specific audiences.

- **Image tags** – Image files should be named before being uploaded to a website. A good naming convention is to include the name of the organization and a relevant title for the image, with each word divided by hyphens (like-this-example). This will make the image more likely to appear in image search.
- **Meta descriptions** – Below URLs that appear on Google search pages there are sentences that describe that the webpage is about. These are meta descriptions. Most website Content Management Systems (CMS) like Wix, Wordpress, and Squarespace offer the option to add meta descriptions. They help drive traffic (visitors) to webpages by making it clear what the page is about.
- **Backlinks** – These are hyperlinks that connect one webpage to another. Adding links between pages in the same websites and to other, high quality and relevant websites is helpful to readers and highly valued in SEO. These links help to show search engines how webpages connect with other similar content, and they also drive traffic directly.

Some useful guides on SEO:

- Introductory article: [Ahrefs – SEO Basics](#)
- Moz – [The Beginner's Guide to SEO](#)
- Google – [SEO Starter Guide](#)

Other SEO-related actions for digital discoverability:

Some other simple actions that improve website’s visibility online include the following:

- Add the business/organization/location to Google Maps with contact information
- Add the business/organization to relevant online listings, and keep the information updated
- Create social media pages with the organization and website information
- Pinterest pins, correctly named using the Keyword principles above and a link to the website
- Encourage visitors/customers who have had a positive experience to rate the business/organization via Google, Facebook, and other online listings.

Case Study: Culture Online, BC

Culture Online is a digital directory of online programs and resources that museums, art galleries, heritage and cultural organizations are sharing with British Columbians during COVID-19. Organizations and artists can add themselves to appear in the directory.

Social Media

Although most arts organizations and practitioners are familiar with social media platforms, there are still new opportunities to optimize content to grow deeper connections with audiences.

Some statistics:

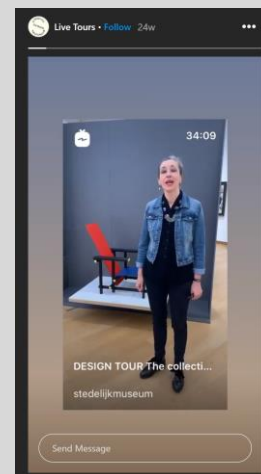
- **32% of marketers say visual images are the most important form of content** for their businesses³² and visual assets are the biggest content contributor when it comes to social media.³³
- **Facebook remains the dominant social media platform in Canada**, with seven out of ten using it.³⁴
- **64% of Canadians use YouTube**.³⁵
- **51% use Instagram**, an increase of 14% since 2019, making it the fastest-growing social media platform in Canada.³⁶
- **44% of Canadians use LinkedIn**, 42% Twitter, 40% Pinterest, 27% Snapchat and 15% TikTok.

Ideally, content should be tailored for different platforms, as platforms and audiences are not identical (Figure 8). Tailored content will gain higher engagement. However, this is not always feasible with small teams and limited resources; in this scenario content can be scheduled to post across numerous platforms simultaneously, for example using [Hootsuite](#), [Later](#) or [Hubspot](#).

Case Study: Gallery Q&A via Instagram TV

Every Friday, curators from Amsterdam's modern art-focused Stedelijk Museum host live video tours of the galleries via Instagram TV (IGTV) to its 189k followers at [@stedelijkmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/stedelijkmuseum).

In these videos, which can gain over 23,000 views, curators talk to paintings as if chatting with friends, answering audience questions as they go. The gallery also saves highlights from the tours via Instagram Stories and saves them as Highlights on its profile.



³² Hubspot, 2018

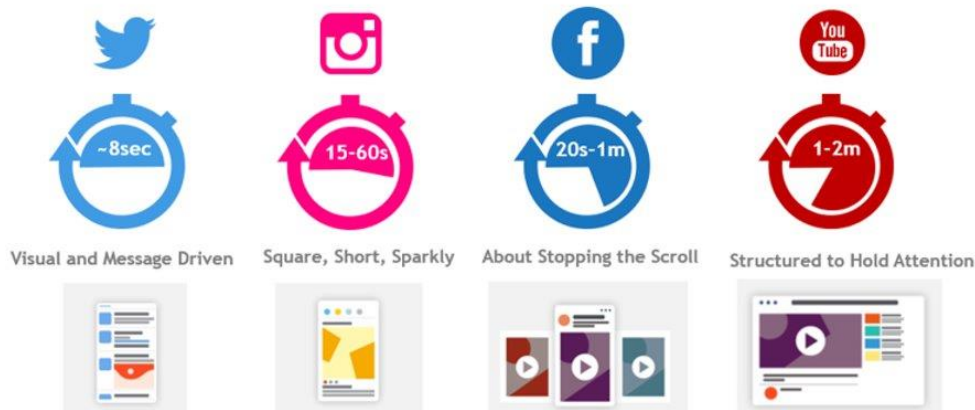
³³ Ofcom, 2017

³⁴ Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), [Canada's Internet Factbook 2020](#)

³⁵ Canadians' Internet 2020 Report: Social Media Use in Canada <https://canadiansinternet.com/2020-report-social-media-use-canada/>

³⁶ Ibid.

Figure 8: Ideal content for different social media platforms



Livestreaming is an especially engaging way for cultural events, galleries, and museums to showcase content online in real-time and enables institutions to share on-site events with a larger audience. The stream can also be saved so that audiences can view the content later via different platforms, giving the content an even wider reach and continuing to add value over time.

[Cuseum's article](#) on video live streams explores some best practice approaches, and a comprehensive overview on [how museums can leverage live streaming technology](#) has been produced by the Arts Management and Technology Laboratory at Carnegie Mellon University.

Digital Advertising

Digital or online advertising refers to any form of using the internet to deliver promotional marketing messages. It includes paid search engine advertising (to make websites appear at the top of Google listings), banner ads which are displayed on websites, and adverts on YouTube videos.

Programmatic advertising is a way to automatically buy and optimize digital campaigns across digital platforms, instead of buying advertising space directly from publishers. Programmatic advertising segments audiences based on data (such as age, location, and interests) so that advertisers only pay for ads delivered to the right people at the right time. Ads are personalized based on each consumers' unique interests and behaviors.

For Millennials (born between 1980 and 1994), **social media ads** such as those on Instagram and Facebook are the number one most influential marketing type for cultural activities.³⁷ Social and search ads can target individuals in any location, and are a great method in seeking to connect with tourists from the province, within Canada, and worldwide.

All digital advertising **should be assigned KPIs** (key performance indicators) to measure ad performance – for example, do you want subsequent visitors to sign up for your newsletter, register for an event or buy something from an online store? Google Analytics and similar data analytics should be used to track visitor behaviour and report on conversions so you can measure the return on investment (ROI).

Some useful links are as follows:

- Lyfe Marketing – [Types of Digital Advertising to Grow Your Business](#)

³⁷ Culture Track Canada, 2018 <http://www.businessandarts.org/culture-track-canada/>

- Digital Marketing Institute – [The Beginners' Guide to Programmatic Advertising](#)
- PPC Hero – [How to Choose a Programmatic Advertising Vendor](#)
- Hubspot – [How to Run Facebook Ads](#)
- DigitalMarketing.org – [The Beginner's Guide On How To Run Ads On Instagram](#)

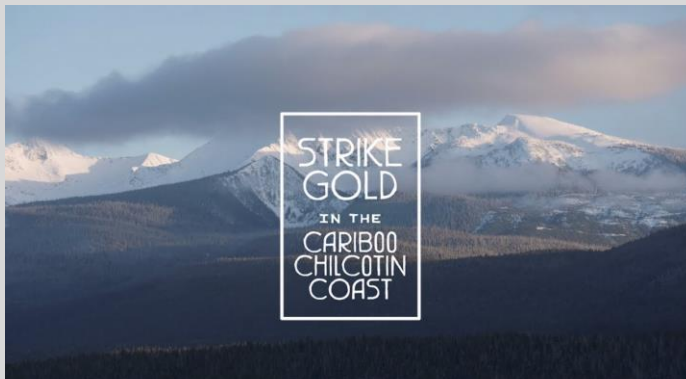
Case Study: Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Regional Marketing Campaign

The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Marketing Association (CCCTMA) is generating bookings for the region's businesses via a regional marketing campaign. The strategy has included a new website with [Land Without Limits](#) branding, social media advertising targeting tourists, global TV advertising, print media, videos and podcasts.

The quality website features an interactive [map](#) of the region with key natural and cultural heritage sites, including locations on the Gold Rush Trail and Great Bear Rainforest. It also tells local stories and connects visitors to different accommodation and recreation options.

The accompanying podcast series, *Untold Stories of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast*, features local adventures and interviews local people such as former Bonaparte Indian Band Chief Mike Retasket, a cultural ambassador who lives at Xat'sull First Nation.

The campaign is part of a broader [tourist destination development strategy for the region](#) that was published in 2019. The strategy details how the Chilcotin Central Coast is one of the least visited areas of the province despite being one of BC's natural and cultural gems. Recognizing that the largest visitor base is residents of BC, Alberta, Washington, California and Germany, the strategy builds upon the appeal of being the road less travelled. It details how the strategy is to use the region's rustic appeal to attract "Authentic Experiencers" and "Cultural Explorers".



Experience Mapping

Experience mapping is a **User Experience (UX) technique** that helps organizations identify all the potential touchpoints for engaging audiences, sometimes referred to as the "customer journey". Experience mapping is relevant to all organizations. It does not only include digital but reviewing and designing the entire experience of interacting with an organization across touchpoints, from websites to customer support phone lines, to physical buildings. It involves identifying and mapping each step of the journey; how does someone come across your

organization? What do they do next? What happens when they contact you for more information, sign up for the newsletter, or buy a ticket to an event? And what happens after that?

