

DIGITAL STRATEGY 2020–2022 Further development

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1. Objectives

The MK&G drafted its first digital strategy in the summer of 2017 with the aim of finding answers to the question of how museums can remain relevant in the digital age while meeting society's changing expectations. The strategy would offer a framework for the digital evolution of the MK&G, with a focus on satisfying user needs.

The next step was then to devise an organisational structure for integrating the digital strategy. This document sets out to do just that, by defining action areas and the associated responsibilities.

In order to make optimal use of the strategy as a planning and control instrument, a catalogue of criteria is needed that can serve as a basis for decisions on specific measures. In addition, concrete implementation criteria can help to make progress more visible. It should be noted here that – based on a continuously evolving and dynamic institutional self-image with regard to the museum's mission and vision – the principles and objectives of the digital strategy must likewise be regularly updated.

Digital in this context means internalising and applying the culture, processes, business models and technologies of the internet era in order to respond to increased (visitor) expectations.¹ In the process, we must continually question and critically reflect on this strategy with regard to all of our content, offerings, experiences, data, systems and technologies in light of our educational mission.

To update our digital strategy, we applied tools for measuring digital maturity,² evaluated questionnaires and conversations with colleagues, and examined the preliminary results from processes geared toward developing an overall vision for the MK&G and for audience development. An interdepartmental working group determined various action areas. The outcome was then evaluated with the help of external experts.

The digital strategy will continue to be refined and adapted based on new findings and requirements.

¹ Definition by Tom Loosemore, partner at Public Digital, the agency that designed the Digital Service for the British government. Cf. Culture 24, A digital transformation agenda, and GLAMs, 2020:

https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Publications/Digital%20transformation%20reports/The%20digital%20transformation%20agenda%20and%20GLAMs%20-%20Culture24%20findings%20and%20outcomes.pdf.

² For example the assessment tool "Digital Culture Compass", cf. <https://digitalculturecompass.org.uk/>.

2. Analysis of current situation

Since the first digital strategy was proposed in 2017, the MK&G has been able to continually advance its digital practice.

MANAGEMENT

Additional positions were created for the digital strategy and management of digital projects, for digital communications, and for IT and system administration, albeit some of them on a temporary basis. There is still an urgent need to establish the area of digitisation and cataloguing of holdings as a permanent task.³

The work on implementing further, overarching digital measures takes the form of a so-called “hub and spoke” team model, with a central hub and several satellites distributed throughout the museum.⁴ Central coordination is the responsibility of the Head of Digital Strategy, involving simultaneous distribution and networking of digital activities among departments or areas across the museum. This approach promotes joint further refinement of the digital strategy and also defines responsibilities by introducing action areas (see below). Involved here are above all cross-museum support functions (digital inventory, marketing, education and outreach, digital communication and digital strategy), which act as digital ambassadors and encourage their teams and other departments to (further) develop museum-wide standards and policies. Depending on the task, colleagues from other departments or external partners are also called in.

DIGITAL OFFERINGS AND PROJECTS

The museum’s digital offerings have continuously expanded and improved. The web journal “Bewegte Jahre” (Moving Years) even won the Grimme Online Award. Also opening up new vistas is the project “Mach was draus” (Make something out of it), which encourages digital visitors to get active and craft their own creative DIY works online with the help of the MK&G Collection Online. Another major theme still to be addressed is the visibility of our digital offerings. Although that visibility was enhanced when museums had to close due to the pandemic, it is crucial to provide content not only on the museum’s own platforms but wherever it can best reach users. The most successful digital offering in terms of reach was the provision of images and metadata on selected musical instruments on Wikipedia with the help of the community. Millions of users were able to learn more about objects from the MK&G collections, with the accompanying information translated into several languages (including Russian, Norwegian and Japanese). In cooperation with Potsdam University of Applied Sciences, the project “Close up Cloud” examined the potential of exploratory and experimental visualisations as a way of researching digital collections.⁵

The accessibility of digital offerings, and in particular of the collection, is the subject of the four-year international project “NEO Collections”, which is funded by the German Federal Cultural

³ The Ministry of Culture and Media Hamburg likewise gives priority to this task in its digital strategy.

