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Strategic Innovative Marketing and Tourism

Current Trends and Future Outlook—10th ICSIMAT, Ionian Islands, Greece, 2023

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Flavio Tiago
Editors

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Editors
Androniki Kavoura
University of West Attica
Athens, Greece

Teresa Borges-Tiago
University of the Azores
Ponta Delgada, Portugal

Flavio Tiago
University of the Azores
Ponta Delgada, Portugal

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This volume and every of our ICSIMAT COMMUNITY volumes are dedicated to Prof. Belch, Prof. Buhalis, Prof. Morgan, Prof. Gretzel, Niki, Diamantis Kitrides, late Prof. Avlonitis, Prof. Kitchen, Prof. Zotos, the scientific and organizing committee, the editors who kindly offered space in their prestigious journals and all the ICSIMAT community, which have contributed to our success. All for one, one for all!

Preface

Aims and Scope of the Conference

The International Conference on Strategic Innovative Marketing and Tourism (ICSIMAT) 2023 was held from 22 to 26 of September in Zakynthos, Ionian Islands, Greece.

ICSIMAT 2023 provided a timely and interactive international platform for academics, government and industry practitioners in order to discuss and develop new perspectives in the fields of marketing, innovative technologies, tourism, communication, education and management. They were able to discuss and debate current trends and future outlook issues that affect the future direction of marketing and tourism research and practice in a digital and innovative era.

ICSIMAT community includes worldwide well-known scholars, faculty members, doctorate students, researchers and business practitioners who network and exchange research work and inter-institutional co-operations.

ICSIMAT 2023 accepted and hosted 122 original research work, after a double-blinded peer-review process. Seven presentations were part of the established industry session that is organized during ICSIMAT conferences. 25 sessions in total were held in order to advance and contribute to specific research areas in the field of strategic innovative marketing and tourism.

The sessions that were created under ICSIMAT 2023 were:

Session on: **Success Stories from Organizations, Industry and Institutes**
Session Chair: **Yannis Vassiliadis, CEO KYANA, Greece**
Session on: **Consumer Behavior (a)**
Session Chair: **Apostolos Giovanis, University of West Attica, Greece**
Session on: **Media Communication**
Session Chair: **Nikos Grammalidis, Information Technology Institute, Greece**
Session on: **Immersive Technologies**

Session Chair: **Idalia Maldonado Castillo, Escuela Superior de Computo-Instituto Politecnico Nacional, Mexico**
Session on: **Branding Related Issues**
Session Chair**: Pinelopi Athanasopoulou, University of Peloponnese, Greece**
Session on: **Methodological Innovations**
Session Chair: **George Stalidis, International Hellenic University, Greece**
Session on: **Marketing Perspectives on Turbulent Times**
Session Chairs: **Eirini Papadaki and Alexandros Apostolakis, Tourism and Entrepreneurship Laboratory, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece**
Session on: **Innovative Culture and Tourism Related Issues**
Session Chair: **Sofia Gkarane, University of Macedonia, Greece**
Session on: **Sustainability Issues and the Role of Not for Profit Organizations**
Session Chair: **Katerina Kabassi, Ionian University, Greece**
Session on: **Human Resources in the Post COVID-19 Era**
Session Chair: **Teresa Borges-Tiago, University of the Azores, Portugal**
Session on: **Policy and Strategic Issues in Culture, Marketing and Tourism**
Session Chair: **Joselia Fonseca, University of the Azores, Portugal**
Session on: **Enogastronomic (Food and Wine) Consumer Issues in Marketing and Tourism (b)**
Session Chair: **Aikaterini Stavrianea, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece**
Session on: **Higher Education Management-Social Skills and Competences**
Session Chair: **Sofia Asonitou, University of West Attica, Greece**
Session on: **Regenerative Tourism**
Session Chair: **Michele Thornton, University of New York at Oswego, USA**
Session on: **Related ICSIMAT Topics**
Session Chair: **Anna Barwińska-Małajowicz, University of Rzeszow, Poland**
Session on: **Consumer Behavior and Social Media (c)**
Session Chair: **Maria Vrasida, Deree, the American College**
Session on: **Consumer Behavior (c)**
Session Chair: **Prokopis Theodoridis, Hellenic Open University, Greece**
Session on: **(Social) Entrepreneurship, (Social) Management Financial Issues**
Session Chair: **Mihaela Gotea, Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania**
Session on: **Consumer Behavior and Social (Media) Networking (d)**
Session Chairs: **Aspasia Vlachvei, University of Western Macedonia, Greece and Ourania Notta, International Hellenic University, Greece**
Session on: **Internal Control and Transparency**
Session Chair: **Petros Kalantonis, University of West Attica, Greece**
Session on: **Alternative Forms of Tourism**
Session Chair: **Victor Briciu, Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania**
Session on: **Health Issues in Management, Tourism, Marketing**
Session Chair: **Efstathios Kefallonitis, University College London (UCL), UK**

