EUNIC DX/AI WEEK

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Report

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Digital transformation has accelerated rapidly in recent years. The spread of Covid-19 has given it an enormous boost, and art institutions and educational establishments had to react swiftly to adapt.

EUNIC – EU National Institutes for Culture – together with its member Goethe-Institut explored the opportunities and risks of artificial intelligence for culture and education, Europe's role in technological developments and its meaning for cultural relations through a series of panel discussions, round tables, and artistic interventions.

Policy makers, experts from the field and cultural professionals gathered during more than 15 live-streamed hours in 8 session on 4 days. 37 speakers, over 300 colleagues and more than 2000 viewers participated in the discussions.

Day 1: The Digital Shift

In the first session of the EUNIC DX/AI week, the keynote speakers explored the implications of accelerating digitisation for cultural and educational work and investigated how communities can be built and international relations maintained in pandemic times. Cees de Graaff, EUNIC President and Director of DutchCulture and Johannes Ebert, Secretary General of Goethe-Institut opened the event.

Building a Digital Future: Accelerated Digital Adoption Through Covid-19 and Beyond with
Elisa Lindinger, *Superrr Lab*

First keynote speaker Elisa Lindinger explained how digital transformation is about adapting processes, creating new workflows and sharing information differently. It changes the way we communicate and could be perceived as a burden by communities, as it is typically not designed with their interests at heart. However, if digital transformation is done right, it could foster new forms of work, new forms of interactions, more transparency, and more inclusivity for a wide range of people.

Short term goals for the COVID-19 pandemic are to abide this tide together. It is not the time to implement plans for long term changes, instead we should make the best of the current situation, dare to test our ideas, reach out to networks and create new spaces. Mid-pandemic or after the pandemic is over, it is time to have a discussion about the digital sphere that we need rather than simply using the one that we already have. What could digital transformation look like when it is created with the public interests at heart? Elisa explained how it would require digital civic spaces, cultural spaces that are in our hands, and the universal understanding that technology is public infrastructure. Going forward, Elisa recommended understanding and implementing the universal declaration of digital human rights.

Making Kin Online: How to Connect and Build Relations in the Digital Age with **Natalia Grincheva**, *Higher School of Economics, National Research University, Moscow, and University of Melbourne*

Natalia Grincheva examined how we can build relationships in the digital age. Natalia's research discovered that there have been great opportunities to reach wider audiences and to build relationships throughout the pandemic by expanding experiences beyond physical walls of cultural institutions. These opportunities can be in the forms of TikTok short informative videos to keep your audience attentive, museums from home with the use of augmented reality, or shifting from grand events to micro online experiences, which have proven to be more enjoyable. Contemporary audiences are craving new experiences. As live streams grow in high demand, exclusivity has become a necessity in order to keep your audience's attention. An example is the "Goat's to Meetings". It's important for people to think outside the box.

However, there have been challenges among building these relationships and trust with online communities, including the rise of conspiracy theories, fake news and misinformation. Political leaders using statements that linked the virus to a specific country when referencing coronavirus have caused a rise in xenophobia online. To combat this, Natalia recommended building trustworthy reputations, practicing ethical data curation, using education to counter misinformation and spreading awareness about data surveillance.

Strategies for the Future: Digital Transformation of Cultural Institutions with **Sarah Ellis**, *Royal Shakespeare Company;* **Nicole McNeilly**, *Europeana Foundation;* **Miguel Marañón Ripoll**, *Instituto Cervantes and* **Agnès Alfandari**, *Institut Français*

Sarah Ellis from the Royal Shakespeare Company recalled how throughout the coronavirus pandemic, the company had to reimagine what performances could look like in the comfort of your own home, without losing the spirit of the theatre. Sarah claimed that it is not just about the most cutting-edge technology, but also about how you integrate those new technologies and truly reach out to people. She introduced how the theatre has been able to proactively engage with its audiences in an innovative way.

Nicole McNeilly's aim for the digital transformation of the cultural heritage sector is to develop the expertise and to encourage partnerships that foster innovation that will make it easier for people to use cultural heritage for education, research creation and recreation. While there is a value of immersion in cultural heritage, the digital divide remains a barrier.

Covid-19 pushed people to take risks. Among the shared challenges and opportunities Nicole recognised are that digital means won't replace an organisation's bread and butter, but that digitalisation of an organisation's processes can lead to greater efficiencies and more time for exploratory work. The scale of who you reach – the numbers – does not always equal the same impact. But there are unlimited new ways to engage with your audiences. But although digital crossed interdisciplinary and geographic barriers, it can be a barrier in different ways. We need to remember who is included and who is excluded within the digital divide, and that digital can also both mitigate and create environmental problems.

Technology is here, we are able to use it. And while technology is not the aim, it is a tool to keep in line with our communities. Never before has our culture and our heritage had so much potential to support and create an open and creative society.

