

# THE DIGITAL RESPONSE OF CULTURE TO THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

*Study carried out by:*

Professional Master's students in "Tourism Promotion and Management of Cultural Heritage" of the University of Bologna

*in collaboration with:*

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April - May 2020



## THE CONTEXT: CULTURE & LOCKDOWN

- During the lockdown caused by the health emergency due to Covid-19, Italian cultural organisations were forced to shut down all activities involving the physical presence of the public for a few months.
- After core activities involving the presence of audiences were suspended, museums, theatres, opera foundations, and libraries tried using the Internet to keep in contact with their public while awaiting a reopening that varied depending on the sector of activity.
- During the months of closure, there was a flourishing of advocacy and audience development initiatives through institutional websites and social media platforms, which had become the sole channel for communicating and conveying various types of content.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of our research was to verify how, during the lockdown, the cultural organisations in question acted to create innovative content and communication opportunities in order to retain, approach, and not alienate their actual and potential audiences and how this could also have a positive effect on their willingness/capability to use fundraising tools and channels, including digital ones.



## KEY ELEMENTS OF THE STUDY

### PERIOD:

The study was conducted from mid-March to the end of April 2020.

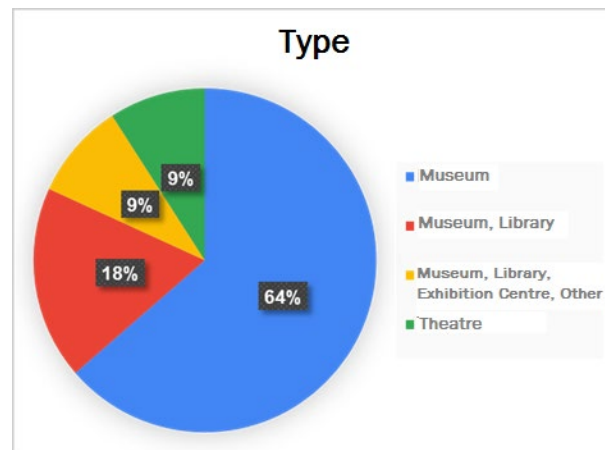
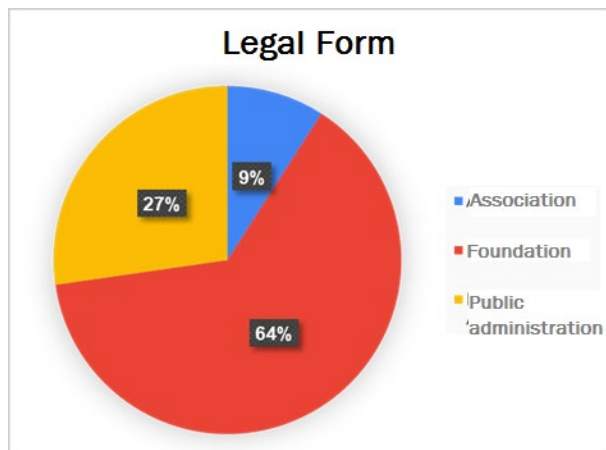
### ORGANISATIONS ANALYSED:

Science Museum, Trento | The Prado Museum, Madrid | Gallerie Estensi, Modena | GAM, Turin | MAMBO, Bologna | Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa | Genus Bononiae, Bologna | The Bagatti Valsecchi Museum, Milan | MUDEC, Milan | Donnaregina Contemporary Art Museum, Naples | Museo Madre, Naples

The analysis revealed information on:

- conception, development, and launch of audience development initiatives
- any changes in the type and amount of content offered to the public via websites and social media platforms
- any implementation of fundraising initiatives/campaigns (for themselves, for other organisations involved in the front line of the health emergency, for artists or professionals in the cultural sector)