⁴ Kati Price, Dafydd James: <https://mw18.mwconf.org/paper/structuring-for-digital-success-a-global-survey-of-how-museums-and-other-cultural-organisations-resource-fund-and-structure-their-digital-teams-and-activity/>.

⁵ <https://uclab.fh-potsdam.de/closeupcloud/#/>.

Foundation.⁶ The project sets out to test new ways of working with collections – whether online or on-site – based on the principles of open access and participation. With a focus on people, digital products or prototypes are developed that enrich the collections with knowledge, questions and fresh perspectives. New workflows are also to be established for the longer term, ranging from object documentation to visitor engagement.

Increased visitor engagement has been seen, particularly on the museum's social media channels. Of particular note is the Peter Lindbergh exhibition, which appealed to an Instagram-savvy audience. A Twitter account has also been set up for further networking, especially with an international professional community.

For the first time, exhibition documentation has been published digitally, documenting not only the academic approaches taken with regard to the exhibition but also exchanges in digital space. Thanks to open licensing, the exhibition documentation for "Among Friends: Japanese Tea Ceramics" could be made available for free download and reuse, reaching a worldwide audience.⁷

Prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, an MKG online ticket shop was successfully launched at short notice in the summer of 2020. It provides the ideal basis for further developing the ticket service, for example with regard to group bookings in cooperation with the Museumsdienst Hamburg.

VISITORS AND NEW TARGET GROUPS

The process of devising an Audience Development Strategy has been pursued further. For this purpose, the museum evaluated previous data surveys (analogue and digital) in collaboration with external experts, resulting in an Audience Development Review. Based on analysis of the data from digital offerings, various visitor segments and visit types were identified. In order to further refine the strategy in a meaningful way, it is necessary to collaborate across the museum to ensure a seamless transition between digital and analogue space.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND COLLABORATION

The COVID-19 crisis has forced us to make access to accounts and data location-independent and to test new collaboration tools and forms in internal and external projects. Another major step in the direction of networked systems and workflows is the introduction of a central Digital Asset Management System (DAMS). This system also plays a role in the planned website relaunch while furthermore integrating image data and information from the collection management system. Varying levels of competence and in some cases a lack of practical application of digital tools can however prove to be obstacles to collaboration.

⁶ NEO stands for user-centred, explorative and open and is being implemented in collaboration with the Übersee Museum in Bremen and the National Museum in Sweden.

⁷ <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3991828>.

3. Vision for 2020–2022: Digitalisation as a 360-degree task

The founding mission of the MK&G was to collect and showcase outstanding creative achievements. The vision was not only to spread knowledge with regard to good design but also to serve as a direct source of inspiration. As described in the strategy for 2017–2019, the MK&G still sees its goal today as arousing curiosity about the collections, facilitating inspiring discoveries, and fostering creativity, innovative ideas and knowledge through an all-encompassing open-access policy.

With our strategy for 2020–2022, we would like to go even further. We want to stimulate critical engagement with and discourse on the collection as a way of gaining a new outlook on how to shape both our present and future.

This involves both focusing on diverse target groups and their needs as well as incorporating additional, outside perspectives and voices into the museum.

At the same time, it is important to think of digitalisation as an overall project, including in internal museum matters, and thus to take a 360-degree view. With this in mind, the strategy should help us to answer the following questions: How do we ensure that everyone internalises the principles of our digital strategy, that they understand it and can identify how the strategy can be helpful for their area? How do we change working habits so that people can take on new and additional tasks? How do we keep everyone informed, so that they can make better decisions? How do we respond quickly and efficiently to crises and changes? We are guided in our endeavours by the following digital principles and digital priorities.

