

Guidelines created by:



# DIGITAL POLICY AND PLAN GUIDELINES



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# 1. Introduction

Thank you for downloading these guidelines. We hope you find them useful when developing your digital policy and plan.

The guidelines have been developed for arts and cultural organisations of all types and sizes, from small performing arts groups to large museums, regardless of where you are on your digital journey. They have been developed to support organisations that Arts Council England is funding, but hopefully other organisations will find them useful as well.

There is no one size fits all approach for a digital policy and plan. They should be specific to the nature and needs of your organisation, its activities and ambitions. They should have senior level buy in and should engage staff across your organisation.

We offer a structured way of thinking through your policy and plan, supported by some examples. The latter part of the guidance proposes some issues to consider in more detail as you work up your ideas, with links to useful information and resources.

## Why is a digital policy and plan important?

Arts Council England is keen that all funded organisations should have a digital policy linked to your overall mission and vision – and a plan for implementing it. This is important for a number of reasons:

- Digital media allow you to promote, create, distribute and share experiences with audiences online, supporting your artistic and cultural objectives
- Digital technologies create opportunities for innovation in artistic and cultural practice, both online and offline
- Digital systems can help improve how your organisation works and your organisation's resilience and sustainability, e.g. through saving money by automating existing processes, or through creating new revenue streams
- A strong digital policy and plan can help you to deliver better value from our public investment in arts and culture.

## 2. Creating your digital policy

Your digital policy should be a broad statement of your organisation's overall digital ambitions, and should provide a framework for your digital plan and good digital practice on a day-to-day basis. The policy should be aligned with your mission statement and business strategy, and should succinctly set out your aims and objectives for digital media across your organisation. It should be endorsed, signed and reviewed by your top management, e.g. trustees and chief executive.

The key points to consider in a digital policy are:

- What is your organisation's overall mission?
- Where are you today in terms of your digital practice? For example:
  - In what different ways do you use digital across your organisation (e.g. in marketing, or creative and cultural practice)?
  - What are the most important of these to your overall organisational aims?
  - How effective is your use of digital today in helping you meet your aims?
  - What resources (people, financial, specialist expertise) are currently committed to digital activity?
- Given this starting point, how can digital help you better deliver your organisational mission and support different areas of your business, e.g. your creative and cultural output; improving the experience for your audiences; or making your organisation more sustainable by opening up new revenue streams?
- What are the key principles and commitments that underpin your approach to digital? E.g. putting audiences at the centre of everything you do; or embedding digital throughout your organisation.
- What skills and capabilities do you need to develop in your organisation?
- Who is responsible for your digital policy? How will it be reviewed and renewed, and when?
- What will success look like?

The result should be a clear succinct policy statement that articulates your vision for how you will use digital over a defined period.

## Example Digital Policy

### Art Centre X - Digital Policy 2018-22

#### Our mission

Art Centre X's mission is to present early career artists to a wider public and to help educate and inspire the next generation of talent in the arts.

#### Our current digital practice

- Digital technology has transformed the way audiences can interact with art centres like ours and we recognise that Art Centre X has not kept pace with our peers.
- Our website and ticket booking system offer limited services for visitors and provide some audience data. Online audience engagement and ticket sales have been growing steadily over time but we believe there is substantial scope to improve the rate of growth. Whilst we have a social media presence on a number of channels these are not regularly updated or linked to our audience strategy and as a result audience engagement is low.
- We have not previously focused on creating digital content about our work and the artists we support and think there are opportunities with selected forthcoming exhibitions and events to begin to engage audiences in this way, particularly in devising imaginative cultural learning content for young people.
- We have a track record of commissioning high quality artists film and video for the Art Centre as part of our programme of work but we'd like to diversify our talent base for this work and experiment with online commissions to reach new audiences off site.
- In terms of skills and resources, the marketing manager role has some time allocated to digital initiatives but there is a lack of wider skills and support for these elsewhere in the organisation.
- There is no budget line allocated to digital creative content and there is a need to increase the budget being invested in marketing and website systems to take advantage of the opportunities there.