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Hybrid Session

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Topics Related to ICSIMAT

Marketing, Social Media Marketing, e-Branding and Brand Experience Management, Digital marketing, Marketing Analytics, Marketing Research, Services Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communications, Consumer Behavior, New Product Design and Development, Sports Marketing, B2B and B2C Marketing, Pricing Strategies, Art and Cultural Marketing, Mobile Services, Gaming, Gamification and Augmented Reality, Location-based Services, Internet-of-Things, Heritage and Museum Management in the Digital Era, Cross-cultural marketing, Tourism and Destination Marketing, Enogastronomic Tourism, Event Tourism, Health Tourism, Transport Industry Marketing, Social Media, Experiential and Sensory Marketing, Customer Relationship Management and Social CRM, Collaborative Marketing, Safety Marketing, Economics of Business Strategy, Accounting Marketing, Global Business, Marketing Finance, Healthcare Management, Accounting Education, Skills and Competences, Higher Education, Retail Marketing, Sales Management, Public Relations and Crisis Management, E-commerce, Marketing Strategy, Sectoral Marketing, Safety Management and Marketing, Entrepreneurship.

Aigaleo, Greece — Androniki Kavoura
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- The famous publication house SPRINGER for their communication sponsorship.
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- The members of the scientific committee that honored the conference with their online presence and provided a significant contribution to the review of papers as well as for their indications for the improvement of the conference.
- All members of the organizing committee for their help, support and spirited participation before, during and after the virtual conference.
- The session organizers for their willingness to organize sessions of high importance and for their editorial work, contributing in the development of valued services to the conference.
- The Municipality of Zakynthos and all stakeholders who greatly contributed to the organization of this mega event.

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Enlightening the Brand Building-Audience Response Link
Prof. Cleopatra Veloutsou, University of Glasgow, Scotland

The Puzzle of Aging
Dr. Liz Mestheneos, A Founder and Board Member of the NGO "50+ Hellas," Past President of AGE-Platform Europe

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The UNESCO Experiential Digital Heritage Narrative in the Black Sea Basin

Aldo Di Russo and Dorothea Papathanasiou-Zuhrt

Abstract New communication patterns define market preferences, while the constant use of e-devices in daily life impacted the common sense through the interpretation of visual codes. It is necessary to determine the quintessential steps to define a strategic approach to the European audio-visual aarket and find new opportunities for research, application and creation of new iconic audiovisuals to design and deliver cognitive-emotional experiences for an inclusive and accessible cultural heritage. The digital revolution has altered the production of various industrial sectors, the audio-visual market including and the use of outdated languages and technologies results in the loss of the audience in the sector. Transferring domain specific expertise and know how into new technologies, is not only adding to the quality of contents and the tradition of the sector, but it is becoming a factor for further developments and progress. Supported by the EU funded project BSB/831/ HERiPRENEURSHIP "Establishing long-lasting partnerships to upgrade heritage-based offers and create new investment opportunities in tourism and the cultural and creative industries", a novel cultural experience pattern is introduced for the 6 Unesco-listed properties in Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Georgia, and Türkiye in the form of a multimedia eBook collection. The design is articulated in two central moments: (a) the presentation of a methodology acquired from many years of research in new media languages and applied in a number of European case studies on the use of tangible or intangible cultural heritage as instruments of social cohesion; (b) from a practical point of view, this methodology is applied to stories, myths, traditions and history reconfigured for the construction of new stories for an unlimited global audience. This paper discusses the process to lead a multicultural and multigenerational audience towards quality experiences at places of cultural significance through an integrated word-image relationship in the digital environment.