DIGITAL PRINCIPLES

People-centred, on equal terms

We want to learn more about our visitors so that we can tailor our content and activities to specific target groups and reach out to new visitors. Above all, however, we want to focus on meeting the expectations of a broad spectrum of the public, both internally and externally.

Collaborative

If we are to rapidly enhance our digital offerings, we need co-creative formats that give equal weight to sharing content in both analogue and digital areas.

Open and FAIR

In addition to an open-access policy, we also strive to utilise open systems, interfaces and software as well as sustainable networking of content and data. We take our cue here from the FAIR data principles.⁸

Sustainable and accessible to all

When developing new digital offerings, we ensure that they are compatible in terms of content and infrastructure (including with existing offerings) and continue to develop them further. This enables us to ensure digital accessibility.

⁸ FAIR stands for findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable; cf. <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>.

Respect for the object and its context

We aspire to live up to our reputation of being a trustworthy and conscientious source and we thus respect the object and its context when publishing content.

Measurable targets and error culture

We establish measurable (qualitative and quantitative) targets, but we also have the courage to experiment and do not shy away from self-criticism. When we fail, we see it as an opportunity and a valuable experience that helps us to learn and progress.

The digital visit as a goal of equal standing

Our overriding aim is to make the collection accessible and tangible, whether in physical or digital space. Physical and digital visitors are of equal value to us.

Digital by default

We not only think digitally in all areas of museum practice, we also see ourselves as a hybrid setting that exists in both physical and digital space.

DIGITAL PRIORITIES FOR 2020–2022

We want to reach out to and connect more people with our content – on our website and digital channels but also in other settings in the digital space and with access options specific to type of use. To this end, we are developing an overall Audience Development Strategy.

We want to empower people to make themselves heard and to get involved. To this end, we are developing programmes, tools and processes that promote participation and make room for diverse perspectives, including external ones. We are pursuing the same goal for how we work together internally.

We want to make use of experimentation, prototyping and user tests as a foundation for effectively developing and implementing new digital museum experiences.

Through our digital offerings we want to raise awareness for the diversity of the collection and help people to comprehend it as a cohesive whole.

We want to learn how to supply and use data wisely in order to make better decisions and continuously improve products and offerings.

We want to support each other in acquiring a digital mindset so that all museum colleagues are able to recognise what digitalisation can mean for their own area and to tap the existing potential there.

4. Action areas, responsibilities and objectives within the scope of the Digital Strategy 2020–2022

In the action areas, the respective challenges are explained in terms of overarching strategic goals and initial measures, and criteria for success are then assigned accordingly. The measures are implemented by interdepartmental teams, calling in external partners as needed. All action areas apply to every collection and department and relate to overriding dimensions of activity: digital organisation, digital content, and the experience in digital space. Although further areas exist within digital museum practice, they go beyond the scope of this strategy.

In the individual action areas, annual sub-targets were defined by a cross-departmental and cross-divisional working group, and concrete measures for achieving them were subsequently formulated. These are refined and adapted on a quarterly basis, with responsibility taken for their implementation in each action area. The measures must be integrated into the annual overall planning for the MK&G and defined in a roadmap, including the human resources required. The objectives may need to be adjusted depending on the overall vision for the MK&G, which has yet to be formulated, the Audience Development Strategy, and the still outstanding integration into the overall annual planning, which regulates the distribution of human resources.

ACTION AREA 1: DIGITISATION AND CATALOGUING

Responsible: Digital Strategy and Digital Cataloguing

Challenges and objectives

The digitisation of the collections and the related information and sources is all about finding a balance between quality and quantity. More objects need to be digitised and catalogued, while still maintaining standards for (meta-) data quality and object digitisation. In addition, new approaches to planning the digitisation of objects must be considered due to the upcoming copyright reform, and knowledge and sources from all areas of the museum must be made accessible, network-ready and reusable.