## WHAT INSTITUTIONS WERE INTERVIEWED?

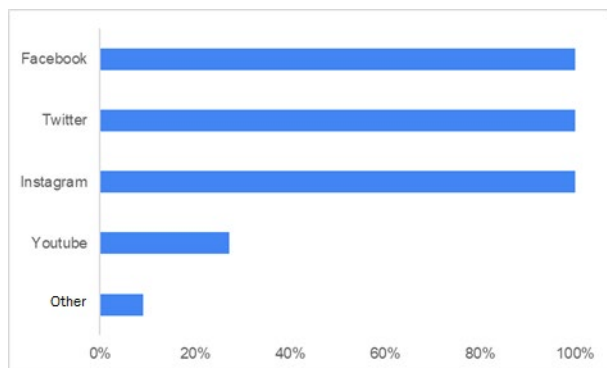


## HOW DID THEY COMMUNICATE? HOW DO THEY COMMUNICATE?

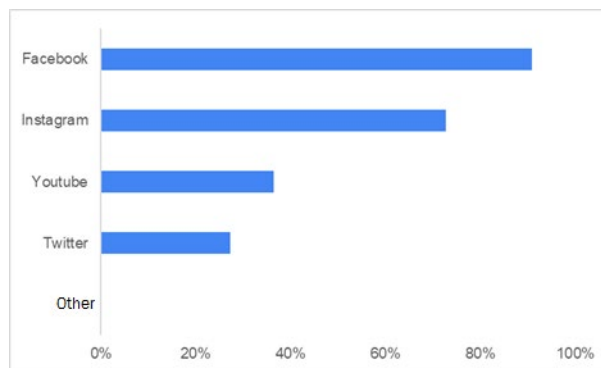


## FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THEIR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Which platforms were used the most by the organisations before the crisis?

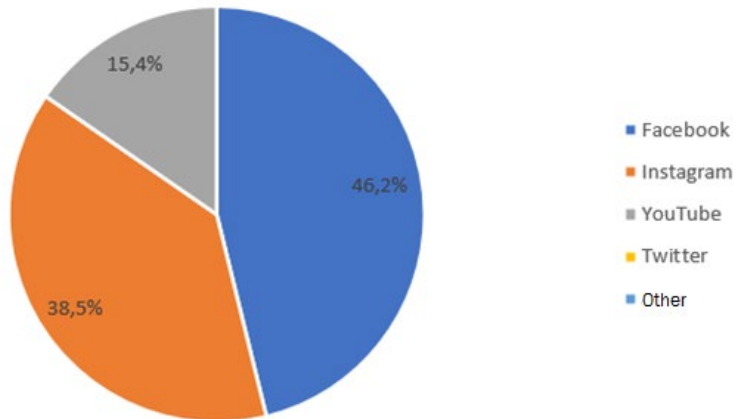


Which of these were implemented during the crisis?



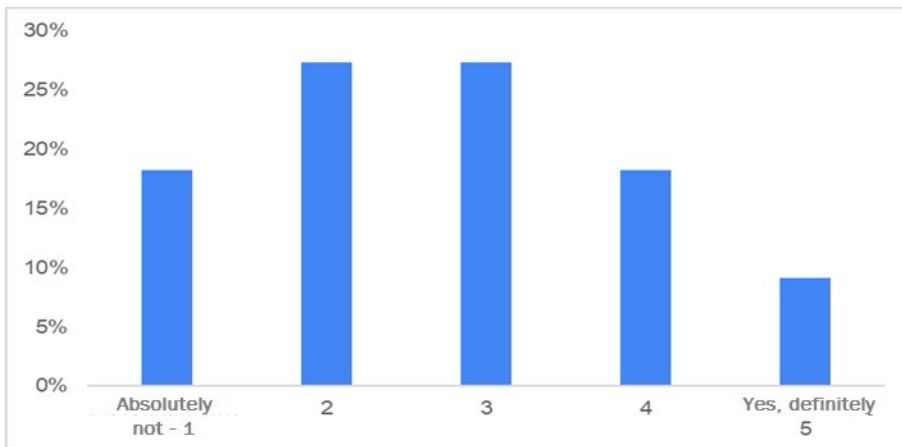
The percentage of responses is calculated for each individual social media platform.

## IMPLEMENTATION IN THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS (%)





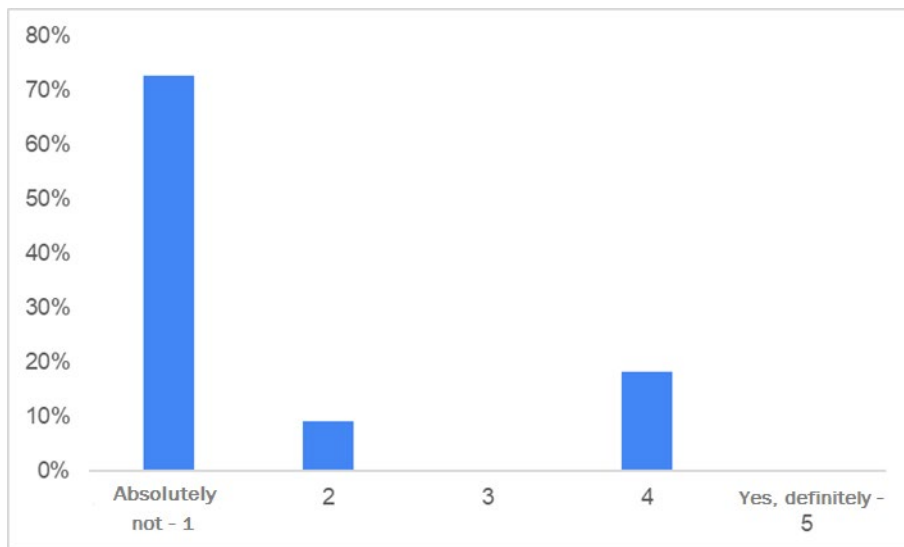
## DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY DID YOU NOTE INCREASED/NEW AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES\*?