#### Our vision for our use of digital in 2018-2022 centres on:

**Creativity** – we will establish a digital content strategy that expands the scope and impact of our creative work both in the gallery, cinema and online

**Audiences** – we will use digital to understand our audiences better, build deeper engagement with existing audiences and respond to the interests of new audiences

**Culture** – we will develop an organisational mind set where digital is an integral part of our thinking, across all our work, and where experimenting with new digital approaches is encouraged to drive excellence

**Resources** – we will invest in staff training and in digital infrastructure that allows us to operate in more efficient and flexible ways

## Our Principles

Five principles will guide our future approach to digital working:

1. **Audience-centred** – we will use digital channels to understand our current and potential audiences better, engage them in conversations and incorporate their feedback into our work. We will be agile and respond quickly to what our audiences are saying.
2. **Innovative** – we are innovative in our approach to programming and we will mirror this in our approach to digital, adopting new technologies where these align well with our mission.
3. **Sustainable** – as well as investing to grow, we need to live within our means. Every digital initiative will be supported by a business case, setting out how it contributes to our mission; the resources needed to start and sustain the initiative; and the benefits we expect it to produce - creative, cultural or organisational.
4. **Collaborative** – we will adopt an open approach to our work, whether that's partnering with local creative technology businesses, sharing our insights and digital toolsets with similar arts organisations; or contributing to open-source initiatives.
5. **Accessible** – we will ensure our digital initiatives and experiences are designed and delivered in a way that allows the widest possible audiences to access them, including those with visual, hearing or other accessibility requirements.

## We will know we have been successful when:

- Our artist commissions reflect a wider range of innovative creative media and through digital technologies we provide new and inspiring ways to experience artists' work.
- More audiences each year engage with us online – the data we collect tells us that we are reaching new and younger audiences, while deepening engagement with our existing audiences.
- All Art Centre X staff report an increase in digital confidence, skills and literacy. They now put digital at the heart of their work and see it as an opportunity to deliver effectively against our mission.
- Digital is at the heart of our planning processes and is considered in all the plans that we produce.

## Policy management

This Digital Policy is the responsibility of the Executive Director. It is reviewed and updated annually by the Board. This policy is supported by a Digital Plan which is reviewed quarterly and updated annually by the senior management team with progress recorded and shared with all staff and relevant stakeholders.

This Digital Policy is endorsed on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Art Centre X by:

I.M Poster (Chairperson, Art Centre X), March 2018

### 3. Creating your digital plan

Your digital plan is a more detailed document that should follow on logically from your digital policy. It should define specific objectives, activities, targets, responsibilities and deadlines for delivering your policy vision.

It should be appropriate to the type and scale of your organisation, its resources and where you are starting from digitally. If you are a small organisation, or digital is not yet a major part of what you do, try to identify some modest, achievable steps to start with and aim to grow your ambition over the period of your plan.

In mapping your aims, actions and targets you will need to consider wider organisational requirements and impacts, e.g.:

- the current status of your digital activities, platforms and processes and how well these meet your existing needs
- the skills, confidence and capabilities you will need to deliver the plan and how you will develop these, e.g. through training, recruiting new staff, bringing in associates or commissioning freelancers to work alongside you
- new approaches to work or changes in mind-set required, e.g. developing a more audience-centric, or data-led approach
- who will be responsible for implementing actions and how you will involve them in developing and monitoring your plan
- new hardware, software, systems and working practices required to deliver the plan. Opportunities to minimise costs/maximise efficiency in their delivery
- new supplier and partner relationships required to deliver the plan and how these will be procured
- budgetary need within your financial plan, including the capital, operating and supplier costs, and any income (for example, from sponsors and/or e-commerce)

In drawing up the contents of your plan, we recommend that you consider the following:

- **Digital objectives:** these should clearly relate back to your digital policy aims and overall business aims, so it is clear how the policy has informed the plan
- **Key activities** to meet each digital objective. Some may not be fully thought through at the moment – e.g. setting up an online shop. In this case, include actions to investigate whether they are achievable
- **Targets:** set clear, ambitious but realistic targets for each activity. Try to make these SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely)

- **Budget / Resources:** consider and summarise the budget and other resources needed for each activity
- **Deadlines:** include a clear timeframe and milestones
- **Responsibilities:** identify who will oversee and who will deliver each activity

You should make clear who will track progress against the targets in your plan and when this will be reviewed. We recommend a quarterly progress report to your senior management team, with the overall objectives and targets in your plan reviewed and revised annually. This regular reviewing process is important as your digital aims will evolve, driven both by change in your overall business aims and changes in the wider digital landscape.