Artificial Intelligence: The role for Europe, culture and education with **Sabine Verheyen**, *Chair of the CULT Committee of the European Parliament and its rapporteur on AI*

Sabine Verheyen stated that AI will lead to a substantial change in all aspects of our society for the next century and that we need to carefully assess its benefits and risks. As Europe must remain competitive with China and the USA, it is essential that the EU stays united. The European Parliament has presented recommendations on how EU rules for artificial intelligence should look like, based on the belief that while it is possible for the EU to become a world leader in the development of artificial intelligence, a trustworthy AI must be a trademark of the EU. We need to ensure the highest standards of transparency for AI systems in Europe.

In some EU Member States, 32% of the pupils had no access to education for several months during the pandemic. It is unacceptable that this is happening within the EU. AI is transforming education and teaching. In order to use AI in education in the EU, it is important to safeguard the use of AI in these fields. Furthermore, AI has helped preserve cultural heritage and holds many possibilities for creating creative content. It is important to assess which skills are needed in the future. However, Sabine is confident that the EU will find a balanced solution in the future.

Workshopping the Digital Responses to Covid-19 in Cultural Institutes

The second session reflected on the impactof both the pandemic and the ongoing digital transformation on the concrete work of Europe's cultural institutes. It started with the presentation of results of a study conducted on the digital practices of EUNIC members during the pandemic by **Sarah Arcache**, study author.

Following this, the participants were split into three breakout groups to discuss three different aspects:
- Digitally Transformed Organisations: How to build agile and proactive cultural institutes ready for new work?
- Online Cultural Relations: What worked over the last months in cultural relations practices and how should we go forward?
- Online Language Teaching: How have our language offerings been impacted, and how do we still need to adapt?

Digitally Transformed Organisations: How to build agile and proactive cultural institutes ready for new work?

Some key terms that were discussed in the first group were business models, regulations and tools, resilience and human resources. Organisations that have not adapted to the digital age or the digital change have business models that might not carry them through this crisis. As such, the crisis has revealed strengths and weaknesses that might have been there already. In larger organisations, rules and regulations prevent organisations from being agile, which might not necessarily be the case for smaller networks. Participants found that we need to make sure that our staff is in good health, mentally and physically, and that it is important to carry on future surveys and conversations. There is also a tendency to undermine social interactions, as we expect them to happen automatically. However, interactions are crucial when you want to build trust within cultural institutions and to build a community. Increased communication should be fostered through digital means in order to imitate social interactions, for example by talking to each other every morning or by doing video calls when possible.

Online Cultural Relations: What worked over the last months in cultural relations practices and how should we go forward?

In group two, colleagues discussed what has worked in the past months and how we should move forward. Some key topics discussed were cultural emergency kits for people who lack internet and how they can be kept included, how to share your efforts with your community, to keep your head up with your competitors, and to share your methodology. Regarding future planning, participants agreed that we should think about how to organise a mix between online and offline activities in 2021. We need to make sure the technology and digital tools that we are using right now are in place to implement offline activities in the new year.

Online Language Teaching: How have our language offerings been impacted, and how do we still need to adapt?

Finally, group three discussed online language learning, tools and digital platforms, accessibility and interactivity. The group exchanged on the different platforms they have been using and the challenges that arose, such as for example not having the human capacity to meet the digital demand or security questions on platforms like Zoom, as well as charging and geographical licencing. To combat this, some academics have experimented with messenger services, ready-made audio and video files for

people who have a limited access to the internet as well as with free platforms that would be useful for teachers and professors.

The session was concluded with a final discussion: **European Collaboration in a Digital Space: How can we learn from each other and go forward in a stronger collaborative spirit?** *With **Camilla Mordhorst**, Danish Cultural Institute; **Anastasia Mina**, EUNIC London; **Rupert Weinmann**, EUNIC Warsaw and Austrian Cultural Forum; **Ammanuel Felleke**, EUNIC Ethiopia and Goethe-Institut and **Karla Chévez**, Spanish Cultural Centre*

Day 2: The Impact of AI

This session delved into the specifics of technologies referred to as AI and discussed their main risks and unintended consequences: discrimination, manipulation, surveillance and social injustice. The session also discussed AI and geopolitics: how does the digital divide affect the development and deployment of AI technologies in the global North and global South? What role does Europe play in the AI race?