Percentage of responses

\*All the organisations examined were engaged in Audience Development activities before the Covid-19 emergency.

## IF YOU USED IT BEFORE, DID YOU NOTICE AN INCREASED FREQUENCY OF CONTACT?



Percentage of responses

## WHAT COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES WERE INTRODUCED?

- ✓ Increased use of social media, workshops promoted by GAM's Education Department, contests, and columns
- ✓ Creation of "The Director's Walks" format and "Do-it-yourself Egyptian" video tutorials for children and increasing the number of videos in the series "Snapshots from the collection": from one per month to four videos published in March
- ✓ Continued promotion and communication of planned exhibitions (without attempted sale of tickets or products)
- ✓ Little Mart at home
- ✓ Virtual gallery tours, quizzes and trivia in Instagram stories
- ✓ Publication of videos with a famous YouTuber from Bologna
- ✓ Campaigns on social media, "Il blog delle meraviglie" blog on the Gallerie Estensi website and a column in Gazzetta di Modena newspaper, development of an app for the Ducal Palace

## WHAT COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES WERE INTRODUCED?

- ✓ Increased publication of posts, sponsorship of the app for a virtual tour, educational contest for children, "maybe you didn't know that..." initiative in various weekly episodes related to some trivia about the museum, participation in the various challenges promoted by many Italian museums, sending at least one newsletter per week.
- ✓ The MUDEC Delivery campaign with 5 different sections (#isegretidellacollezionepermanente, #vietatoagliadulti, #pilloledalfuturo, #ricattedartista, #profilidartista)
- ✓ Use of Instagram stories to engage the community through surveys, tutorials, and challenges.
- ✓ "2minutidimambo" (2 minutes of mambo) initiative
- ✓ Interviews, live broadcasts on Facebook and YouTube

## WHAT COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES WERE INTRODUCED?

- ✓ Communication activities related to the publication on the museum's website of exhibitions and performances (published in stages and for a limited period); - Involvement of experts on culture who talk about the museum during the period it is closed.
- ✓ Posts dedicated to accessing the digital materials at Mart museum; 2 - detailed articles published on the museum's website to develop the “nuggets of information” contained in the posts; 3 - Little Mart at home - tutorials on manual activities for children
- ✓ Look, Search, Discover; #GAMconTE; Things to do at home; #homeARTlab. New column via newsletter: The link parade of museums. Contest on Instagram in collaboration with Nikon Italia: #fotoimperfette.
- ✓ Games for families and online courses for students.

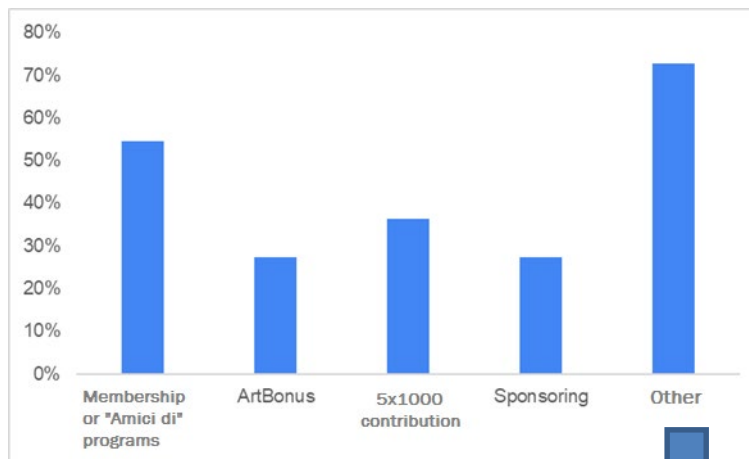
## FUNDRAISING

Did the organisation engage in fundraising activities before the crisis?