Measures

- Draft a digitisation strategy (planning as well as standards, incl. audit of metadata quality).
- Train colleagues on object digitisation and designate responsible persons within the collections.
- Record objects in the context of exhibition preparations, depot relocation.
- Introduce DAMS and test new workflows.
- Innovative and object-oriented digitisation in a 3D project
- Determine how to make use of artificial intelligence.
- Supply/link to already existing sources.
- Continue partnerships and crowdsourcing (Scan the World, community, universities).
- Evaluate needs with regard to third-party funding applications for finding aids, archives, library and their networking.

Success criteria

- Increased number of digitally accessible objects and sources as well as data quality
- A digitisation strategy has been adopted and implemented, and the workflow has been adapted where necessary.
- Digitisation, cataloguing and enrichment of the collection are anchored as goals in other core processes such as exhibition preparation, depot relocation, etc.
- Recommendations have been made for the digitisation of 3D objects with regard to different use cases.

ACTION AREA 2: NETWORKING AND REUSE OF THE DIGITAL COLLECTION

Responsible: Digital Strategy

Challenges and objectives

In addition to extending the successful open-access policy to all areas of the museum, the aim is to simplify access to the digital collection and implement tools for collaboration, annotation and participation, thereby promoting networking and reuse. Different user needs have to be taken into account, on the one hand with regard to knowledge sharing with internal and external resources, and on the other in terms of co-creation on the basis of collection objects.

Measures

- Expand the open-access policy.
- Introduce Digital Rights Management in DAMS.
- Integrate MK&G Collection Online into the website.
- Map links to other sources on the website.
- Look into where it would make sense to further develop MK&G Studio projects (cf. Action Area 3).
- Further develop the MK&G Collection Online.
- Implement and link to crowdsourcing initiatives (Wikipedia, Wikidata).
- Transfer data to the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek (German Digital Library) and Europeana.
- Make machine-readable data available on GitHub and via open interfaces.
- Expand digital publishing.
- Partner with multipliers such as Creative Commons.
- Expand cooperation with Hamburg Open Science.

Success criteria

- The open-access policy has been expanded and implemented and all contracts have been adapted with this in mind.
- More colleagues have been trained in handling rights information.
- More objects are available for reuse.
- Increased engagement on MK&G Collection Online and external platforms

ACTION AREA 3: DIGITAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Responsible: Museum Education

Challenges and objectives

Especially in these pandemic times, the relevance of the museum as an extracurricular locus of learning has become more apparent, but it should also be a place that lends a sense of identity and invites people to participate and create. This invitation extends beyond digitally enhanced on-site museum visits to include offerings that take place exclusively in digital space. The aim is to offer visitors a seamless transition between analogue and digital experiences.

Measures

- Evaluate existing offerings for potential for further development.
- Collaborate with Action Area 2 to optimise the digital collection with respect to educational needs and to link existing creative offerings with the digital collection.
- Draft a customer/user journey map (with Action Areas 2, 4 and 5).
- Cooperate with external partners and platforms (e.g. Code Week, Europeana, education server).
- Offer bookable digital tours.
- Develop digital/hybrid workshops.

Success criteria

- Quality standards for digital products have been developed.
- More teachers are taking advantage of the available offerings.
- More external art educators are integrating MK&G digital offerings into their events.

ACTION AREA 4: DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY

Responsible: Digital Communication

Challenges and objectives

The goal is to increasingly focus attention on the collection and its stories and to implement storytelling across collections and resources as a way to promote diversity and polyphony.

Measures

- Implement “Feature” in connection with content from the MK&G Collection Online on the website.
- Test takeover models and create community guidelines for this purpose.
- Host social events.
- Distribute content to different channels and target groups.
- Train colleagues in the use of social media.
- Evaluate current trends and new channels and their use.
- New format “Themes in the Collection”

Success criteria

- Increased engagement
- Dashboard provided to colleagues with relevant data

- Evaluation of community/social events and takeovers
- Content strategy adopted

ACTION AREA 5: DIGITAL MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICES

Responsible: Marketing

Challenges and objectives

The goal in this area is to optimise the so-called customer/user journey, especially with regard to planning a visit, and to adapt it to the varied needs of (digital) visitors. At the same time, digital offerings should also be advertised and made visible on equal terms with offerings in the physical space. Continuous evaluation of offerings should serve to increase not only the reach but also the relevance of the MK&G as a global digital brand.