The session started off with an **AI Crash Course: Understanding Artificial Intelligence and its Basic Concepts** by **Katharine Jarmul**, *Cape Privacy*

The Geopolitics of AI Technologies: Ethical Concerns, Risks and Global Challenges *with* **Gry Hasselbalch**, *Co-founder DataEthics.eu, European Commission High-Level Expert Group on AI;* **Karen Yeung**, *Interdisciplinary Professorial Fellow in Law, Ethics and Informatics, University of Birmingham, European Commission High-Level Expert Group on AI and* **Martin Rauchbauer**, *EUNIC Silicon Valley and Austrian Tech Ambassador*

The panel pointed out that it is possible for Europe to get a head ahead in the 'race for AI', but stated that just because another country is doing so, this does not make it the right thing to do. Europe and the European Union have to decide how we want to live in the future and what we are committed to as the European community. This means that we have to find a solution that will not be a breach of privacy standards, which we consider to be fundamental. If other countries want to live in a different way, we don't have to follow that. In countries that don't have a stable government, the panel believed that political challenges intensify, however not specifically related to AI.

The panel agreed that a manifesto should be put into place as a kind of shared agreement on the type of society we want to live in including in terms of legal framework and of shared cultures on how to develop technologies. Those cultures can be built bottom-up. We as a society want to choose how we live rather than let technology decide, and have to follow those principles. Creatives play a valuable role in currently defining roles in our societies. Hence, we should consider bringing in artists into tech companies to help AI grow in the future.

Regarding the development and deployment of AI technologies in the global North and global South, the panel discussed how colonialism implies not only material but also cultural spaces. The global South is already being drawn into geopolitical digital dynamics, however it is often hidden by the tech industry. The global South is working behind the scenes, hidden from the 'Western' world. It therefore appears that the technology is doing the work, although in reality it is humans behind it – who are based in the global South. This is an ethical issue, as those people are used for cheap labour in places where there are insufficient or no labour laws. The panelists discussed how the tech industry has disturbing business models which seek to capitalise on technology, seeing the global South as the New Frontier

with many resources and many opportunities to make money. They agreed that safeguarding needs to be put in place to regulate unjust exploitation.

The panel also agreed that the United Nations should include the global South in these discussions, for example about end-to-end encryption and the debate between appropriate balance between privacy and security. Since the beginning of civilization, we need privacy –to a degree and not absolute privacy, which can foster organised crime. The panel believed that law enforcement should have adequate rights to enforce these regulations in the future.

The Grid

The evening of day two was devoted to bringing artists and technologists from Europe and the United States together. It presented *The Grid*, a platform launched in Silicon Valley by EUNIC Silicon Valley Cluster as one of the six pilot projects of European Spaces of Culture. *The Grid* has become a global, multi-stakeholder platform for international arts organisations, technology companies, representatives of civil society, research institutions and local and international government bodies.

Day 3: AI & Art

This session focused on the connection between AI and art. Over the past few years, AI has captivated the imagination of the art world. Artists reflect on the social and systemic implications of AI on society, while also being affected by AI in how they produce and distribute their work. If machines can learn to compose music and paint pictures, what does this mean for human creativity in the long run? And how does the mass production of creative content using AI impact the diversity of cultural expressions?

Automation vs Augmentation: AI and the Future of Cultural Expressions *with **Marcus du Sautoy**, Charles Simonyi Professor for the Public Understanding of Science, Oxford University and **Octavio Kulesz**, Director of Editorial Teseo and UNESCO expert on cultural diversity, digital creativity and artificial intelligence*

One idea that was discussed under this topic was that AI is everywhere. It can be found in finance, health, education, manufacturing, mobility and – most importantly – culture. However, AI in culture is often overlooked even though culture can be both an input for machine learning as well as an output, for example in the form of music, visual arts, and writing. There are many opportunities for AI regarding cultural expression: It can augment creativity, lower entry barriers, create higher productivity, provide new services and jobs, and provide a larger variety of content. And there are plenty of ideas for the future including awareness training, networking, local data ecosystems, more research, and large tech companies and their diversity of cultural expressions.

Contemporary Art and AI: A Curator's Perspective *with **Marnie Benney**, independent art curator;* and **Creating With AI: Artist Talk** *with **Sofia Crespo**, neural artist*

Marnie Benney stated that artists use AI technology in their work because they feel that it is important to highlight social injustice issues and biases in machine learning. Artists constantly look at us as a society, as a human race, showing us who we actually are. Artists' work with AI shows us who we are as humans, and where that line is, or how often the line is blurred. You can find some of the artist's work here.

Sofia Crespo spoke on her work and the discussion between beauty with art and AI. She stated that beauty is subjective, believing that bias is not just in the database she works with but in human nature. Sofia's work can be accessed here.

The concluding panel discussed opinions of artists as instrumental tools, first from the point of view of when the camera was first introduced. Artists found a way to use this tool to see the world in a new way, which is exactly the opportunity AI is giving us now. Artists are going to play a big role in examining this new technology. The panel highlighted that AI art and AI creativity are ways of examining this new field in a world which is so complex that we don't understand how to make decisions. The panel also asked at what moment AI becomes art. Art includes both intention and creativity, which still come from the human.