When you review and revise your plan, remember to focus on your organisation's priorities; evaluate what audience and other data is telling you; and ensure that your activities and targets are realistic, sustainable and can generate good results for your investment.



## Example Digital Plan 2018-22 - Art Centre X

Our Digital Plan is focused on four objectives, designed to deliver a step change in approach and capability, starting in April 2018 and building over the next four years. The Plan will be updated each year in order to remain responsive and relevant. Our targets will also be updated annually.

Digital objective <sup>1</sup>	Key Activities	Targets	Budget/Resource	Deadlines/Milestones	Responsibility
1. Establish a <b>creative content</b> strategy to incorporate digital technologies into our work and engage audiences	Incorporate digital creative content into high-profile commissions and exhibitions. Produce short form online video that a) showcases artists work and b) supports young people's digital engagement in our work	At least one commission a year that supports an artist(s) working in digital media and technologies.  At least two exhibitions a year that showcase work created with digital media and technologies  10 short form cultural learning videos per year	£30,000 p.a. budget to cover commission and content creation.	By March-19	Head of Programmes <sup>2</sup>
	Partner with distribution platforms relevant to our priority target audiences – could include generic platforms (e.g. Vimeo, Snapchat), but also platforms that have a cultural audience (e.g. Nowness, The Guardian and <a href="#">Canvas</a> )	At least one partnership per year. Begin by joining <a href="#">Canvas</a> by September 2018  At least 20,000 online sessions viewing our creative content by March-19, 50% of which should be aged 18-24	In house research and partnership building by Head of Digital.	March-19	Head of Digital <sup>3</sup>
	Develop a framework for mobile-friendly content delivery that can be used across exhibitions	Framework used for at least 2 exhibitions by March-2021	£20,000 budget for software development in 2018-19.	First by March-20; second by March-21	Head of Digital
2. Become more <b>audience-focused</b> by using digital channels to understand and respond to their differing needs and behaviours	Agree data management plan for tracking and sharing audience and other digital insights across organisation	Data plan, including dashboard giving actionable insights for management. Deliver data report / dashboard every 3 months	In house resource. Allocate £2,000 to staff training in advanced use of analytics tools	Plan & dashboard by Sept-18 Training by March-19	Head of Digital

<sup>1</sup> Make sure that you can relate each objective back to your overall business aims and digital policy aims.

<sup>2</sup> Although Head of Programmes has overall responsibility, they will need to delegate responsibility for key tasks or strands of work to other team members

<sup>3</sup> In organisations without this role, responsibility might sit with an alternative member of team, e.g. Head of Marketing, Head of Programmes , Head of Development

Digital objective <sup>1</sup>	Key Activities	Targets	Budget/Resource	Deadlines/Milestones	Responsibility
			Assume free software (e.g. Google Analytics)		
	Review and audit all current digital content channels. Use online data plus audience surveys to map current and potential online audiences and their interests	First survey of minimum 200 users by May-18. Refine and re-run every 6 months for next two years Audience analysis using survey + usage data	In house research by marketing team.	Survey: May-18 Every 6 months to May-20	Marketing Director
	Develop and deploy content strategy to increase engagement levels on selected social media channels	Increase social media reach and likes/ re-tweets by 20% by Dec-18 and 30% by Dec 2019	In house resource	Strategy live by April-18 targets for Dec-18 & -19	Head of Digital
3. Use digital to drive <b>new revenues</b> and help become more sustainable	Optimise the current online ticket sales process to improve revenues and data collection	Increase of 20% in year-on-year online revenues by April-19	£15,000 development budget for technical updates and user testing	System optimised by Jan-19 Target achieved by April-19	Head of Digital
	Run a data-driven fundraising campaign via social media. Evaluate results before deciding future strategy	First campaign live in 2019 – use to set baseline of targets  Campaign every 6 months – set targets based on pilot campaign results	£3,000 budget for website updates plus in-house resource. Look at opportunities to share technology, data etc. with partners	First campaign live by Jan-19. Then repeat every six months	Fundraising Director
	Gain sponsorship from at least one technology partner p.a. to fund an innovative approach to digital content within the Art Centre	£10,000 per annum in cash or in-kind from April-19 onwards	In house resource to manage	First sponsorship by Oct-19	Fundraising Director
4. Create a <b>culture</b> where staff think digital all the time and have the skills, resources and equipment they need	Recruit new post for Head of Digital	Head of Digital in place by July-18	Salary of £35,000 p.a. Also supported by existing marketing associate role and IT manager.	July-18	HR Director
	Amend other key job specs in organisation to reflect digital responsibilities	Mapping completed and new job specs written by Oct-18	HR team in consultation with Head of Digital	Oct-18	HR Director
	Digital skills mapping completed. Ongoing training then offered to all relevant staff	All relevant staff received initial digital training by March-19	£10,000 additional training budget in 2018-19. £5,000 in following years.	Mapping by Oct-18 Initial training by March-19	Head of Digital

