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Lector in Fabula: Reinventing Digital Publishing to Attract the Youth and Strengthen Cultural Capital in Sites Museums and Collections



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Abstract New digital publishing diversifies tourism offers in peripheral destinations with heritage-based products and services, addressing stakeholder alliances and improving professional skills to internationalize locally operating micro-enterprises, achieve excellence and facilitate their uptake by the global market. We present a composite tourism product created in seven peripheral destinations in Greece, Italy, Spain, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. The final product constitutes a digital publishing Trilogy (Cultural Route, iBook, Heritage Games) that is exploiting both the technology intense experience and the onsite condition in the territory. It is seamlessly connected with tourism consumption points at place level, facilitating authentic and multicultural experiences along with needed tourism services, accessible in real time, such as accommodation, facilities, transport, catering, souvenirs and traditional products, open, indoor and artistic activities. The product builds an unprecedented opportunity to terminate the vicious circle of generating and distributing low quality tourism commodities exchangeable by price.

Keywords Cultural communication · Narration · 4IR (4th Industrial Revolution)

1 Introduction

The 4th Industrial Revolution, a concept explicitly explained by Schwab in the homonymous book, has altered the production of various industrial sectors, mostly due to the fusion of technologies blurring the line between digital and physical,—the cultural market included [1]. New communication patterns define new markets and preferences, while the constant use of e-devices in daily life impacts the common sense through the interpretation of visual codes. ICT allows manipulating and animating the images repurposing the context in a composite process unthinkable

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just a few years ago [2]. Digital Publishing 2.0 is marked by the conversion technologies that promise an unprecedented level of consumer interaction with content through smartphones, e-readers, and tablets, as well as an equally engaging experience through computers [3: 5–11, 4: 23–24, 5: 787–790]. But what kind of impact can this opportunity have on the ability to produce meaning beyond the technical aspect?

As per the EU AVMSD 2018/Article 16 [6: 1] it is necessary to develop immersive and pervasive solutions for AV, platforms, games, films and communication media and thus bring the quality of cultural content to unprecedented new levels. The focus is clearly put on cultural content aiming also and to protect the youth from violence contamination, which is deeply diffused in the digital world. In this respect the production of culture using new technologies, such as digital publishing, is opening opportunities and perspectives, declaring war to uncontrolled that give rise to a horror insensitive youth, hostage to bullying, war games, and contrived reality.

We defend the thesis that digital publishing is an exciting opportunity for the development of knowledge connected to heritage places, site museums and collections, as it is the only process that can support values and meanings. We define as digital publishing specific to cultural content, the value-driven, artistic multi-media narrative that impacts the mental process to create abstractions, leading to the cognitive reconstruction of an appropriate context: only then digital publishing becomes a carrier of creative ideas and a platform to exercise participatory culture. The articulation of complex semantic languages is a condition *sine qua non* for the creation of cultural contents: thus the creation of cultural contents that cannot be self-driven.

2 The Digital Revolution

Pietro Montani, in his treatise on technologies of sensitivity [7], points out that today there is a ‘literacy’ situation spontaneously offered by the possibilities of the technologies, disordered in the mode, rhapsodic and still linked to the default procedures offered by the seller. Scholars agree that the digital shift has not assisted our cognitive abilities to perform better due to the acquisition of digital literacies does not build the precondition for the creation of art works [8–13]. One should not think that only technology, is able to produce special effects and it is not vector graphics, but the poetics of the grands masters like Homer, Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Aristophanes, Dante, Shakespeare and Cervantes that have a deep impact on the audience. Mounting successive scenes in synchronous time does not refer to a multilayer digital editing system, but to the liberation of St. Peter in the Vatican by Raphael or the dream of Leonardo to fly. To perfectly shoot an actor on a perspective outside the scene is not motion tracking in blue screen, but it is again a grand master like Fellini or Bergman, the expressive paradigm that has generated meaning.