Mapping the experience enables organizations to: 1) Review the current experience and process of interacting with your organization, to highlight areas that could be improved, and 2) Define what the ideal experience should be, and put plans in place to improve the user/customer journey. In turn, this improves discoverability and increased conversions – whether that is attendance, sales, or newsletter sign ups. Innovation foundation Nesta offers a free [experience mapping toolkit](#) for cultural organizations with worksheets on how to do it.

User Personas

Developing "user personas" means creating written and/or visual descriptions of fictional but realistic individuals who are the target audience for your organization. Having one to maximum three user personas in mind is very helpful when creating content and to inform your curation, design, and marketing choices. A useful persona pulls together key characteristics of your target audience – such as demographic information like age, plus interests and behaviours – ideally on one page. It helps producers of any discipline to create with the target audience in mind.

An overview of how to develop user personas:

- 1) Re-evaluate existing data – look at your existing data like visitor or customer numbers, website analytics if you have them, and social media followers. Consider who is visiting or interacting with your organization and how much (see Section 4.4).
- 2) Survey your members/visitors/customers – who are they, and what interests them? You can develop online polls and email surveys, or survey visitors in person face-to-face or via feedback walls in physical locations.
- 3) Use the data gathered to create typical profiles of your key audience members(s). Nesta's comprehensive [user persona development toolkit](#) outlines how.

4.4 Growth Priority 3: Assessing Impact

It is increasingly important – and yet not always easy – for arts and culture organizations to communicate their impact. This section explores how organizations can leverage data to help meet this challenge, and how data can help with decision-making and planning. Furthermore, it includes practical information and considerations relating to data security and privacy laws and legislation.

Objective 1: Utilize tools that make it easy to assess your own impact

This could include first establishing a plan to identify the right metrics that show your impact and then evaluating what is needed to collect the right data. It would also be useful to conduct a review of the digital platforms you are already using, and whether there is a tool that can pull all the metrics into one platform so that you can review all relevant data in one place to gain insight and make data-informed decisions.

Objective 2: Share data to find harmonized and replicable means for collection

Within this objective, DIG could define key performance metrics and indicators as a group, to enable benchmarking, comparison, and shared learning. This form of collaboration could also include sharing anonymized data, such as statistics on footfall, website analytics on online traffic, ticket sales metrics, and number of online views. However, personally identifiable information (PII) must never be shared. Before sharing data with any external organization, it is important to review data privacy laws as well as the privacy policies or terms of reference for the data platforms that were used to collect the data (see Data Privacy Laws below).

4.4.1 Assessing Impact Tools

Arts and culture organizations can find it challenging to demonstrate impact. Data collection and analysis is a powerful way to help assess and show impact and audience engagement. It is also highly valuable for research purposes and to define what is or is not resonating or working effectively. This insight can be used to develop more effective strategies, which can also save costs by improving efficiency and reaching target audiences more directly.

Data can seem intimidating, but even light-touch explorations of data analytics can be highly insightful and beneficial. A wealth of user-friendly information on how to make the most of your data is available from the UK's [Digital Culture Network](#), including an introduction to data analysis and insight, top tips for website and social media data analysis and how to track marketing campaign performance.

Easy-to-Action Analysis

There is a wealth of insight waiting in your data. The challenge, however, is firstly knowing where to start with the analysis, and secondly, how to make data analysis a useful, core part of your operations and not a time-consuming process.

Arts organizations and practitioners often have a lot of data already, from records on visitor or customer numbers to website and social media account analytics. Most platforms – such as websites built on Wix, Wordpress, and Squarespace – and social media platforms already have analytic tools built in – see **data analysis tools** below.

Simple website analytics analysis is a good place to start. It involves looking at the most popular webpages, the traffic sources (e.g. are specific platforms, such as social media accounts, driving users to the website, or are most users stumbling across your website via a specific search term on Google?). You can also consider whether users are accessing via desktop or mobile, and look at popular times of day. By doing so, you can gain an understanding of how your audiences use digital and see what is driving spikes in traffic. Investigating the data like this will give you an idea of what users are most interested in and what is or is not working. These findings can help you to plan your digital content strategy, and to save time and money by focusing efforts on approaches that are more likely to be successful.

If you are not doing so already, consider putting an hour or two in your calendar every month to look at your data analytics. By reviewing data from different platforms together – such as your website analytics, newsletter, and social media posts – you can start to see patterns in what content is most popular. What was your most popular newsletter article, blog post, or Facebook post? Why do you think this is? Are your users more interested in video, images, or text, and does this vary by platform? Look for patterns, note them down, and think about what these patterns may mean. Experiment with using these insights to focus more of your efforts on creating this type of content.

Data Analysis Tools

There are numerous free or low-cost tools available to help with data analysis. Most website platforms, such as Wordpress and Squarespace, provide some form of analytics so you can see how users are interacting with your website. Adding Google Analytics to your website is also recommended, as it is one of the most powerful tools and most frequently used. Most social media platforms also include data analysis which can tell you more about who your followers are, and what else they are interested in.

Some relevant links:

- Beginners [guide to installing Google Analytics](#) to your website

- Wordpress offers [basic 'stats' analytics](#) for its websites, but it is also recommended to install Google Analytics as well: [tutorial](#) on installing Google Analytics for Wordpress specifically.
- Squarespace [website analytics](#)
- Facebook [Audience Insights](#)
- Instagram [Insights](#)
- Twitter [Analytics](#)
- Pinterest [Analytics](#)
- LinkedIn [Analytics](#)

Integrated Data Analysis Dashboards

It can be time-consuming to review different data sources and datasets separately. To address this challenge, numerous platforms are available that enable organizations to pull their data from different sources together into one dashboard, so all the data can be reviewed at once. These platforms can save time, while also providing a broader view of your organization's digital profile and impact.

Business Intelligence (BI) tools enable organizations to understand "Big Data" (large datasets) in an easily digestible way. They pull together data from different platforms into one place so that analytics from different platforms can be reviewed in one place, including website interactions and sales, and email and social media analytics. This is not only more efficient than looking at the different platforms separately, but also offers clearer insights by comparing results from different platforms. BI tools also let you create automatic, downloadable reports to make it easy to track results over time.

Example platforms include:

- [Dexibit](#) is a data processing and analytics tool designed specifically for galleries and other visitor attractions to make use of their data without needing external support. The Software-as-a-Service provider specializes in helping cultural institutions draw valuable information from visitor experiences and venue performance. It offers easy-to-understand dashboards on visitation rates, and uses machine-learning AI models to predict exhibition performance. Free for a basic account.
- [Microsoft Power Bi](#) is a powerful BI option that connects to almost any data source, from web APIs where you connect different platforms directly, to .csv files uploaded from Excel. It is free for free for a basic account, offering a visual dashboard and the option to create and export reports. Premium subscriptions start at USD \$3 per user per month for non-profits.
- [Databox](#) is designed to simplify data analytics, bringing multiple data sources into one streamlined and visually appealing dashboard. Set it up to display your key performance indicators and you will not have to wade through several dashboards to see your KPIs each day. Free for a basic account.

Data Privacy Laws

Federal and provincial Canadian privacy laws protect the privacy of individuals and give them the right to access information gathered about them. The [Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada](#) (OPCC) oversees compliance at the federal level.

The federal law, the [Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act \(PIPEDA\)](#), relates to the collection, use or disclosure of personal information in the course of commercial activity. Although it legally applies to commercial for-profit enterprises, its digital privacy principles are best practice for all organizations. The law is based on [10 fair information principles](#); consent is a core basic

principle, meaning that organizations must obtain an individual's permission to collect or use their personal information. Individuals have the right both to access their personal information and challenge its accuracy. The principle of “identifying purposes” means that personal information can be used only for the purposes that individuals have agreed upon.

British Columbia has its own similar law, the [Personal Information Protection Act \(PIPA\)](#), which applies whether or not an activity is commercial in nature. The federal PIPEDA law may still legally apply to BC-based organizations when the personal information is disclosed over provincial or international borders, however. Like PIPEDA, PIPA mandates that organizations may only collect, use or disclose personal information for a purpose that a reasonable person would consider appropriate in the circumstances. The key principles are as follows:

- Organizations are accountable for the protection of personal information under their control.
- The purposes for which the personal information is being collected must be identified during or prior to the collection.
- Personal information may only be collected, used or disclosed by an organization with the knowledge and consent of the individual, with limited exceptions as specified in the legislation.
- The collection of personal information is limited to what is necessary for the identified purposes and will be collected by fair and lawful means.
- Personal information must only be used and disclosed for the purposes for which it was collected, except with consent or as required by law. It can be retained only as long as it is necessary to fulfill those purposes.
- Personal information must be as accurate, complete and up-to-date as is necessary.
- Personal information must be protected by adequate safeguards.
- Information about an organization's privacy policies and practices must be readily available to individuals upon request.
- An individual has the right of access to personal information about himself or herself and has the right to seek correction. Both these rights are subject to some exceptions as specified in each statute.
- Organizations must provide the means for an individual to challenge an organization's compliance of the above principles.

*Source: Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada,
[The Application of PIPEDA, Alberta and British Columbia's Personal Information Protection Acts](#)*

In May 2019, the federal government proposed a [Digital Charter](#), which includes plans to update PIPEDA. The Charter includes 10 principles including Control and Consent – that Canadians have control over what data they are sharing, who is using their personal data and for what purposes, and know that their privacy is protected, and Safety and Security – that Canadians can rely on the integrity, authenticity and security of the services they use.