Measures

- Introduce a CRM system and expand email marketing.
- Further develop online ticketing.
- Website relaunch
- Look into how the wayfinding system can be digitally extended.
- Establish visitor services for greater accessibility.
- Continuous measurement and evaluation of key usage indicators
- Use marketing budgets for digital products as well.
- Draft CI manual for digital products and communication.

Success criteria

- More and new visitors take advantage of our offerings.
- More visitors use the online ticket service.
- Digital offerings are easier to find on the website.
- Better ratings on external platforms
- Standards for accessible visitor services have been implemented.
- Adjustments according to the evaluation of utilisation figures

ACTION AREA 6: CULTURAL CHANGE AND DIGITAL MINDSET

Responsible: Digital Strategy and Project Coordination NEO Collections

Challenges and objectives

This action area entails trying out new ways of working and new tools in order to gain fresh insights and solve problems better. Another goal is to learn more about pioneering digital projects. The main thing, though, it is to make sure we are on the right track and to internalise a digital mindset. This includes primarily openness (as well as open access), participation and networking (cf. Action Area 2), which are made possible by digital technologies and influence our work both internally and externally.

Measures

- Document and share examples of good practice.
- Offer digital consultation hour for colleagues.
- Obtain regular input from external experts.
- Try out new tools and methods as part of the NEO Collections project.
- Support colleagues in the assessment and planning of digital projects.
- Develop impact assessment for digital measures.

Success criteria

- More colleagues have internalised the goals of the digital strategy.
- Colleagues rate their digital competence more positively.
- Digital applications and methods are part of the planning for all projects.
- The Board of Management includes digital competence as a goal of advanced training measures.

5. Criteria for evaluating digital projects, products and programmes

All projects, products and programmes within the scope of the digital strategy are to be examined and evaluated on the basis of this catalogue of criteria, so that a decision for or against implementation and prioritisation can be made.

OBJECTIVE

- Definition of the goal (with reference to the priorities of the digital strategy)
- Which target group is to be addressed by the measure?
- Possible alternatives for achieving the goal
- Success criteria with regard to the target group and the achievement of the goal

PROJECT FRAMEWORK AND TASKS

- Responsible person and team, roles and tasks in the team and organisational structure
- Proposed time frame, human resources required (hours per week), projected costs and funding
- What is the level of complexity of the project?
- How is the goal to be achieved? (workflow)
- Which cooperation partners could be of assistance? Where might synergy effects arise?
What kind of expertise should be called in?
- What is the long-term outlook and future support structure?

DOCUMENTING AND SAFEGUARDING OF KNOWLEDGE

- What must the required project documentation contain?
- Are there outcomes that should be documented in collection management?
- How should the knowledge obtained in the project be stored?
- How do we ensure an exchange of experiences with colleagues and, if necessary, transferability (e.g., a channel through which we can report on the measure)?

RIGHTS AND PROVISIONS

- What rights need to be obtained or clarified?
- Are there data protection and data security aspects that need to be regulated and documented?
- Which aspects of accessibility have to be considered (e.g. rules and regulations for online media, onsite offerings)?

ASSESSMENT AND SETTING OF PRIORITIES WITH REGARD TO THE DIGITAL STRATEGY

- How does the measure relate to each of the stated priorities of the strategy?
- Does the measure comply with the respective digital principles?
- What long-term (advanced training) potential does the measure offer with regard to a digital mindset and working habits?
- How can the sustainability, continuance and future viability of the planned or chosen approach be ensured?
- How can subsequent usability, later expansion and linking to existing infrastructure or content be ensured?
- What relevance does the measure have for the digital portfolio?
- How is the measure relevant to other areas of museum work?