The digital revolution provides means to our ability to use symbols, which allows the audience set out on the path to a work of art, to history, to culture to appropriate a degree of knowledge he did not have before. Knowledge is always a traumatic process, caused by the condition of *thaumazein*, the existential upheaval of which Aristotle spoke. It means generating an imbalance and moving from a consequent imbalance to a new, more advanced and solid balance, reconfiguring the old information with the new in a new scheme. The digital publishing market, the one that is specific to the composite cultural communication is particularly blessed with the ability to reconfigure any type of static data, as it is heavily relies on multi image production and has a computer graphic-base. Its ability to synthesize an integrated interpretation of composite images reveals one of the hidden features not used by any other means of communication in the digital age: the ability to manipulate an image, the ability to write a story from a white page makes digital publishing one of the most interesting new products for the cultural and touristic market.

3 Methodology

Funded by the 2014-2020 COS/TOUR/694933 Project *DIVERTIMENTO*, the *EUROTHENTICA* Digital Collection is a new genre in the digital publishing focused to enhance the onsite-offsite experience in seven peripheral destinations in GR/IT/ES/SI/RO/BG/TR with a new pattern for cultural [14]. Two research questions prevailed, namely:

- (a) how to terminate the vicious circle of generating and distributing low quality tourism commodities exchangeable on the basis of the price and
- (b) how to incorporate the technology intense experience into the experience in the territory through a novel form of digital publishing, where higher skilled workers create and distribute an open access participatory space and where the audience participates in a multifaceted way, most notably by redistributing, commenting, re-editing and customizing contents.

3.1 The Survey

EUROTHENTICA has not been created in isolation: it has explored the views of 452 stakeholders in an effort to understand how new cultural consumption types are generated in the creative economy and how these changes are affecting the consumption pattern. A Pilot Project has been designed in each country with 70 geolocations in total. Stakeholders showed an interest in being involved in products/services development in the Pilot Project Area, which is declining in the more mature destinations: BG:100.0%, IT:80%, RO:75.0%, SI:70.0%, TR:50%, GR:45.5%. Stakeholders underlined in BG/GR/TR/IT:80%; RO:81.8%, SI:54.5%

that they are aware of the heritage included in the Pilot Projects and that those would help diversify the tourism offer in their communities: SI/IT:100%; BG:90.0%; RO:81.8%; TR:72.7%; GR:70%. The Pilot Projects inspire new business models in SI:100%; TR:90%; RO:81.8%; IT:80%, BG:50.8%; GR:36.4%: again the interest is declining in the 3S destinations Varna and Rhodes.

Guided by the stakeholder views and the particularities of each of the 70 geolocations, a new service with cognitive-emotional affinity has been modelled to attract the market with a new digital heritage narrative with onsite and off-site usability. This *lector in fabula*, incorporated in the EUROTHENTICA Collection and published as an iBook Collection at the Appstore aimed to demonstrate how heritage places could develop a *new asset value-driven* and *human-centric* communication policy with the public, while connecting with industry-related, experienced-based products and services to meet needs and requirements of the demand side. EUROTHENTICA has been tested as a service at the ITB Berlin 2017 not only as a Project-driven business model, but also as the proactive promoter of each participating region. Supported by Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), it has attracted 92 tourism providers in GR/IT/ES/SI/RO/BG/TR for further exploitation and has been selected as one of the three best practices of the COSME Programme 2014–2020.

3.2 Technical Features

EUROTHENTICA uses a fusion technology that includes various and different electronic formats in one format like, pictures, sound, music, text, video, multivisions and interactive pictures converging into a cohesive communication narrative. It embeds non-textual multi-media including interactive images and image galleries, videos, audio files and interactive animated graphic design. In this way EUROTHENTICA inevitably becomes an agent for experience-driven cultural heritage products and services that are not yet in place, but are needed in the context of the re-valorization of the territory.

Being a free downloadable book at the Appstore, EUROTHENTICA offers to onsite and dislocated audiences a significance chance to create their personal place-bonding through a digital publication, which consists of text, images, interactive images, videos and multimedia and a variety of shared practices (Bookry/Reader Cloud; Google+; Facebook; Twitter; Email; Web embedding). Mobile availability is provided for users with a mobile data connection, alternatively it a copy can be stored on the device. The whole Collection capitalizes on existing local resources to enable local businesses with proximity to the selected geolocations benefit by being present in the interactive Google Map that leads to the enhanced visitation. By being a pure digital publishing product, EUROTHENTICA can exceed its own life re-inventing itself, available for further updates and considering transformations in the connected consumer market.