Regarding email communications, the federal law [Canada's anti-spam legislation \(CASL\)](#) addresses spam and other electronic threats. To comply with CASL, an organization must provide email recipients with the option to unsubscribe, and also ensure before sending an email marketing message that it could demonstrate to regulators that it either: (a) has obtained express prior consent in CASL-compliant form, or (b) has confirmed that an authorizing provision of CASL allows the organization to send the commercial electronic message without such express consent.

Data Storage Laws

PIPEDA mandates that organizations are responsible for personal information they have collected even when it's being transferred to a third party. This can make things complicated if data is stored in servers abroad, such as in the US as US law then also applies to the data. Therefore, **storing data on Canadian cloud server providers is often the advisable route** due to their knowledge of the country's privacy laws.

Some examples of Canadian-based cloud servers:

- [Sync](#) – A Canada-based Dropbox alternative that's compliant with federal and provincial data privacy laws.
- [Microsoft Office 365](#) and [Microsoft Azure](#) cloud storage - Microsoft Platforms allow organizations to [choose to store their data in Canada](#) in a way that is compliant with PIPEDA. Existing customers can choose their region, and all new Microsoft 365 clients are automatically assigned to their local region.
- [CloudPockets](#) – A cloud storage provider based in Canada that specializes in services for Canadian non-profits and small businesses.

Other useful links and guides:

- Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada – [Guidance on e-Marketing](#), revised January 2020
- Endpoint Protector – [Data Protection in Canada: All You Need to Know about PIPEDA](#), January 17, 2019
- Clark Nuber – [Legal Basics for Nonprofit Websites](#), 29 July 2020

Data Security

There are straightforward day-to-day practices that can greatly enhance organization's digital security:

- Create an updated Privacy Policy and ensure that all employees, trustees, and volunteers understand what information can or cannot be shared or released.
- Practice strong encryption. Lock down laptop hard drives and secure all mobile devices with passwords. Encrypt all sensitive data. If possible, do not store personal Identifiable Information (PII)³⁸ on mobile devices.
- Update devices' operating system and apps as soon as updates are available.
- Ensure appropriate anti-virus software is installed and running on all devices used for remote work.
- Enable security features for web browsers and cloud-based platforms and accounts.
- Do not provide employees with more access to data than necessary, and do not grant access to personal information to third parties like vendors without proper safeguards.

³⁸ Personally Identifiable Information is sensitive information that includes age, name, ID numbers, income, ethnic origin, or blood type; opinions, evaluations, comments, social status, or disciplinary actions; employee files, credit records, loan records, medical records, existence of a dispute between a consumer and a merchant, intentions (for example, to acquire goods or services, or change jobs).

5. DIG Action Plan

The sections below are presented in sequence to provide a proposed roadmap to pursue the objectives described above, within the time and resource constraints of DIG.

5.1 Next Steps

In the immediate term, DIG will build on a strong collaborative foundation and focus on strengthening processes to ensure success. In addition, it will work with external contractors to provide the specific capability needed to take the next steps as a group (i.e., IT auditor and impact assessment expert), as detailed in the sections below.

Reinforce Sharing Processes

- Ensure that shared resources are accessible and easily found through searchable cloud folders.
- Building on the success of the privacy pilot, establish knowledge sharing activities and schedules based on specific themes that could include:
 - Guest speakers on specific growth pillars or type of technology
 - Deep dives on specific lessons learnt during COVID-19 or from recent activities
 - Sharing ideas for partnerships or connections outside of the arts

Conduct Internal IT Audits

- Engage a freelance IT expert to audit platforms and digital tools for *each* organization with a focus on systems integration.
- Ensure audits are bespoke to the unique reality (e.g., size, digital literacy of staff) and future needs of each council and include the following components:
 - Assess platforms for managing volunteers, donors and members that best integrate with current systems.
 - Evaluate tools for enriching digital experiences in gallery as well as online ticketing sales platforms.
 - Conduct full marketing and communications audit to understand avenues for streamlined communications including the opportunity for cross pollination through shared newsletters or cross posting on social media.

“An organizational audit with recommendations would be so valuable for us... it would let us make progress in our own digital literacy and capacity.”
DIG Member

Develop Impact Metrics

- Engage a metrics and impact assessment expert to support DIG in establishing impact measurement objectives (i.e., what needs to be measured to tell the story you want to share).
- Develop an impact measurement plan to tell the story of the arts, with the following considerations:
 - Define ‘artist’ and ‘arts organization’ that goes beyond Stats Canada classifications
 - Establish geographical scope
 - Develop data collection tools that are user friendly and replicable

“Collecting similar data will give us a more powerful tool as we create our own data and persuade Tourism to come along with us.”
DIG Member

5.2 Medium Term

In the medium term, DIG will focus on building sustainability and community relevance by supporting its members to continue executing the processes established in the short term. In addition, it will continue to explore opportunities for community collaboration and partnerships. Three recommended actions in the medium-term are listed below:

- Share findings from the IT audits to assess any common recommendations as a starting point for potential shared digital tools or resources such as a digital coach to implement findings (e.g., the auditor could be retained as the coach).
- Collect data to assess the impact of the arts based on the metrics developed in the session described above.
- Convene another community roundtable with interested stakeholders and local First Nation leaders to revisit partnerships ideas and conversations started in September. And explore means for further collaboration.

5.3 Longer term

Beyond December 2021, DIG will look to retain continued financial support (e.g., grants or social enterprise development) required to act as an umbrella organization for island arts and play a thought leadership role. Three recommendations for long-term consideration are list below:

- Explore further opportunities for funding to support the development of DIG as an umbrella organization for island arts – e.g., the future iteration of the CCA Digital Strategy Fund, the [Social Finance Fund](#), or [Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure \(CCR\)](#) Program.
- Assess opportunities for DIG thought leadership at digital innovation events such as FWD50, ArtsBC conferences, or other arts and digital transformation related events.
- Pursue opportunities to create digital tools or resources (e.g., impact measurement ‘how-to-guide’) that could be monetized in the future (e.g., a DIG social enterprise).

6. Conclusion

As detailed above, DIG has an exciting opportunity to work together to seize a plethora of opportunities for digital technology to help improve operational efficiency, expand audiences, and assess and share the impact of the arts. As the world continues to face challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of digital will continue to accelerate with many trends likely to remain even after a vaccine is widely available. As such, the timing is ripe to continue sharing digital challenges and collaborating on the array of potential solution.

Appendices

7. Appendix 1 - Leading Practice Case Studies

This section includes three best practice examples of small to medium-sized cultural organizations with a strong digital presence. The case studies also show how the organizations have been experimenting with online-only programming in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

7.1 Nelson Arts Council

The Nelson and District Arts Council (NDAC) is a registered non-profit organization that was formed in 1969 as the Kootenay-Columbia Arts Council. NDAC's regional area spans from South Slocan to the North Shore, Procter and Queens Bay, and from Nelson to Apex. NDAC has individual and group members who all participate in art and culture related activities. Members represent such disciplines as theatre, music, dance, visual arts, crafts, heritage and writing.

The Council presents a number of projects each year intended to foster the arts in Nelson and District, including the Nelson International Mural Festival, Nelson ArtWalk, Hidden Creek Artist Residency, Appetite for Art, our Dance Educators' showcase.

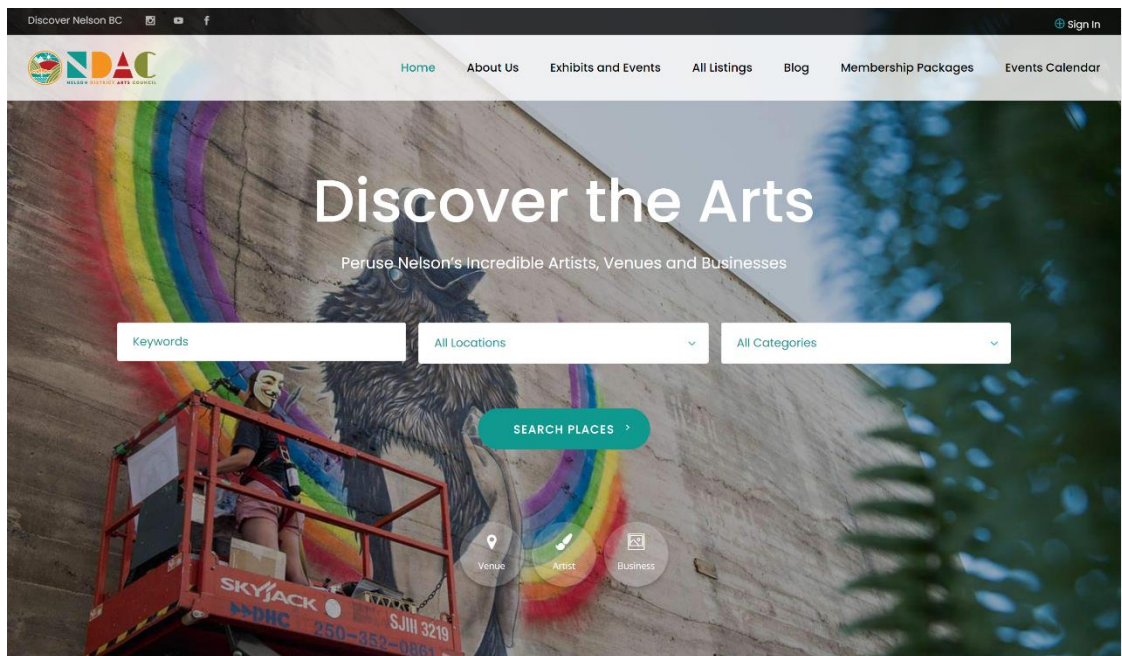
7.1.1 Digital Presence and Discoverability

Website

The Arts Council has a fantastic, modern website (www.ndac.ca) created by a digital marketing agency called [Collabo](#). The website displays and loads equally well on mobile, with a responsive design that automatically resizes to the correct width for the device.