Keywords Digital storytelling · Digital grammar · Audio-visuals

A. Di Russo
Artifactory, 20 Panaghias Evretis, 821 00 Chios, Greece

D. Papathanasiou-Zuhrt (✉)
Open University of Cyprus, 33 Yannou Kranidioti, 2020 Latsia, Cyprus
e-mail: dorothea.papathanasiou@ouc.ac.cy

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1 Introduction

In 1997, the digital world was just beginning to populate the needs of mankind and the market, and a global audience was summoned to the Moscone Center in San Francisco to attend the Macromedia Conference *Ignite the Web* [1]. The mission was to understand the way forward for the Internet: a mature and tested technology for specialists from the military and academic world was becoming part of everyday life. At the time, the Internet meant a network that could basically only carry text, but according to experts, it would develop very quickly and intensively and would provide possibilities and opportunities waiting to be discovered. Industries were anticipating huge investments from which they expected equally huge profits, and for that reason companies like Apple, Macromedia, and Walt Disney had summoned a heterogeneous audience together: engineers, programmers, philosophers, poets, musicians and so on. Several experts from the audiovisual sector had many prejudices about that new digital world that wanted to enter the old world, with directors, television writers, scriptwriters, and creative professionals grappling with a language that had yet to be built. The major technology makers were looking for answers on a series of research questions such as: new communication paradigms, engaging and useful ways to impact future users; what the new articulation of the forms is, to give sense and meaning to the new medium, and finally how to turn novelty into innovation. While the term novelty is expressing the technological aspect, innovation is to be sought in society, and from that day on, it was to be sought among the creative forces of the cultural industry. It was the same year that DCMS launched the 'Creative Industries Mapping Document' [2]. While a simulator gave evidence of what would be the possibilities of the Net in every home in every country in the world, the debate suggested to use the future medium we were testing, to tell the story of the art by providing services to museums, pointing out that the necessary investments would come from applications for cultural tourism. The discussion tackled the topics of knowledge, emotion, experience, and that was how culture was about to be re-born in the digital environment with possibilities and opportunities that were unimaginable at the time. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate an experiment with a new audio-visual grammar that digital publishing urgently needs in the cultural heritage sector, which could overcome the word-image division by constructing paradigms of reference that rewrite the word-image relationship where orality is added to the written word in a universe of possibilities yet unknown.

2 Literature Review

Our time is characterized by the decline of the written word: the influx of images has prompted many to study the anthropological effects of the civilization of the image, to indicate the increasing centrality of visual communication in the mass culture of western society [3–7]. In his monograph Apocalyptic and integrated intellectuals:

mass communications and theories of mass culture first published in 1964, Umberto Eco links image and consumption arguing that we have become consumers of an intensive production of continuous stream messages, industrially mass-processed and broadcast according to the commercial rules of that period [8]. Already in the days of Paolo Uccello (1397–1475), pioneer in the visual perspective in art, great painters felt the need to insert words into their canvases and frescoes to reach where even their art could not reach [9: 21]. Cinema, where the integration of image and word is the perfect synthesis, but where the word is orality, seems to conclude the process of media integration.

When development processes are fast, it is vital to analyze what was predicted at the time with what happened afterwards. In the last two decades an abundance of influential publications has emerged discussing the impact of digital technologies culminating on the EU guidelines for the audiovisual and media services first published in 2018, especially article 16 "On the production and distribution of European heritage works [10–15]. In the same year, the Report on e-tourism, demonstrates that tourism grows in Italy, despite inadequate digital offers [16]. It seems that the path of research that began in 1997 in the framework of the Macromedia Conference Ignite the Web has come to a halt and has become entangled around technologies and infrastructures, stopping to reflect on the audiovisual languages for a conscious and profitable use of the digital product, so much to be considered inadequate after more than twenty years. The tendency of each new medium to imitate its predecessors has always existed, there was the tendency of the cinema to photograph the theatre and that of television to illustrate with images the content to which radio listeners were accustomed; it is therefore not shocking that the Net and the digital world in general has tried to imitate television. All the mistakes made must become a source of study, but mainly it must be understood as such:

- digital is an environment in which relationships are experienced;
- digital is a way of conceiving and generating a product;
- digital requires conceptual structures to favor and privilege the relationships between facts and not the facts themselves.

Almost thirty years after the Macromedia Conference Ignite the Web [1], the awareness has matured that no sector and no discipline alone will be able to provide global answers to a world that thinks and acts in a common direction and with the same tools for all. Technology alone is no longer enough: from now on the discussion shall focus on the methods and on the capacity of the audio-visual language to create human-centric experiences or not.