4 The Design and Delivery of the EUROTHENTICA Collection

In an effort to create multisensory experiences at the 70 selected destinations, EUROTHENTICA has developed a multimedia cultural narrative evolving across 70 geolocations transnational route (ten geolocations route in each participating country) and a game, which are strictly intertwined, and where the narratives in the iBook hide the game clues, so as to motivate the youth engage in reflective reading.

4.1 Italy: Looking for Myths

The Narrative focuses on ten places in the south of Italy are filling the gap left by Goethe, who, shipping from Naples to Palermo, cut out of his Journey one of the most ancient parts of Italy, rich in history, heritage and culture. Enriched with texts, pictures, animations and audiovisuals, the history is recreated through deeply imaginary myths. The heritage game, Your Values, Your Choice, focuses on the human values and behavior of an immigrant from Padula who arrived in New York in the last century and fought against organized crime. It takes as a reference, the native house, today a Museum, of Joe Petrosino, not focusing on the character but on what he represents. The Museum has in place two key elements of the game, the story which is the narrative part and the game mechanics that are all the resources available to drive the visitor through the story. The game as it is designed to be “without walls” and opens the possibility to be played by both onsite and dislocated audiences, who play it in a different way, but interacting with the same content. The design of the game follows the structure of the Museum through the four rooms that are connected to four concepts related to the mafia and the anti-mafia struggle fear, courage, connivance, freedom. Each room makes the visitor reflect on a particular set of values. The game is played anonymously or by introducing a nickname, the choice is made by either the museum or the player. Two popular open access mobile apps, Mentimeter and Kahoot, collect visitor insights dropping in this way the ICT barrier. As a result, the museum can collect real-time information about the content and its impact on onsite visitors or offsite players.

4.2 Greece: The Unites States of Europe—Rhodes 1305–1522

A multimedia heritage narrative reveals stories connected to the UNESCO enlisted Medieval City of Rhodes, while a complementary game entitled Grand Master Challenge evolves around ten selected monuments. The game is designed to offer visitors a participatory heritage service with cognitive-emotional impact, where

validated expert knowledge matches the creative skills of experience seekers. Instead of attracting visitors by merely exposing asset visibility, the game links the tangible object with its intangible dimension, the hidden meanings and the stories in a cognitive-emotional way, embedding the technology intense experience into the onsite condition. Main goal is to inspire visitors get to know the Mediaeval City through and immersive approach by co-creating contents while having fun. At the same time, they can valorize local heritage as they are experiencing it in a playful way without alienating the socio-historical context. The Game tells a story at each play unit, where each monuments offers players a hero to identify with. Depth and complexity depend directly on the location-task correlation, which affects the time required perform the game tasks at each location. By mastering all relevant tasks, the winner is awarded the title of the Grand Master. To promote the game's ludic character, winners receive a diploma and a free meal/drink and his/her photograph is uploaded in the Facebook/GM-Gallery, Generation II.

4.3 Spain: Mazaricos, the Inner Journey on the Santiago Way

The heritage narrative is based on existing emotional personal experience of the visitor/pilgrim connected in the territory of Mazaricos. It combines through a game the inner journey of the Pilgrim (inspiration, search, peace, journey, overcoming, deep, discover/findings, magic, connection, time, faith, respect, meetings, effort, implication, resistance, nature, silence, flow) with local heritage using the social media channels for creating a double experience of emotional co-creation real and virtual using different #hashtags. Each Pilgrim becomes an avatar of the game. While playing in a real scenario connected to the ten selected geolocations, the emotional experience collected in the social media channels is being shared through the networks of the participating "pilgrims".

4.4 Slovenia: The Last Conspiracy

The narrative *The Last Conspiracy* is based on true story about the conspiracy against emperor Leopold I Habsburg is evolving in ten geolocations in the proximity of the castle of Rače. Count Tattenbach, owner of the castle met in 1668 the with other two nobles and signed document of a conspiracy against the Emperor Leopold of Habsburg, who signed the shameful peace treaty of Vasvar in 1664 with the Ottomans returning to them Christian territories rightfully regained in battle. In the homonymous game played in the Castle, players have the mission to find the traitor among the six characters connected through a love story within the conspiracy. Love becomes the catalyst for the betrayal of the political cause and the conspiracy. Young

adults from the community (and alternatively professional actors) play a theater performance of 20 minutes prior to the game start to initiate visitors into the game plot. Visitors select to impersonate one of six historic figures, forming two groups competing with each other. Visitors move through the castle and follow QR codes that help reveal the clues, while the actors are assisting the players with hidden clues. But also raise the tension. When the game is over, visitors reassemble in the main hall and watch another short performance, an epilogue revealing the fates of each of the historic figures.