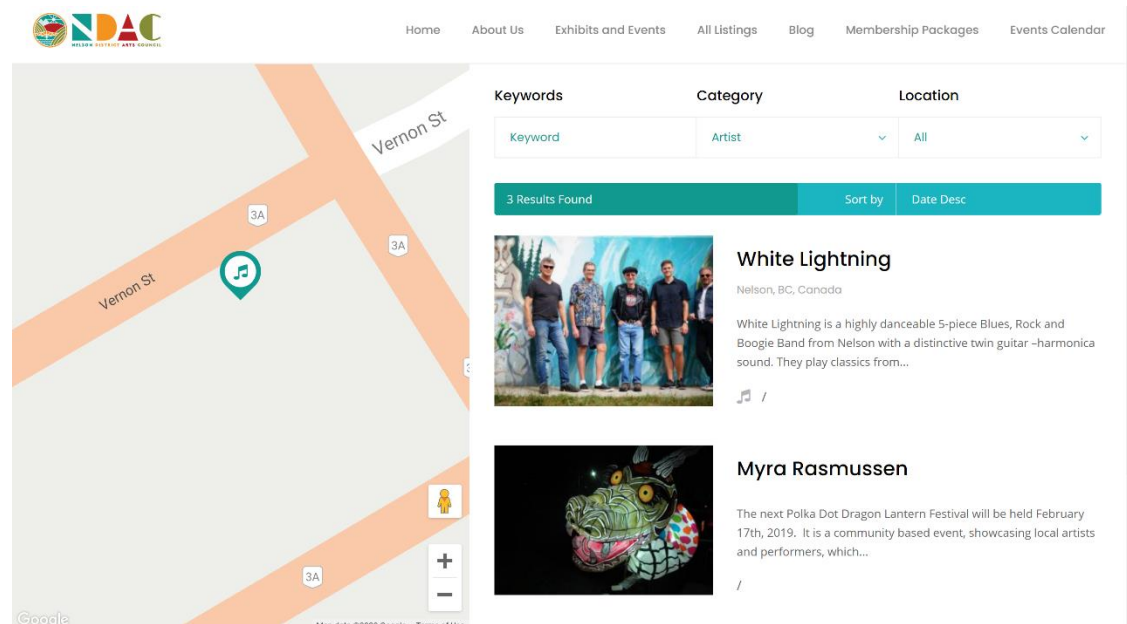
The homepage is eye-catching with a strong call to action to "discover the arts" (Figure 9). It immediately invites the visitor to find exactly what they are looking for based on keywords, locations, and categories of arts activity or location. Surprisingly, however, there is no email newsletter sign up form on the website, when a visitor would typically expect to find one.

Figure 9: NDAC website homepage



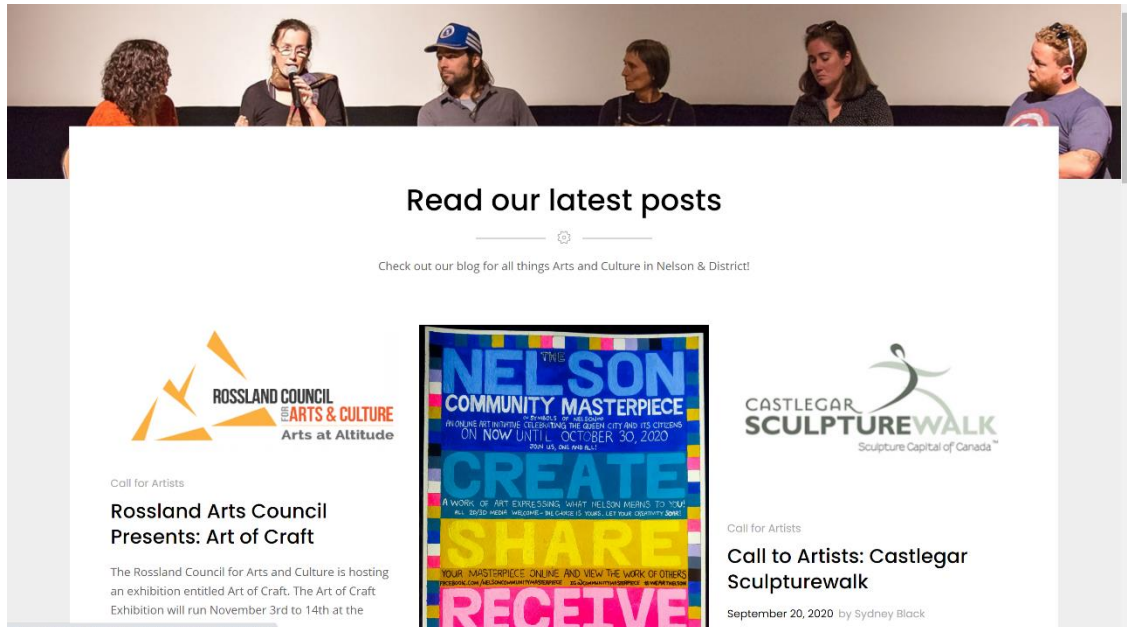
The [members listings database](#) (Figure 10) is easily accessible and searchable. Each Arts Council member has their own profile that they can populate with key content and contact information. The members' locations are also displayed on a map.

Figure 10: NDAC website members listing



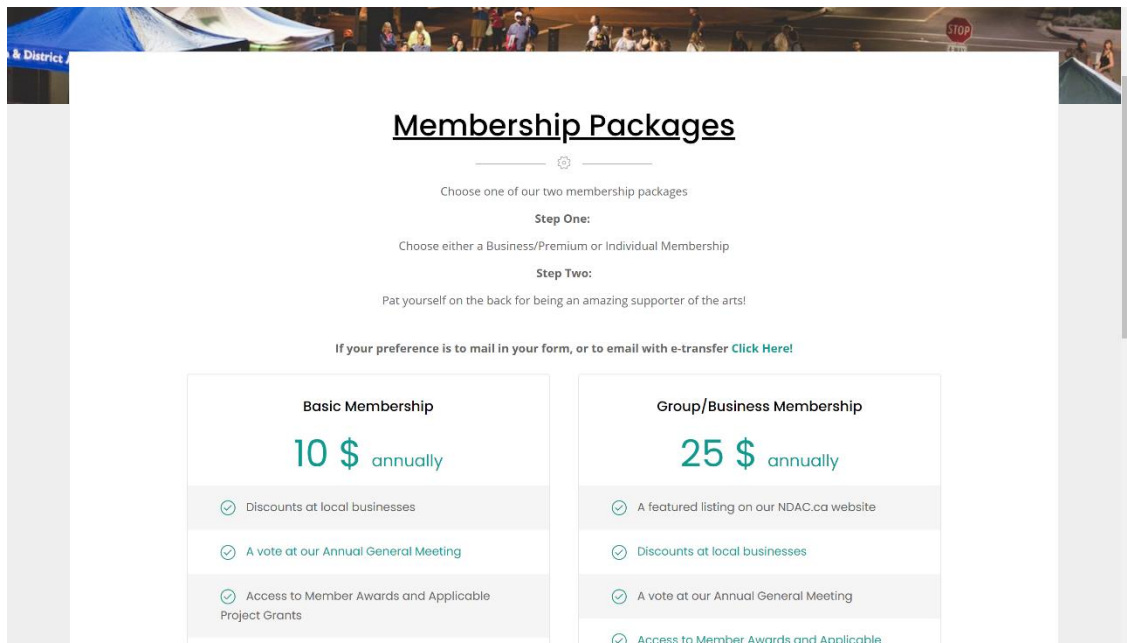
The [blog](#) (Figure 11) has a bold mosaic/tile design so that several post titles can be seen at once. This makes the blog section stand out compared to the design of the other sections of the website, and also shows the range of the Arts Council's activities at a glance. New blogs are posted at least once a month, and sometimes up to several times a month. This shows that the organization is active, and it is also good for SEO.

Figure 11: NDAC blog



The [membership page](#) (Figure 12) is very clear, and straightforwardly offers the visitor two options; either \$10 or \$25 annually, with a clear list of what is included for the price. This represents good practice for user experience (UX), as the user can easily see the difference between each package at a glance. Limiting the choice to two options is also effective (a maximum of three pricing options is an ideal user experience).

Figure 12: NDAC website membership sign up page



SEO

The website appears to rank well for the term “rural arts council” and similar terms. Webpage URLs are clearly and descriptively named (e.g. <https://www.ndac.ca/nelson-international-mural-festival/>). However, images have not been saved with descriptive titles, which is not best practice. The website has around 600 unique visitors a month,³⁹ which is not especially high. However, if these are targeted visitors, then it is a reasonable number.