## 4. Additional guidance on how to develop an effective digital policy and plan

Your digital policy should be rooted in your organisation's creative and cultural mission. It should consider how digital can help you to achieve your wider objectives and how the unique qualities of your organisation can best be supported by digital technology.

Don't set digital objectives that are too numerous or wide-ranging to be achievable. Instead, focus on a few key areas that will enable you to achieve measurable results with a realistic level of resource and an ambition for excellence.

Digital can be a great medium for low-cost experimentation. You can try out ideas quickly and gather data on which of these are effective. The elements that work may then become part of your core approach. By adopting a focused yet agile mind set, you can create a multi-year plan that is realistic and also has room to evolve.

It is important to consider how your plan will be embedded in your organisation. In our experience, effective policies:

- Are endorsed by, and led from, the very top of the organisation
- Put audiences at the heart of their policy and centre decision-making on audience and performance data
- Involve those who will be responsible for actions and for delivering policy objectives in planning, objective setting and monitoring progress
- Recognise the skills development, resource requirements and partnership approaches necessary to make the plan viable

Listed below are some areas to consider when developing your digital policy and plan. In each area we offer suggestions to help shape your thinking. You should not necessarily expect your plan to address all of these areas. It is a question of prioritising: focus your efforts where your organisation has the greatest opportunity to deliver against its creative or cultural vision and purpose.

### 4.1 Audiences

Digital has had a transformational effect on how people engage with arts and culture. We therefore strongly recommend putting **audiences** at the centre of your plan and taking care to align with the wider audience planning in your organisation.

It might help to think of your digital audiences in three ways:

- **Your existing audiences.** Some of these may already engage with you using digital and some may not. As well as their different levels of digital involvement,

consider their motivations for different types of engagement and how different frequencies of engagement affect their relationship with you. Some will be loyal, repeat visitors, others only occasional. How can your plans and respond to their differing needs and their digital behaviours?

- **Wider geography:** can digital initiatives allow you to attract people with a similar profile to your existing audiences but nationally, or from overseas?
- **Harder to reach audiences:** what are the digital opportunities to engage a different type of audience, whether in your area or further afield? Digital can offer great ways to reach out to younger or more diverse groups, audiences who face challenges accessing arts and cultural experiences, or those who wouldn't regard themselves as fans of the arts.

For each of these groups you can then plan by considering:

- **Who are they?** What profile information can you gain about each group's characteristics, such as age, gender, location and socio-economic status?
- **What are their interests and habits?** What type of cultural content are they, or might they become, interested in? What are their digital behaviours?
- **Where are they active online?** What channels does each group use? Consider the channels that you own, such as your website or YouTube channel, but also third party websites or social media platforms that attract large audiences that might have an interest in your content.
- **What engages them?** What combination of content and format seems to most engage them? If you are looking at new audiences or have limited data from your own content, then consider the websites, social media channels or mobile apps of organisations offering potentially similar content to the same audiences. Examine what material gets the highest numbers of views/plays, most engagement in terms of likes and shares or most positive feedback in comments. What patterns emerge from these interactions? Also consider individuals that have a strong social media following and may be influential in your sphere of work. Whether already linked to your organisation or not, they could form the foundation of a strong peer network to raise awareness of your brand and activities. How might you work with them?
- **Why might they engage with you?** Finally, considering the various audience groups and the data you have gathered, what types of content could your organisation create; what would motivate them to do so; and how might you distribute and promote your content in a way that will support your organisation's vision and objectives? The section below gives further advice on this.