4.5 Romania: The People's Verdict—18th of December 1918

The heritage narrative displays all the historic stages of the Romanian Unification that has culminated after WWI on the 12/18/1918 in Alba Iulia. The game, entitled *A Day in Alba Iulia* is played locally within the fortified walls of the Alba Iulia Citadel narrating the Unification across the centuries. At each play unit forwards visitors to the next historic stage within an evolving narrative, whose clues are hidden in the iBooChapter *The People's Verdict*. By mastering all relevant tasks, the winner is awarded at the Alba Iulia Tourist Office.

4.6 Bulgaria: The Golden Anchor, Varna 1869

A heritage narrative connects ten monuments from the nineteenth century in the historic centre of Varna. The aim is to familiarize visitors with the efforts of Varna to connect to the European family after its successful decoupling from the Ottoman yoke. The narrative suggests the physical representation of Varna as an open-minded intercultural society, providing a sense of sensitivity, cultural recognition and emotional experience visitors can acquire during their stay. The Game called *The Magic of Time* evolves around the ten selected monuments communicating messages that reveal the socio-historic background of the society in Varna at that time through a jigsaw tapestry in paper version. Ten quizzes are performed at each monument, so that the players match each answer with the relevant monument, using the iBook as clue-finder. By answering all questions, the winner is awarded with the ancient song of Varna. The game consists of ten riddles, one of which is typically devoted to a specific local asset. Those, who answer properly and/or find the sequence between the riddle and the asset, gains a jig saw particle. Once reading all ten riddles, the gamer receives all particles. When all particles match, the old magnificent sign of Varna from the late nineteenth century appears on the back side.

4.7 Turkey: Connecting Cultures—A Truly Eurasian Story

The heritage narrative starts with the Argonauts and is evolving toward the Greek colonization of the Black Sea, the Romans, the Byzantines and the Ottomans until it reaches the Turkish War of Independence in the aftermath of WWI. A local high school community developed a story based on the heritage narrative, which connects ten selected monuments in the wider area of Trabzon with a read thread. The main game idea is not only to promote the local tourism but to engage other schools and stakeholders to replicate the video concept developing new stories based on heritage described in the Pilot Project. A theatrical representation is recorded and included in the iBook. Visitors demonstrate the evidence of the knowledge acquired at the game locations, which is shared through the social media channels.

5 Conclusion

The narration, that is to say the consolidated ways of cinema and theatre, reconditioned in an audiovisual language specific to cultural goods, helps to decode the symbolism behind which the artists hide reality and bring with them emotion, and the emotion helps the visitor to navigate within the own a wealth of ideas to search for and rebuild the meaning of the work of art. If a story is written and realized in a convincing way, it increases interest and curiosity and encourages integration which in turn supports the cognitive approach. The latter is the precondition for the knowledge to be processed, assimilated and placed in the above context. The awareness of having understood strongly influences the motivation to keep going forward, offering satisfaction, strengthening the attention in all future processing, activating the chain reaction cognitive-motivation and releasing new energies for learning.

Information, the raw material of a narrative structure, comes from the specific study of the work and from specialists, but it cannot build an experience per se. Narrations on the contrary derive from a creative approach to that information, and are articulated in an artistic language according to the advanced ways and consolidated in the public. History and narration are not synonymous: each figure, not whether imaginary or not, when it becomes part of a history, transforms into a value carrier who interacts with the one's conscience, passes from mouth to mouth, collects and shows knowledge. In this way each story is a vector of a narration woven within it, which is in turn the instrument which shapes our reactions, while the information is the raw material on which it is built. And 'on which', does not mean 'with which': it is not information in a row, but a fabric made using information as threads. For centuries storytellers have regulated the tone of life of the communities they met. They didn't make history, but built memory using history and embodied identity. This may be the role of the new narrative in the era of digital

reproducibility of the work of art where the composite digital publishing may become its carrier.

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