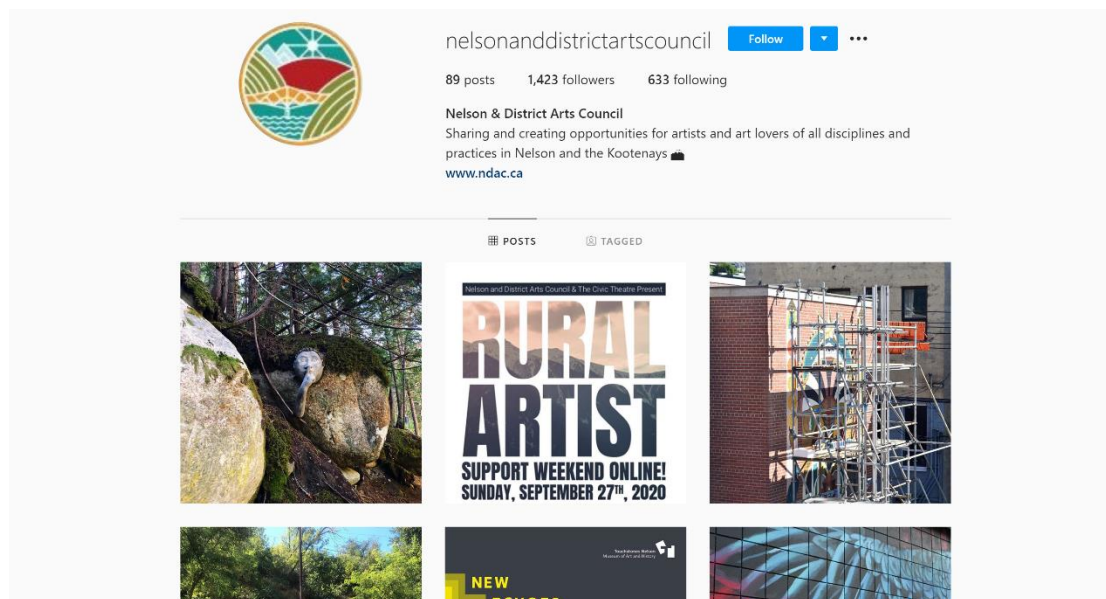
Social Media

NDAC only has three social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The website links to each platform via the footer (having the icons in the website header or footer represents best practice).

Being active on a smaller number of networks is fine, however, and can represent best practice if each account is regularly updated with suitable content and if each platform is effective at connecting with the target audience. It is better to use only a few platforms and be regularly active on them that to have a large number of accounts that are rarely updated.

The Instagram account [@nelsonanddistrictartscouncil](https://www.instagram.com/nelsonanddistrictartscouncil/) has 1,423 followers (Figure 13). The image selection is considered, and the choice of images work well together. Posts make good use of hashtags, using a few relevant ones but without the usage appearing excessive. Especially visually-appealing images gain up to 90 likes. This is a reasonable engagement, but a level that could be built upon.

Figure 13: NDAC Instagram profile and example post

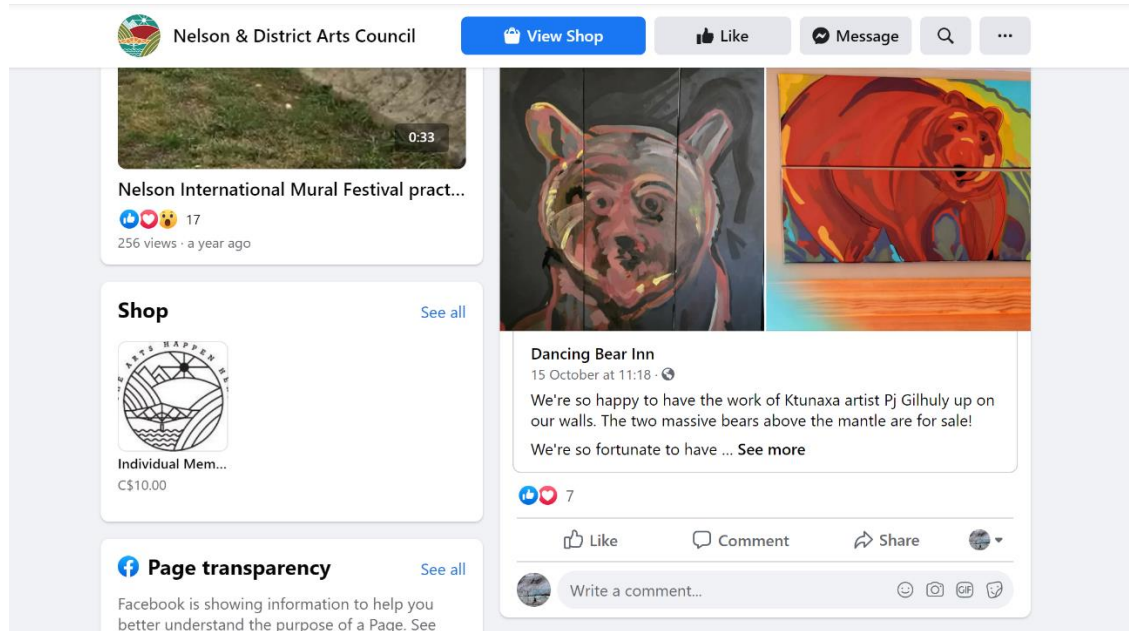


³⁹ According to analysis using SEM Rush <https://www.semrush.com/>



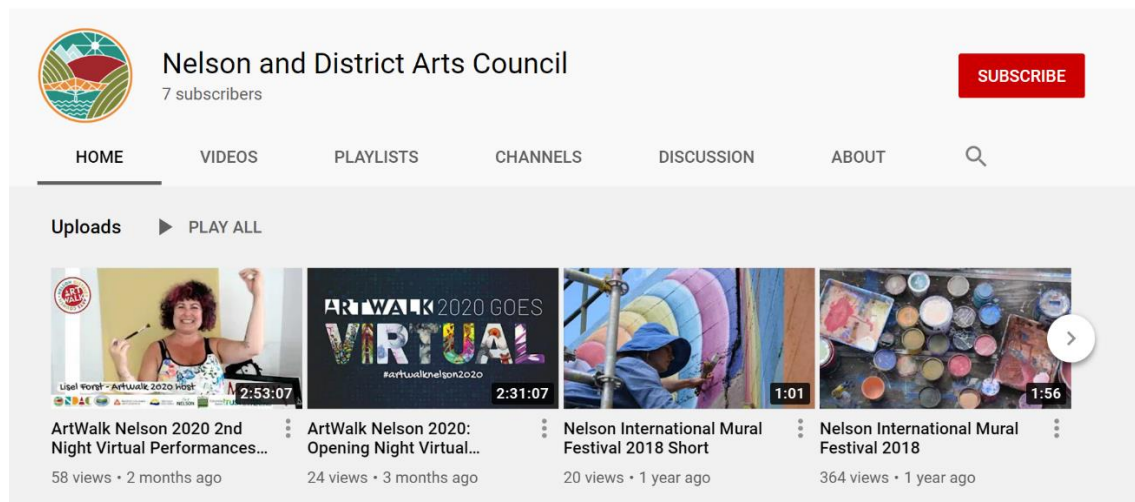
The [Facebook page](#) posts similar but not identical content, recognizing that each platform and audience is not exactly the same (Figure 14). The page has 1,944 followers and tends to share more detailed information on online events and links that the members may be interested in, as well as posts of some members' artworks. The engagement in terms of likes is much lower than Instagram, but interaction appears to be slightly more engaged when it does take place. Visual posts have a much higher response rate, which is typically the case with Facebook posts.

Figure 14: NDAC Facebook page and example post



NDAC's [YouTube channel](#) is not being actively used as a social channel to grow regular engagement or expand audiences, but it is used to share and save videos of the Arts Council's key festivals and events (Figure 15).

Figure 15: NDAC YouTube channel



7.1.2 Digital programming

NDAC has hosted a range of online events, including training for its members as well as live, remote versions of its signature events like ArtWalk Nelson.

Rural Artist Support Weekend

On September 27, 2020, the Nelson and District Arts Council (NDAC) provided local artists with a free virtual symposium – The Rural Artist Support Weekend – in partnership with The Civic Theatre. The event featuring presentations on career development, grant writing, marketing, and the rural arts scene. The aim was to assist artists of all disciplines in light of the challenges of COVID-19 by helping them to manage and grow the business aspect of their craft.

Four workshops were available free of charge via both Facebook live and Zoom on career development, grant writing, online content creation and the future of rural arts. [Example event](#).

Online Art Initiative: ‘Nelson Community Masterpiece’

NDAC also organized an online [Nelson Community Masterpiece](#) initiative to celebrate Nelson and its citizens. The topic for the community initiative was “empowered creative self-expression and acts of gratitude”.

The brief to participants was to create a work of art expressing what Nelson means to them and share a photo of the artwork with NDAC. Participants received a handmade thank you gift for participating and artworks were shared on some of NDAC’s social media channels.

Although this was a fantastic idea, levels of social media engagement were reduced because there was a [separate, new Facebook page](#) set up for the initiative. As the page is new, with limited community awareness of what it is about, it has under 100 followers compared to NDAC’s main page’s nearly 2,000 fans.

Live-streamed ArtWalk 2020

NDAC hosted a high quality, live-streamed version of its annual ArtWalk event online as the main event could not take place in person. The first live stream session achieved over 1,700 views via Facebook when it was live. It gained several hundred more views afterwards as the video remained accessible online via YouTube and Facebook.

The three-hour event had a dedicated host, and performances by local bands and artists. It meant that the artists could still performance live in a summer when almost all performance opportunities were cancelled.

Artists’ work was hosted on virtual venues on the social media pages of participating businesses, and NDAC also hosted a digital gallery of all artists’ work on its website. This year, 100% of the sales went directly to the artists, as another way the Arts Council is supporting the local arts community during the challenges of COVID-19.

7.2 Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA)

MAWA Mentoring Artists for Women's Art is a group in Winnipeg that presents visual arts education, theory and criticism from an intersectional feminist perspective. The artist-run centre is used to mentor artists, and was founded in 1984, to encourage and support the intellectual and creative development of women in the visual arts by providing an ongoing forum for education and critical dialogue. MAWA welcomes all cis and trans women and non-binary participants into all its programs.

MAWA’s mentorships range in duration from 2-12 months, sometimes focusing on a specific media or theme, and often culminate in an exhibition.