Here are a few issues to consider:

- **Own channels and/or partners:** it can be challenging to create a loyal online audience from a low base, so distributing content through distribution partners and platforms that have established audiences of the type you want to attract might

sometimes be the way to go. That said, your owned channels will allow you to build brand loyalty, gain audience insights, engage in online dialogue and cross-promote your other content. The best approach will depend on your objectives and the baseline of digital engagement you are working from.

- **Technology choices:** how your audience is most likely to find and interact with your content should influence your technology choices. For example, mobile apps may be best for multi-level games where the user engages regularly over time. However, given the likelihood of a user finding an app in the store, installing it, opening it and returning to it, they can be an expensive way to reach a limited audience. If the content is not optimised for repeat, return visits and you don't have a well-designed strategy for app store publishing and marketing, alternative methods for content delivery (e.g. a mobile browser-based experience) are more effective and scalable.
- **Creating communities** through the social media channels most relevant to your audiences. Think about how to provide creative content that is engaging and optimised for sharing, and consider what frequency of content is needed to build visitor loyalty. How will you monitor what people are saying about you on these channels, respond to comments, or have conversations with users or fans? Can you introduce opportunities for your audiences to co-create your digital content or programmes, or to creatively re-use the digital assets that you hold?
- **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO):** if you have an online presence you almost certainly need an SEO strategy. Here is a [great starting point for beginners](#). You will achieve the best results by focusing on search terms where your organisation has a distinctive advantage – for example, optimising around the titles of famous works where you own relevant digital content and have a chance of becoming the 'go to' destination for that search term
- **Pay-per-click advertising:** consider experimenting with pay-per-click advertising via Google or social media networks. With careful targeting, relatively modest investments can provide significant reach to new audiences.

## 4.2 Usability and accessibility

It is essential to consider usability and accessibility in your content creation and distribution plans so that all audiences can enjoy a user-friendly experience across different devices (e.g. mobile and desktop). It is important always to consider how you can maximise access to your content for users with visual, hearing, motor, cognitive or other impairments. Always follow [W3C accessibility standards](#) and where possible incorporate user testing in the development of digital products and services.

### 4.3 Effective use of data

To measure and learn from audience engagement, you will need a clear strategy around data gathering, monitoring and evaluation. This doesn't need to be complex.

Start with the data you already have: for example from your ticketing system, marketing database, your own website (e.g. via free tools such as [Google Analytics](#)), or the built-in analytics tools on social media platforms (e.g. YouTube, Facebook). Also consider tools like [Quintly](#) and [Similarweb](#). These can give you insights from social media activity and a wide range of websites for relatively low cost.

To avoid information overload, focus on a small number of metrics that best measure success against your objectives and that generate actionable insights. As a starting point, what is the simplest metric linked to ticket sales, social media engagement, or audience reach that will help you see whether you have been successful, or where there is scope for improvement? If you can't say how a metric will help improve your decision-making about future content production or distribution, it may not be worth tracking. Data reporting and evaluation is only useful if it can be shared and acted on in a timely manner by those responsible for, for example, audience strategy, creative content or wider planning.

As well as audience reach, consider how your metrics can help you understand depth of engagement (e.g. duration of videos watched, percentage of visitors completing a level of an interactive quiz). Also consider how you might use audience surveys - whether online or offline - to gain insights. Surveys can give you additional information about audience profiles and interests, their perception of the quality of your work and their reasons for engaging. They may also tell you whether their experience of your digital content has altered their relationship with your organisation (e.g. an increased likelihood to buy a ticket for a performance or event).

Finally, consider how you will gather, store and share this information with your team and partners (while complying with legal requirements around data protection).

### 4.4 Content

Your plan will need to show how digital **content** can support your artistic and cultural ambitions. What is your organisation best placed to do to reach some well-defined audience groups with content that will strongly appeal to them? How might you innovate, build and maintain audience relationships through this content? And can you do this in a way that is sustainable?

The Arts Council's [Creative media policy](#) approach seeks to increase the quality, amount and reach of digital content and experiences that can engage audiences. You should consider and identify how you can contribute to this ambition and articulate this within your policy and plan in whatever way is most appropriate for your organisation.