**Yes, all the institutions interviewed conducted fundraising activities before the crisis.**

# WOW!

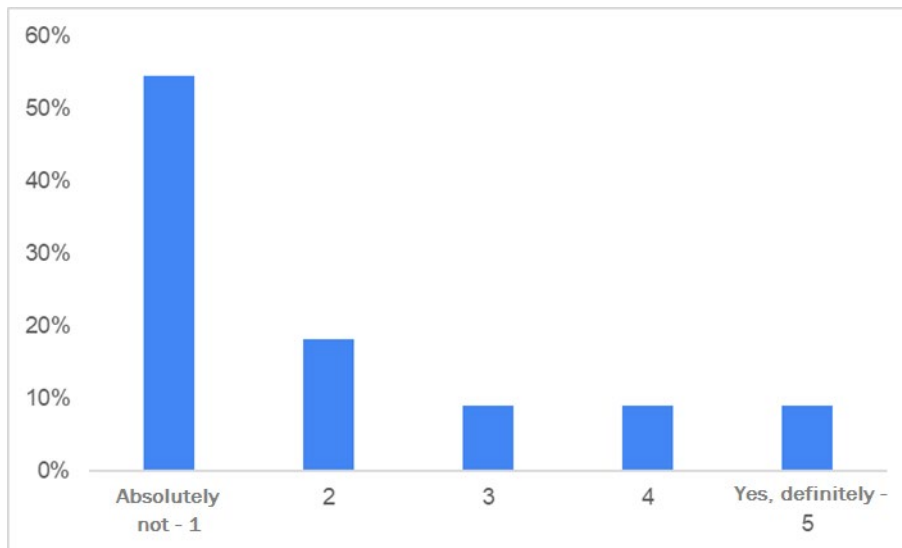
## HOW DID THE ORGANISATION ENGAGE IN FUNDRAISING BEFORE COVID-19?



“Other” includes:

- independent collection with a gift brooch
- possibility for companies to hold meetings, gala evenings, conferences, previews, and special initiatives
- private events on the premises of the cultural organisation
- Roll of honour
- “Support the Foundation” campaign
- donations
- donations for projects

## DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY DID YOU NOTE INCREASED/NEW FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY?



Percentage of responses



## IF SO, WHAT FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES DID YOU NOTE?

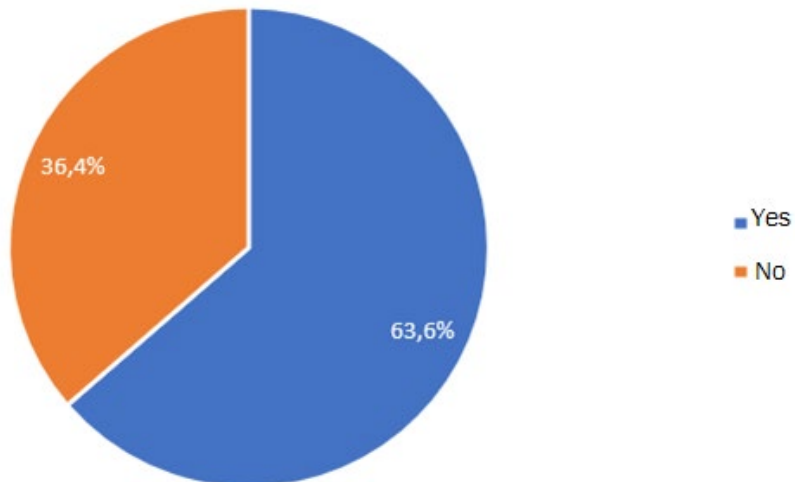
Ad hoc "Support us during the emergency, donate a ticket to us" campaign which, with a donation worth two tickets (€ 20), included one admission at the time of reopening (worth € 10), and promotion of the "5x1000" contribution destined for charitable organizations with newsletters and dedicated posts, also on social media.

They implemented the existing ones by means of advertising under the videos and reference to tangible projects implemented by the museum also through donations. They also added the possibility to donate on-line through Satispay and PayPal.

Fundraising for  
the Sant'Orsola  
Hospital in  
Bologna

Before each live  
broadcast 2  
images sponsoring  
the "5X1000"  
contribution were  
shown.

## WAS THE ORGANISATION'S WEBSITE MODIFIED FOR THE EMERGENCY BY ADDING A "SUPPORT US" SECTION OR, IF POSSIBLE, A DONATION SECTION\*?



\*All the websites analysed were found to be *RESPONSIVE*

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## CONCLUSIONS

- Due to the almost total shutdown of activities involving the physical presence of the public, organisations in the sector spent this time improving **their use of digital communication tools**
- They **changed their way of communicating**, shifting from merely informative and contact-based communication to communication which is able to convey the values, the key figures, and the beneficiaries of their activities, as well as to transmit cultural content in an innovative manner
- The increased attention to digital communication has also made it possible to **understand the degree of interest, concern, and loyalty of the public** towards cultural organisations
- The increased use of digital tools has also had a positive impact on the **possibility of developing new fundraising tools** also in the cultural sector.

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For information on the Professional Master in  
Tourism Promotion and Management of Cultural Heritage

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