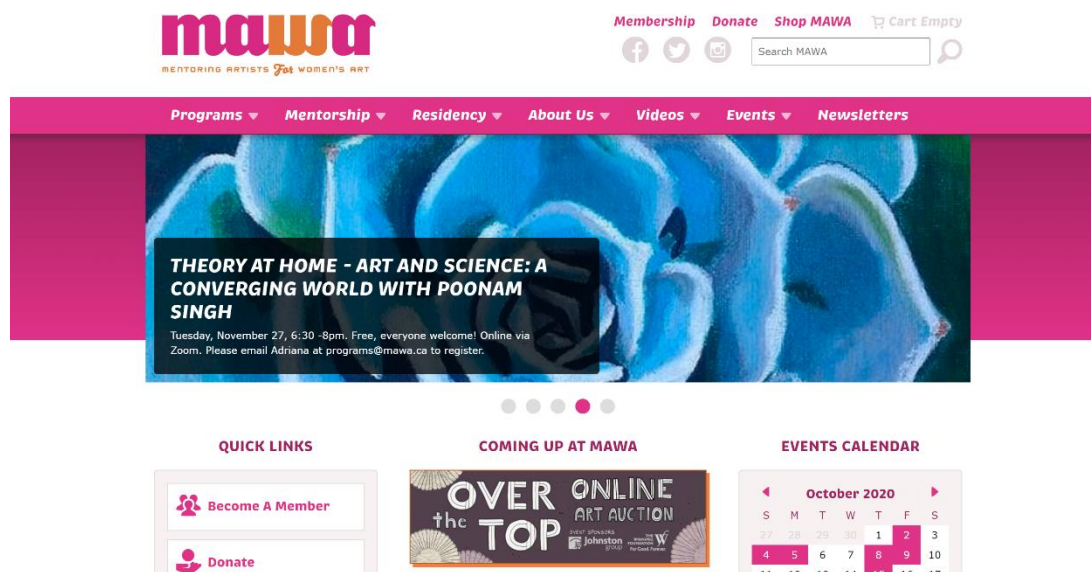
7.2.1 Digital Presence and Discoverability

Website

MAWA's website (<https://mawa.ca/>) has a bold and simple design with clear navigation and communication (Figure 16) and a good checkout process for visitors looking to sign up for membership.

While not every single aspect of the website represents best practice – for example, the formatting is misaligned in a couple of places – it is a good example of a simple, user-friendly website. It also works effectively and offers a good user experience on mobile.

Figure 16: MAWA website homepage



The [membership page](#) (Figure 17) clearly presents the different membership options and pricing. The UX isn't quite as clear as that of NDAC (described above) as users need to scroll down the page to learn more about what it includes, but it makes the main options and prices clear at a glance. Once the user has selected a membership option they are taken through to a well-designed payment page. This page is also housed within the same website at the same domain (i.e. mawa.ca/checkout) which represents best practice as the user is not redirected to a third party to complete the purchase. MAWA also has an [online shop](#) which has a similarly easy and professional checkout process.

Meanwhile, the 'donate' page, listed in the main website navigation at the top of the page, takes the user to another page which processes donations via the [Canada Helps](#) payment platform. Although it is not ideal to use more than one payment processing option on a website, it can be a practical response if necessary, to avoid costly all-in-one payment processing systems or CRMs. In this case, Canada Helps means that donors have the option of giving either a one-time gift or a monthly donation via credit card.

Figure 17: MAWA membership sign up pages

Membership

COMING UP AT MAWA



Over the Top Art Auction
July 3, 2020 – November 30, 2020, 12:00pm–9:00pm



Master Class in Contemporary Beading Practice with Katherine Boyer
October 4, 2020 – November 15, 2020



Cross Cultural Beading Group – Cancelled
November 2, 2020, 6:00pm–8:00pm



Critical Painting Perspectives – November
November 2, 2020, 9:00am–10:30pm



Through your membership fee, you contribute to the health and success of our organization. Membership supports the intellectual and creative development of visual artists from feminist perspectives.

Membership costs just \$30 for regular membership, and \$15 for students or the underemployed.

1 Year MAWA Membership	\$30.00	Join
1 Year MAWA Membership (Student/Underemployed)	\$15.00	Join
2 Year MAWA Membership	\$60.00	Join
5 Year MAWA Membership	\$150.00	Join

Checkout

COMING UP AT MAWA



Over the Top Art Auction
July 3, 2020 – November 30, 2020, 12:00pm–9:00pm



Master Class in Contemporary Beading Practice with Katherine Boyer
October 4, 2020 – November 15, 2020



Cross Cultural Beading Group – Cancelled
November 2, 2020, 6:00pm–8:00pm



Critical Painting Perspectives – November
November 2, 2020, 9:00am–10:30pm

ORDER CONTENTS [Edit](#)

1 Year MAWA Membership	\$30.00
Quantity: 1	

Total: \$30.00

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

I would like to add a donation in the amount of:

\$10
\$20
\$50
\$100
No donation

I would like to volunteer for MAWA:

☐ Yes ☒ No

I would like to receive my MAWA newsletter by email to save on paper:

☒ Yes ☐ No

I would like to receive email notices of MAWA programs:

☒ Yes ☐ No

Please use this email address to communicate with me about my membership *

NOTE: If you are buying a MAWA membership for someone other than yourself, please enter their particulars in the Shipping Address section below.

SEO

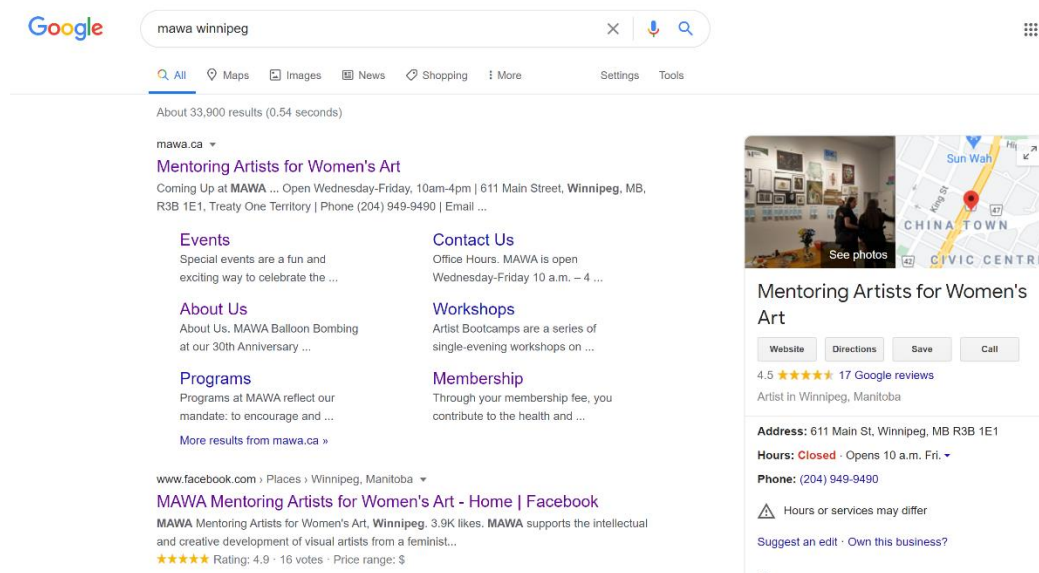
Individual website pages are named descriptively, as per best practice. The website achieves just over 500 visitors per month.⁴⁰ The images are not named descriptively, which is a simple tweak that could improve the website's ranking in Google by appearing in Images. MAWA also does not appear to be

⁴⁰ According to analysis using SEM Rush <https://www.semrush.com/>

writing meta descriptions for webpages, which could also help optimize the website for search engines.

When searching specifically for MAWA via Google, the organization's description, opening hours and location appear on the right-hand of the page (Figure 18), which represents best practice. This extra listing appears because MAWA has listed its physical location on Google Maps and provided opening information and contact details. The organization also has 17 positive reviews from Google users, which builds trust and encourages more visitors to engage with the website.

Figure 18: MAWA's appearance on Google



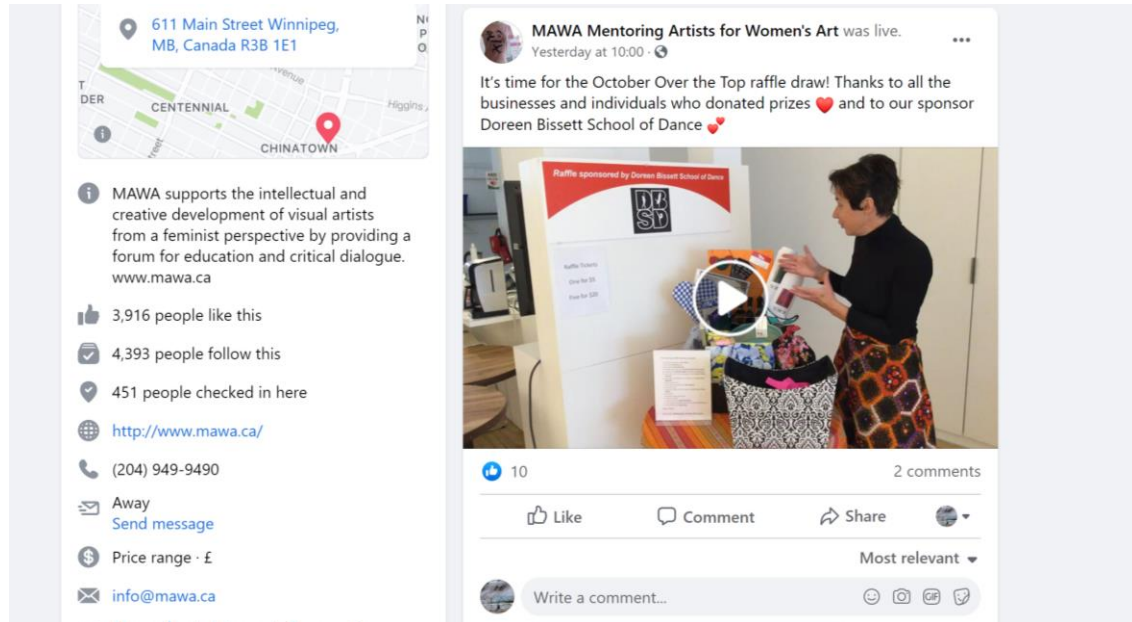
Social Media

MAWA is active on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. As with NDAC, the content it shares is not identical across platforms but slightly tailored to each.