We've identified three main categories of content below. It's important not to overlay the distinction between each category. In our experience, organisations who are best at using digital for creative impact focus on how they can reach and engage the right audiences in the right places with the highest quality content.

### **a) Creative content**

Creative content or 'born digital' content is where digital media and technologies are central to the creation of new artworks and cultural experiences. This can help you support Arts Council England's [Goal 1](#) (excellence). Areas to consider include:

- Creating standalone digital works of art, such as a mobile game, interactive storytelling or immersive cultural experience
- Artist's films and/or short narrative films produced by arts organisations
- Creating standalone cultural experiences, such as an online-only exhibition
- Works that make use of [pervasive media](#) and which blend on- and off-line experiences
- Incorporating digital elements into artworks or performance, such as a digital projection in a live dance show or use of [binaural soundscapes](#) in a theatrical performance
- Incorporating digital into an exhibition, e.g. incorporating [virtual reality](#), [augmented reality](#) or [mixed reality](#) content; interactive installations; kiosks or video displays

Rather than putting the technology first, we would encourage you to start by thinking about what stories and ideas you want to convey, then the experience you want the audience to have, and only then decide what technology would be best to deliver that experience. There is a tendency to focus on the latest technical innovations, or trends in consumer devices: the recent rise of [virtual reality headsets](#) such as Oculus Rift and Google Cardboard, for example. Whilst emerging technology can be a good route to innovative cultural content, it can also carry risks and significant costs and may only help you reach limited audiences.

### **b) Captured content**

Captured content is where existing works of art and culture, including performances and cultural collections are produced and distributed digitally to engage and reach wider audiences. For example, an arts venue might record performances in order to reach audiences who might not otherwise be able to see a live show; or a gallery or museum might digitise and make its collection available online to reach a global audience.

This can help you deliver Goal 1 (excellence), [Goal 2](#) (everyone) and could also apply to [Goal 5](#) (children and young people). Areas to consider include:

- Distributing live performances or other content through digital channels – e.g. arts websites such as [BBC Arts Online](#) and [Nowness](#), or YouTube, cinemas, or broadcast TV and radio.
- Providing on-demand recordings of performances, whether audio or video
- Using [Facebook Live](#), [Periscope](#) and other low-cost ways of streaming performances
- Digital experiences that capture and extend a cultural experience, e.g. a mobile app that allows the user to interact with an art installation or exhibition
- A museum's digitised collection
- Producing E-books, or digitally distributed music

### **c) Cultural learning content**

Cultural learning content is content about arts and culture that is produced, distributed and experienced digitally to increase cultural knowledge and participation. It might support informal adult learning or formal learning in schools and other education contexts. This can help you deliver Arts Council Goals 1, 2 and potentially Goal 5. Areas to consider include:

- An educational game based on a collection, linked to a Key Stage 2 History course
- Mobile-accessible, browser-based quizzes to engage children and earn virtual badges for their success
- Behind-the-scenes videos about an exhibition, aimed at visitors of all ages
- Short films, documentaries or podcasts about arts and culture and/or your organisation
- Curated archive collections with accompanying digital material
- Creation of digital platforms and resources that seek to involve people in learning about the organisation

Consider which learning and educational institutions – whether traditional or e-learning focused - you might partner with to help your content align with audience demand or syllabus requirements.

Also think how you might test your ideas with children or other target groups to understand the type of material they find most rewarding and where to pitch the learning. Consider if the approaches you're planning can be cost-effectively re-used in other exhibitions, performances or events, perhaps cost sharing with other organisations.



## 4.5 Content distribution and exhibition

Digital distribution is important in delivering Goal 2. Digital channels help arts and cultural organisations bring cultural content and experiences to more people in more places.

Organisations increasingly are able to publish quickly, cheaply and at a high quality across open internet channels like Facebook Live and YouTube, but also into physical venues such as cinemas. Consider opportunities to partner with broadcasters, technology companies, device manufacturers and other organisations who can help you here, by providing the platform, delivery technology or even sponsorship necessary.