6. Appendix

Evaluation of measures to date (2017–2019)

OBJECTIVE: ACT IN A DATA-BASED AND USER-CENTRED MANNER

Uniform analytical tools were installed and online surveys of website usage were created and conducted (separately for MK&G Collection Online and the MK&G website). Planning for the further development of the website with integration of the Collection Online progressed on the basis of user segments.

OBJECTIVE: FACILITATE USER COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION

Visitors to the museum have access to an open Wi-Fi connection via Mobyclick. Implementation of the website relaunch has already begun, making responsive digital offerings available along with links to external projects. After weighing the pros and cons, the decision was made not to integrate user-generated content on the website in the form of social media feeds for the time being.

OBJECTIVE: ENCOURAGE INTERACTION AND DIALOGUE WITH USERS

A need for action was noted in particular in the area of social media communication, and a strong increase in interaction has already been achieved by creating a position for Digital Communication. A Twitter account was set up primarily to exchange information with the professional community and to strengthen the museum's presence and profile in the media.

OBJECTIVE: ENABLE OPEN ACCESS

While the digital availability of works in the public domain has steadily increased, the clarification of rights for digital content produced in-house is still too inconsistent and has not yet been extended to all products.

The API (Application Programming Interface) has already been implemented for the transfer of image data and metadata to the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek (German Digital Library), but is not yet freely accessible.

The image data is to be made available in higher resolution via the Digital Asset Management System (DAMS) that has already been launched. This system also enables centralized and uniform rights management.

OBJECTIVE: STIMULATE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND CREATIVITY

The MK&G's cooperation with the Wikipedia community ("Wiki loves Music" Editathon) has proven to be very successful. With the creation of a position as Head of Digital Strategy, increased reuse of the collection has also been established as a strategic goal, and there is now staff capacity to implement further projects with external partners in the area of crowdsourcing. Collaboration with the "Scan the World" project was for example planned for summer 2020, but had to be postponed due to the pandemic. Academic projects at Potsdam University of Applied Sciences (Close up

Cloud) and LMU Munich (Artigo) integrated data and content from the museum and generated innovative approaches to the collection.

OBJECTIVE: MAKE MORE DIGITAL CONTENT AVAILABLE FOR DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS

This objective is closely linked to the goal of stimulating knowledge production and creativity. Here, the focus must lie on the digitisation, reuse and enrichment of content from different departments. Hurdles include the need to clarify rights as well as the fact that the workflow has not yet been optimised to make material from all departments continuously accessible outside the digital inventory project. DAMS promises to bring some improvements here. In addition to testing digital publishing, the API was also developed.

OBJECTIVE: HIGH-QUALITY AND INNOVATIVE DIGITISATION AND AVAILABILITY OF DATA

The 3D digitisation project (photogrammetry, various scanning techniques) is being carried out in exchange with external partners such as the University of Hamburg and the “Understanding Written Artifacts” Cluster of Excellence. The IIIF⁹ rollout is tied to the introduction of the DAMS system and will be applied to the relaunched site.

OBJECTIVE: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

So far, this goal is still on the starting block. With regard to impact assessment, further development only makes sense in the context of finalising the vision and mission. The goal of networking has been made possible by the introduction of DAMS.

OBJECTIVE: INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

The publication of our digital strategy led to other museums, including some abroad, using it as a benchmark for their own work and strategy development, for example the Joanneum in Graz.¹⁰ The work in the committees and communities of Europeana was continued.

OBJECTIVE: ADAPT WORKING HABITS

Driven in part by the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, progress has been made in the area of collaborative asynchronous and location-independent working. There was increased use of new tools. Nevertheless, further training is needed, as well as more user-centred approaches in practice and the utilisation of data to develop new applications and content.

⁹ International Image Interoperability Framework.

¹⁰ <https://www.museum-joanneum.at/blog/projekt-digitale-strategie-workshop-tag-1/>.

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