Day 3 was concluded with a **Digital Art experience** *by Moisés Horta Valenzuela & Jenna Sutela*: What novel experiences do digital spaces and online artistic works have to offer? Their digital art space invited participants to reflect on AI and the realms of possibility of digital artistic production. The virtual space was designed to create an experience tailored to the digital realm and, where relevant, be applied to one's own programme formats.

Day 4: AI & Education: Language Learning

Developments in the field of AI have a direct impact on the future of learning. On one hand, we have to prepare students for a reality where AI technologies are ubiquitous. On the other hand, AI will soon establish itself as a standard tool in the education market. Already today, educational content can be tailored directly to the needs of students with the help of AI. This discussion presented these technologies and discussed their impact on the educational work of European cultural institutions.

Teaching With AI: Impact of AI on Education and Language Learning *with* **Priya Lakhani**, *Founder and CEO, Century Tech;* **Riina Vuorikari**, *European Commission Joint Research Centre and* **Michael Campbell**, *Founder and CEO Glossika*

The panel discussed the challenges when trying to scale AI with education. Priya Lakhani stated that even when hugely ambitious, it has proven to be difficult for people to gain access to their language learning tool when their internet access is limited. She claimed that there are some elements to creating an AI environment for students, such as infrastructure and software. She states that at the moment, it is disheartening to try to reach everyone. There is a need for governments to put in place infrastructures or a digital strategy for everyone to get access. Typically, it is not the software that is the issue but the infrastructure, giving an advantage to those who are economically better off than others. COVID has put a spotlight on this.

Michael Campbell stated that one of his biggest challenges is the actual data, and the bias that comes with it. One of the biggest problems is the question of why the data collected fails. The panel also discussed what AI is teaching us about education. Panelists stated that while we have learnt a lot over the past 20 years, we are still using components from the 90's, while we would need to rethink and retag everything. We can now track insights on how we learn and how teacher engagement can affect the learning. Riina also stated that AI is helping learners to learn how to learn: AI can teach a student how they learn in the best way. We can also learn how these new technologies can help us to become more aware of education in general.

Digital Literacy and Education: How to Prepare Students for the Age of AI with
Stephanie Hankey, *Tactical Tech*

Stephanie works with international audiences of engaged citizens and civil society actors to investigate and mitigate the evolving impact of technologies on society. Through projects like *The Glass Room* and the *Data Detox Kit*, they find creative and accessible formats to demystify technology and give people actionable, sustainable changes to make in their own digital lives. You can find out more information on the projects they do [here](#).

Stephanie also discussed how cultural organisations should focus on fundamental frameworks of technology, and on teaching students what they actually care about (an example being young people caring about climate change). Cultural organisations should find new ways to connect with their students, showing them that technology is a mirror to society which is always reflected in the online space.

The session was concluded with the presentation of **Language teaching across the world: A case study**, *by Joachim Quandt, Goethe-Institut.*

What's Next?

A concluding workshop summarised the key insights from the previous seven sessions and invited participants to reflect on what they have learned throughout the four days. Questions the group discussed were amongst others: To what extent are the discussed technological developments already part of your work? What fields of applications are planned for the medium term? Are there possibilities for cooperation between different institutions in the field of AI and digitisation? Smaller groups worked on practical action plans and presented their findings to all participants.

What is the most surprising insight you gained into AI, culture and education?

Some keywords from the participants included: Hope, share, learn, need to reskill, cooperation, huge canvas of implications, that it's not a black and white geopolitical scenario, that it can generate human positive and creative follow-up, underlying philosophical implications, AI was originally an enemy, scared of it, awareness of the artists working on it, opened a new world of opportunities.

Can you name one key learning from the EUNIC week?

Key learnings included: Need to learn a lot more about AI, AI can be customised, history repeats itself, the need of more flexibility in our structures, how unprepared most of our language learning is.

Further key points and take-aways from the reflections included:
- Interpreting the notion of culture - wide dimension rather than strictly just culture
- Geopolitical discussions; international relations - who controls the advantage element of AI, private companies or more aggressive nations?
- Digital divide between the global South and North
- Digital divide might operate in a different way, shared infrastructure, AI will change our society so much that we will be relearning at some point
- Never leave anybody behind
- Monitoring of ethical processes - unique - keep members up to data if possible
- Need to keep learning; to train & enable artists, learn from different perspectives

- We have to be proactive - policy recommendations and different perspectives
- Bringing culture and arts to the political space
- Need to build bridges with artists from different backgrounds, governments, etc.
- Add to art to political strategies - no strategies at the moment
- Reacting to the current situation - we need to keep going - we need to prepare for digital transformation for the future
- Cultural institutions to reflect about AI among a general audience
- Bringing people to the table who are not normally in this discussion, a younger generation