Digital offers many opportunities to enhance the visitor experience in galleries and museums, and to re-imagine how collections can be presented, interpreted and shared. Importantly, there are a growing number of specialist arts and culture content aggregators or distributors that can help you to reach audiences and increase the profile of your work. All arts and culture organisations with an online video channel should consider joining [Canvas](#); performing arts organisations with high quality captured content should look for opportunities to showcase it through projects like [Cinegi Arts & Film](#) or [Digital Theatre](#); all organisations with collections of visual art works should be familiar with [Art UK](#); and museums, galleries and libraries should consider promoting what they do on [Culture24](#).

## 4.6 Preservation and archiving

As well as thinking about digital creation and publication, your digital policy and plan should consider the management and preservation of digital assets. This is essential for museums, but is also relevant to many arts organisations who maintain archives, or who wish to collect or preserve digital art works. Management of digital assets should be prioritised alongside the management of physical collections and their supporting knowledge and information. Where preservation and archiving is important to your work and mission, your digital policy and plan should cross-refer to and integrate with any other policy and planning documents you have that cover preserving and archiving.

The [Digital Preservation Coalition](#), [Collections Trust](#) and [The National Archives](#) offer useful advice and information on this topic.

## 4.7 Operations, resilience and sustainability

Digital media and technologies can help you to operate more efficiently and effectively. This is important in delivering [Goal 3](#) (resilience and sustainability). Here are some ideas to consider:

- When starting out on a digital initiative try not to duplicate what is already out there. Try to build on, and add value to, what already exists (by using open source software, for example).
- Can you automate processes, such as ticket sales, to reduce the cost of sales?
- Could you use [cloud internet services](#)? Options here are wide ranging and usually customisable to different needs. They might include pay-per-month licencing for desktop software, cloud based file storage, CRM systems, HR systems, internet hosted telephony and website hosting. Switching to these services could improve staff effectiveness and reduce the need for up-front investment in IT hardware and software or onsite support. Per-month-per-user billing allows additional flexibility in your overheads.
- Can you link systems to reduce the need for manual data handling? Tools like [Zapier](#) and [IFTTT](#) allow you to easily automate processes between different commonly used business tools. This can free staff from laborious, repetitive tasks, to focus on areas where they can add more value.
- Could you replace offline options with lower cost online services – for example, online job listings and recruitment services, or replace physical newsletters with email newsletters?
- Could you use digital to improve team communications and reduce travel and office overheads? Whilst there is sometimes no substitute for face-to-face meetings, there are many tools designed to enable more effective communication and collaboration. These might include a team intranet, shared calendar and documents or chat/collaboration apps. Adopting these may help your team to work in different locations, using different devices, and reduce the need for fixed office space. They might also enable more effective project communications with partner organisations and freelancers
- Rather than expensive capital purchase of digital equipment, could you consider short-term rental arrangements, or share equipment between partner organisations that have similar occasional requirements?

## 4.8 Commercial considerations

### a) Income generation

Think about and then set out how (if at all) you intend to use digital technology to grow your revenue streams. This is important for Goal 3.

Here are some areas to consider:

- E-ticketing: you may want to implement e-ticketing for the first time or improve an existing system by optimising the purchase funnel or the collection of customer data
- Sponsorship: if you have a creative project that is digitally innovative, you may attract support in cash or in kind from a technology partner that is looking for high quality creative content to showcase their capabilities
- Fundraising: you might invite donations through online and mobile channels or raise funding through online campaigns, tools and services, such as the [Kickstarter](#) crowdfunding platform
- Product sales: sales of physical products and merchandise could be increased via an online store
- Digital content sales:
  - Paid-for mobile apps, in-app purchases, e-books, music and games all present potential revenue streams
  - There may be opportunities to sell your live-streamed or on-demand content directly to consumers, or to syndicate it to third parties with established distribution networks e.g. online, through on demand TV or [event cinema](#).

## **b) Rights management**

Your commercial plans should consider how you will approach rights clearances for creative content. This will be shaped by whether you plan to distribute content online on a free or commercial basis. It is important to be specific at commissioning stage about what the content is for, e.g. are you commissioning an artistic piece of content, or a marketing piece of content? You need to agree up front with artists and other creative collaborators how you can use their contributions now and in the future. You will need clear agreements with them around the ownership and licencing of their work and you will need to be sure these agreements give you the flexibility to syndicate and find an audience for the completed works. Questions to consider include: who will own the IP? Should a mutual rights agreement be set up where a percentage of future use is taken by each party? Can the content be shared? Make sure also that you can clear the digital rights for any pre-existing content that you are incorporating into your works, and any underlying rights, e.g. in the original music, lyrics choreography, design etc.