The organization's [Facebook page](#) (Figure 19) has 4,393 followers. The organization regularly shares content of relevance and interest to its members, including promoting its events to showcasing individual artists and exhibitions, as well as useful articles and support. The organization also uses Facebook Live to host events like Q&A sessions, which have good engagement. Videos of the events remain accessible on Facebook afterwards, so audiences can watch later.

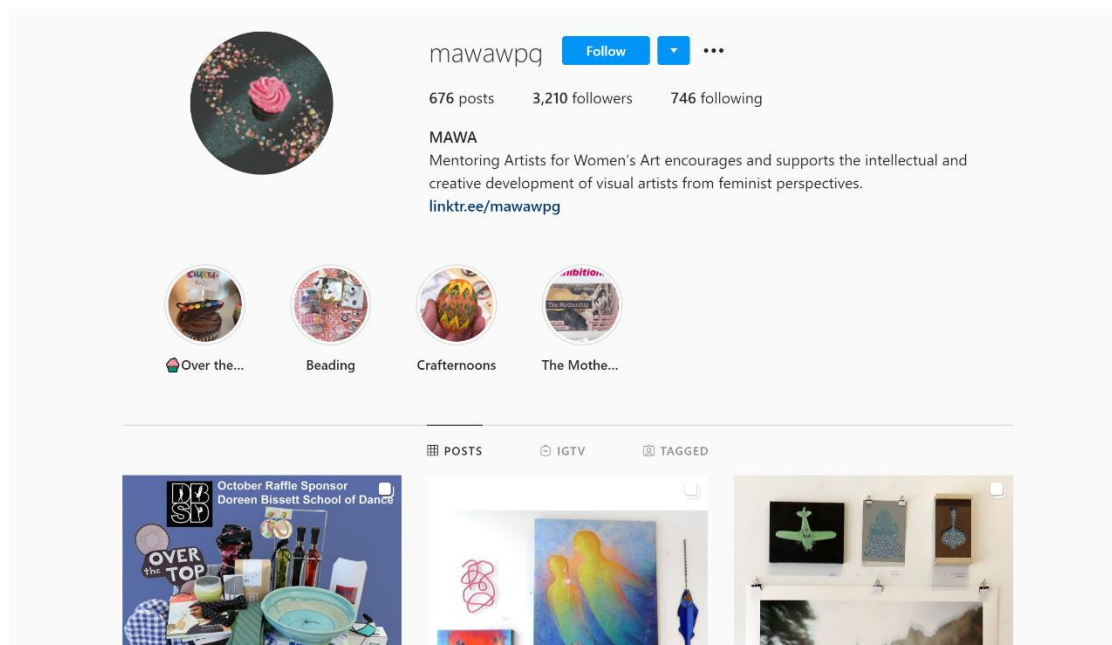
Meanwhile, MAWA's Twitter account [@mawa_wpg](#) has 1,755 followers and shares a range of similar content, as well as retweeting other content of interest to its followers.

Figure 19: MAWA's Facebook page



MAWA's Instagram account [@mawawpq](https://www.instagram.com/mawawpq) (Figure 20) also has a respectable number of followers for a small organization (over 3,000). Posts have reasonably good engagement with over 100 likes for visually strong images, or photos of individual people.

Figure 20: MAWA's Instagram account





7.2.2 Digital Programming


Online videos and tutorials

Rather than simply housing videos of previous events on YouTube and other platforms, MAWA hosts past events such as a series of lectures, professional advice guides and craft tutorials on a [dedicated page](#) on its website. The dedicated webpage makes the most of existing content by opening it up to as wide an audience as possible, while underscoring that they are part of dedicated series of events.

Figure 21: MAWA's Videos Page


Videos

Videos
Craft Tutorials
Lectures
Professional Advice
Who Counts? A Feminist Art Symposium




LECTURES

Missed a Wendy Wersch Memorial Lecture or First Friday talk? Check here for a video recording!



First Friday Artist Talk by Katherine Boyer

Katherine Boyer delivered a First Friday artist talk October 2, 2020.



First Friday - Feminist Theory and Hollywood Practice by Alison Gillmor

First Friday Lecture - *Feminist Theory and Hollywood Practice* by Alison Gillmor. September 4 2020.

Professional Development Bootcamps via Zoom

During COVID-19, MAWA has been offering free live events and workshops online including artist bootcamps on Zoom. Bootcamps include business-focused topics such as [writing about your art](#) and other topics that are relevant to their membership.

Online Auction

Each year, MAWA hosts an [Over the Top fundraising art auction](#). As it could not take place as usual this year, the group organized a blended online/offline auction instead that combines an online bidding platform with in-person (socially distanced) viewing and bidding.

7.3 Big Medium Gallery, Texas

Big Medium is a nonprofit dedicated to promoting contemporary art in Texas. The organization is dedicated to supporting artists and building community through the arts by providing opportunities for artists to create, exhibit, and discuss their work and connect to an engaged and diverse audience.

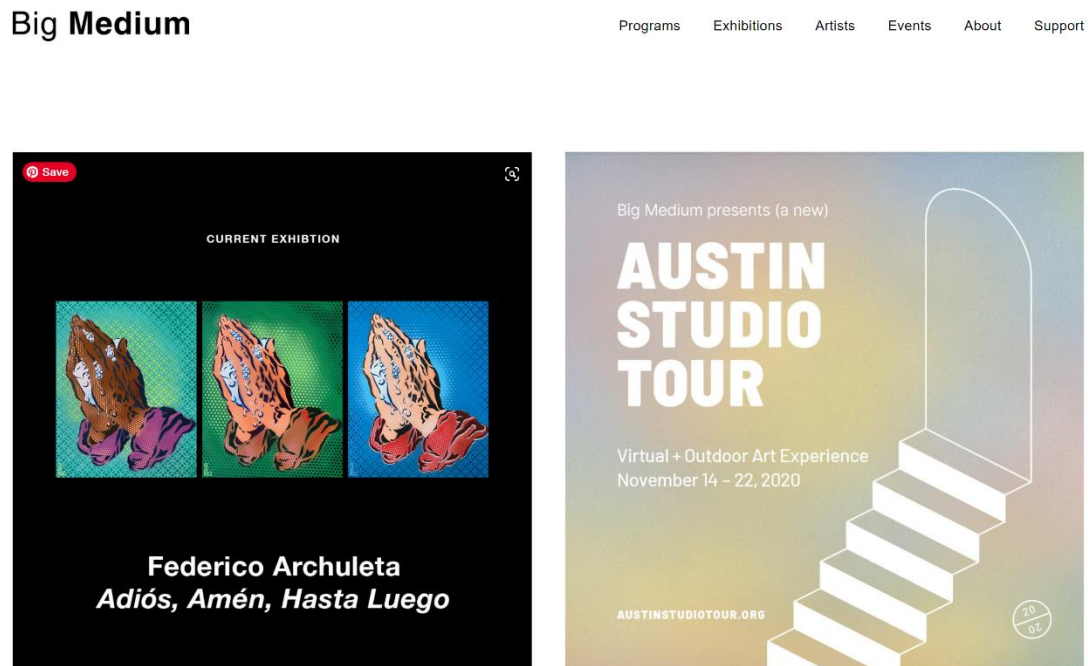
True to its name, the gallery is medium-sized, and its mission is to make art a part of everyday life. Big Medium produces several events, including the East and West Austin Studio Tours — annual city-wide art events that offer the public an opportunity to meet local artists in their creative spaces; the Texas Biennial — a curated statewide survey exhibition of contemporary art in Texas; Creative Standard — professional development workshops and resources supporting artists at any stage of their career.

7.3.1 Digital Presence and Discoverability

Website

The website (www.bigmedium.org) has a slick and minimal design which is almost like a gallery in itself. The homepage features square, Instagram-style banners promoting its latest events and exhibitions (Figure 22). At the bottom of the homepage there is a direct call to action to sign up to membership, simply stating "Big Medium relies on support from members to ensure our future."

Figure 22: Big Medium's website homepage



The [Membership page](#) (emotively called “Support” in the primary navigation) clearly introduces the range of prices for membership, from an accessible \$4.17 a month or \$50 for the year (Figure 23). The different membership options are clearly laid out as a list with thumbnail images and a brief description of what each includes. NDAC’s membership options design is perhaps clearer still, but the page is still quite simple and effective. Selecting a membership page takes the user through to a clear payment process, hosted on the same website (Figure 24).