There are interesting models to consider in terms of how you exploit any rights you may hold. For example, you might want to license some content using a [Creative Commons](#) license to encourage collaboration and brand awareness, or you may prefer to focus other content on opportunities for revenue generation.

The [Copyright User](#) website has extensive, up to date information, tailored to the specific interests of the arts and cultural sector, on copyright and digital rights issues

## **4.9 Leadership, skills and resources**

Leadership, skills and digital literacy will be key if you are to successfully implement your digital vision and plan. Digital should be a central consideration when you think about how you will approach [Goal 4 \(skills\)](#). This starts at the top. You should think about the composition and knowledge-base of your board and executive team. Often you will need new energies to drive cultural change and it will be important that your leadership team is aware of developments in the digital landscape and can give your digital plans focus and momentum.

You also need to consider the skills, experience and confidence needed in house if you are to deliver all aspects of your plan and oversee freelance specialists, digital agencies, other suppliers and partners that you may need. A skills mapping exercise can identify gaps in your team's existing skills, which can be addressed through formal training or informal learning - including through online learning resources focussed on different digital competencies. You might also consider joining networks of industry peers, such as the [Museums Computer Group](#), to pool and share knowledge.

You need also to consider financial and other resource necessary to deliver your plan. When planning and budgeting, make the most of free resources and don't forget the value of collaborating with partners. These may be technology partners who are seeking innovative creative content, or it may be similar organisations to yours, who are looking for technology solutions that you could jointly specify and purchase.

Significant cost savings might be achieved by, for example, collaborating with other organisations to design and procure a web app that allows you separately to curate and share your archive material online. You could take this collaboration a step further by co-designing strategies for developing audiences and cross-promoting each other's collections online.

## 5. Useful resources

There are a number of freely available resources tailored to the arts and culture sector that you might want to look at in preparing your digital policy and plan:

**The Collections Trust** has a wealth of useful information, tools and resources aimed at museums including [Resources and guidance on Digitisation](#), [Information about digital copyright and licensing](#), [Putting your collections online](#) and [Developing your Digital Strategy](#), including a free, easy to use [Digital Benchmarking Toolkit](#) for auditing your museum's digital skills, equipment, activity and needs.

[Culture24](#) has some great ideas and advice about digital change, and on how to measure and [evaluate success online](#).

[The Space](#) website has a wide range of useful resources about creating art and culture digitally. The Space site also includes case studies and links to previous and current creative media [commissions](#) which involved capturing and extending existing performances and exhibitions, and a number of creative interactive digital projects.

[The Digital R&D fund](#) supported by the Arts Council, Nesta and the AHRC has produced a wide range of research, evaluation and learning resources including [Digital Culture survey data](#) and [case studies](#).

For strategic approaches to **audience and digital strategy** see The **Arts Marketing Association's** [Culture Hive](#). Consider also using the **Audience Agency's** [Audience Development Planner](#)

For Advice on **best practice standards and principles in accessibility** see [Gov.UK guidance](#), the [BBC's Accessibility Standards and Guidelines](#) and ideas from the [Digital R&D fund](#) on how to design accessible digital arts products and services.

Finally, here are some examples of **existing digital policies**. They include a creative approach to digital from a local authority arts centre, best practice examples from national arts museums, and a document from the US that shows how digital has been fully integrated into the overall strategic vision of an arts institution:

[The Point, Eastleigh and the Berry Theatre](#)

[The Science Museum Group](#)

[Tate](#)

[Philadelphia Museum of Art](#)

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MTM is a research and strategy consultancy specialising in arts and culture, media and technology. MTM's clients include Google, the BBC and the National Gallery. MTM ran the three-year Digital Culture survey for Arts Council England and Nesta.

The Space is a Community Interest Company founded by Arts Council England and the BBC. It brings arts organisations, artists and technology together to make great art and reach new audiences. It commissions digital projects, builds digital skills and helps arts organisations reach more people using digital media.