Figure 23: Big Medium gallery's membership webpage

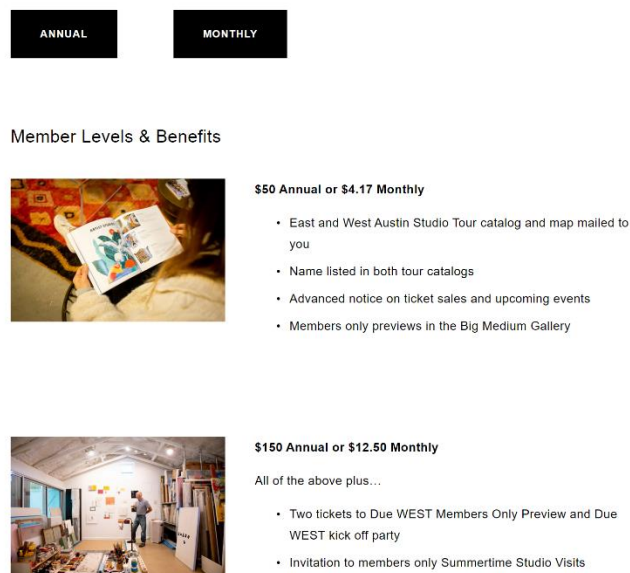


Figure 24: Big Medium's payment process

Big Medium Programs Exhibitions Artists Events About Support

Big Medium Annual Membership

Name *

First Last

Email *

Phone Number

- -

- ### -

How would you like your name(s) to appear on our website and other materials? *

Mailing Address *

Street Address

Address Line 2

City State / Province / Region

Postal / Zip Code Country

Rather than having a standard blog, Big Medium has an [Artist Features page](#) (Figure 25) which features a different artist each Tuesday. Artists can apply directly to be featured on the page. The [Events page](#), meanwhile, lists a wide range of activities and events hosted by the gallery (most of which are currently online only).

The [Artists Registry](#) is an online shop for artists exhibited at the gallery, hosted via a white-labelled third party platform. While ideally the shop would be hosted on the same domain (web address) as the main website, this may have involved too large an investment on behalf of the gallery to achieve the functionality it was looking for.

Figure 25: Big Medium's Artist Features webpage

Artist Features

Discover new artists weekly every Tuesday.

To be considered for future Artist Features, apply [here](#).



Erin Curtis

October 30, 2020



Carter Watkins

October 19, 2020



Cheyenne Weaver

October 13, 2020

SEO

Big Medium performs well when it comes to SEO as well, with around 4,000 visits to its website per month, which are all from organic (rather than paid) search. Part of the reason is because nearly 20,000 other websites online have published links to the gallery's website.⁴¹ In terms of on-page SEO, Big Medium's webpages are named descriptively but images are not, which could be a further opportunity.

Social Media

Big Medium's Instagram account [@bigmediumaustin](https://www.instagram.com/bigmediumaustin/) has a large following of 21.2k followers (Figure 26). The account showcases a range of content, from saved Stories highlights on different features and exhibitions to studio tours. Their posts combine a range of videos and photos, with videos gaining around 400-500 views and photos around 100-500 likes.

Figure 26: Big Medium's Instagram page and example post



⁴¹ SEO analysis accessed via Semrush <https://www.semrush.com/>



The gallery is also active on [Facebook](#), with over 15,000 followers, and also on Twitter [@BigMedium](#), with over 3,000 followers. As with the other case studies presented in this report, the presentation of posts and content is adjusted slightly for each platform and audience.

7.3.2 Digital Programming

Events programming beyond exhibitions only is a significant part of Big Medium's activities. The gallery has responded well to the challenges of COVID-19, hosting a wide range of online and blended online/offline events.

Austin Studio Tours

As the usual annual Austin Studio Tours could not take place, Big Medium is participating in and actively promoting [a blended virtual and outdoor version](#) of the event. The 'Art Experience' Virtual Studio Tours, Exhibitions, and Artist Talks, alongside installations of Outdoor Art throughout the City. Some Participants will present Artworks outdoors in front of Galleries, Studios, Homes, or in Garages, but Artists will not interact in person with self-guided Tour-goers this year.

Artist Relief Fund

While technically an initiative rather than an event, Big Medium organized for an [Artist Relief Fund](#) to provide financial grants to those who are struggling. As there was such an overwhelming response in terms of applicants, the gallery found partners who would match donations from members and the general public.

Other [recent online events](#) have included a free virtual legal clinic for artists, and training events held on Zoom such as How to Create a Compelling Virtual Studio Visit, as well as various 'Coffee Chats' to feature and promote individual artists.

8. Appendix 2 - Glossary

Algorithm – a process or set of rules followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations, especially by a computer. A search engine is an algorithm that takes a search query and searches its database for items relevant to the words in the query. Algorithms are used throughout all areas of IT and computing. They can manipulate and process data and perform actions in various ways, for example to personalize internet search results based upon an individual user's interests.

Analytics – data analytics is the science of analyzing raw data in order to make conclusions about that information. Analytics are used to find patterns or meaning in raw data.

Backlinks – also known as “inbound links”, backlinks are links from one website to a webpage on another website. Backlinks are one factor in SEO (see below).

Big Data – extremely large data sets that may be analyzed computationally to reveal patterns, trends, and associations, especially relating to human behaviour and interactions.

Business Intelligence (BI) tools – software that enables organizations to understand “Big Data” (large datasets) in an easily digestible way. They pull together data from different platforms into one place so that analytics from different platforms can be reviewed in one place, including website interactions and sales, and email and social media analytics

Cloud software – cloud-based software/platforms are computer system resources that are available on demand without the user having to actively download or manage it. A typical example is cloud-based data storage.

Content marketing – a type of marketing that involves the creation and sharing of online material (such as videos, blogs, and social media posts) that does not explicitly promote a brand but is intended to stimulate interest in its products or services.

CRMs (Customer Relationship Management systems) – digital software or systems that manage an organization's contacts, including current and potential customers. CRMs record an organization's interactions with customers and other contacts, aiming to improve relationships. CRMs today often combine customer data management with other functions such as ticket sales, HR and volunteer management, and sending email campaigns.

Digital Discoverability – “discoverable” digital content means the ability to be found in digital contexts, and especially by individuals who may not have been specifically looking for the content.

Digital platform – the term “digital platform” is used in different ways, but usually means a digital product that serves/enables other products or services. For example, YouTube is a social media digital platform where users can share videos. Whereas digital tools do one thing (or a few select things), a digital platform does many.

Digital tools – digital programs, websites or online resources that can make tasks easier to complete.

Domain – a domain is the address where Internet users can access a website. The domain is the name of the website itself, whereas URLs lead to different pages within the website.

Ecommerce – business model that lets firms and individuals buy and sell things over the internet. The user-facing aspect of ecommerce is a business' online store.

Encryption – the process of converting information or data into a code, especially to prevent unauthorized access.

Experience Mapping - a User Experience (UX) technique that helps organizations identify all the potential touchpoints for engaging audiences, sometimes referred to as the “customer journey”.

Footfall – the number of people entering a store or shopping area in a given time.

Hashtags (#) – words that are added to the end of social media posts with a # in front, which enables digital systems to find the post when somebody searches for that term/word on the platform, e.g. #Digital

Integration – when digital systems or accounts “talk” to each other and automatically update each other.

Keywords – a keyword is a term used in digital marketing to describe a word or a group of words an Internet user uses to perform a search in a search engine or search bar. In an SEO strategy, keywords are very important and should be included in copy written for the web (e.g. present in the content, titles and SEO elements). For example, "art" is a keyword. However, people commonly Google "longtail" keywords which are longer phrases (e.g. "modern art gallery vancouver island" is longtail).

KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) – a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively an organization or an initiative is achieving key business objectives. In a digital context, KPIs could include the number of visitors to a website, online sales, or the number of digital impressions/interactions achieved by a post on social media.

Livestreaming / to livestream – broadcasting (or streaming) digital content online live, filming and sharing it simultaneously in real time.

Longtail search terms – these are three or four keyword phrases that internet users use to perform a search in a search engine or search bar. Longtail search terms are very specific, and not search for online as often as common keywords (such as "art").

Meta descriptions – meta descriptions are short text descriptions of different webpages and digital content that tell search engines what the page is about. These short snippets appear below URLs that appear on Google search pages there are sentences that describe that the webpage is about. These are meta descriptions.

Navigation – digital navigation is how a user uses a website, app or other digital service or product. Good navigation design (see UX, User Experience) makes it easy for a user to find what they need.

Optimization - digital optimization is the process of using digital technology to improve existing operating processes (e.g. websites, ecommerce stores) and business models. Also see UX (User Experience).

PII (Personally Identifiable Information) – PII is any data that could potentially be used to identify a specific person. Examples include a full name, email address, Social Security number, driver's license number, bank account number or passport number.

Search advertising – a method of placing online advertisements on web pages that show results from search engine queries.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) – SEO is the process of managing online content in a way that makes it easy for search engines like Google to find and promote to users, for example by using keywords in text content (see Keywords).

Segmentation – data segmentation is the process of taking the data you hold and dividing it up and grouping similar data together based on the chosen parameters so that you can use it more efficiently within marketing and operations. For example, in the context of email marketing, a mailing list could be segmented into new customers/prospective customers, or those who opened the previous campaign/those who did not.

Social ads – a method of placing online advertisements on social media platforms.

Stream/streamed – see Livestreaming.

TikTok – a Chinese video-sharing social network that is also popular worldwide. Users share short videos between 3 to 60 seconds in length. Videos are usually set to music. It is especially popular with teenagers.

To integrate (digitally) – refers to digital systems or accounts “talking” to each other and automatically updating each other’s data.

URL (Uniform Resource Locator) – a URL is the address of a webpage.

UX (User Experience) – User experience (UX) design is the process design teams use to create products that provide meaningful and relevant experiences to users. This involves the design of the entire process of acquiring and integrating the product, including aspects of branding, design, usability and function.

UI (User Interface) – a user interface is whatever aspect of a product that a user interacts with. For example, for a website, it means the series of screens, pages, and visual elements—like buttons and icons—that enable a person to interact with a product or service.

User personas – “user personas” are written and/or visual descriptions of fictional but realistic individuals who are the target audience for an organization. Developing user personas to represent customers or clients helps inform the creation of content, services and marketing choices, so that the intended audience is kept in mind.