3 Research Methodology

Research and experimentation in new audiovisual languages is a reason for cognition and emotional impact at the service of representing the culture, history, and identity of a people. However, above all reasons, research in this domain is inherent to social

cohesion. We argue that language stimulates technology to go further in the direction of facilitating knowledge in a subject matter, thus, in the world of the creative industries, this bridge links artists and technicians το build together something new. In other words, art measures itself against the digital revolution, which is a culture of sensitivity that is made possible by what technology can develop. The opportunity to test this assumption was offered by the BSB/831/HERiPRENEURSHIP project. Funded by the 2014–2020 ENI CBC Black Sea Joint Operational Program, it aimed to establishing long-lasting partnerships to upgrade heritage-based offers and create new investment opportunities in tourism and the cultural and creative industries. 6 UNESCO sites in Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Georgia and Turkey have pursued a new genre in digital publishing to enhance the onsite-offsite experience among non-captive audiences. Two research questions prevailed, namely: (a) how to variate on the theme of virtual reality integrated with a reality that enhances the emotional afflatus; (b) how to impact the audience in a cognitive and emotional way allowing for the development of transformative experience in both the digital environment and the territory.

A valorization survey has been conducted in 2021 across 6 UNESCO properties in Greece (Archaeological Site of Philippi), Romania (Danube Delta), Bulgaria (Ancient City of Nessebar), Moldova (Intangible Cultural Heritage of Weaving Carpets), Georgia (Mtskheta-Tbilisi) and Turkey (Soumela Monastery in the Tentative List). 60 stakeholders have been interviewed in relation to their planning and management policies; 60 suppliers have given evidence on the status of the creative industries in the project area; and 180 foreign visitors have evaluated the sites visited, indicated needs, and formulated suggestions for improvement. Research results have revealed that there is a consensus in viewing digital storytelling as a powerful mechanism to promote the sites and build a quality tourism experience and the travel motivation. However, there are differences how the three groups define the tourism experience: while stakeholders and app providers focus on the accessibility issues preferring applications with a clear service orientation, like opening hours, transport means, short history etc., visitors request an impactful experience, which ensures "to learn and feel" and that the time spent on the sites was value for money, rather "value for time".

The results can be summarized as follows: (A) stakeholders, e.g., the public sector are not aware of the requirements for the creation of compelling contents and are often impeded to select experts by the very nature of the public procurement procedures, which impose the selection of the lowest offer. This results in low quality applications and direct loss of audiences, especially among the young. The further frustration of stakeholders combined with the distrust of market operators leads towards inhouse 'productions' with low quality software and unskilled staff: a vicious cycle is born. (B) Digital providers focus on the technical aspects and do not allocate efforts on the quality of contents, not willing to pay a price for research, expertise, and artistic input, arguing that the public procurement in the cultural sector is not a lucrative opportunity. The survey has unveiled that there is no common ground as to what "digital storytelling" is: for the service providers the liability for contents is not of their concern, while the heritage authorities expect quite the opposite. (C) 82%

of the visitors in the project area require quality cultural experiences such as AV-driven visitor centers, interactive experiences, apps with quality contents, gamified experienced, and multimedia eBooks with co-creation possibilities. All six UNESCO properties in the project areas have been criticized for being void of "experience and recreation opportunities" but "full of boring descriptions, digital or print". Thus, the requirements for the creation of the multimedia eBook collection have been decided by the demands of the three selected target groups. The guiding principle is to enhance the onsite-offsite cultural experience and improve the audience's creative capabilities and cultural capital. For this to happen a digital design has been weaved, to impact non-captive audiences in a cognitive-emotional way.

4 Application and Discussion

From the theoretical background built through the experiments and experience acquired, comes the more recent history of collaboration with museum institutions and territorial administrations [17: 8–9, 18: 328–329, 19: 25–28]. In the audio-visual industry there is constant insistence on the need to construct narratives that stimulate the listener's curiosity and interest. This seems a truism. Who would produce a story with the aim of boring the attention of the audience? It is necessary to start with how to do it and below, we suggest hints, methodology, sometimes procedures established by practice so that the research mentioned in the previous paragraphs can take place and provide usable analyses in the future.

The collection published under the name UNESCO Experiential Heritage Corridor in the Black Sea embeds non-textual multi-media including interactive images and image galleries, videos, audio files and interactive animated graphic design. It is offered to iOS and Android users as a free download. By being digitally born, the collection can be easily modified, re-invent and update itself with new data and media, a possibility the print media do not possess. We are accustomed to the caption descriptions that mark the stages of many of our visits to collections, exhibitions, museums. A well-crafted caption contains references, explicit or implicit, to historiographic sources or/and archaeological evidence that frame the object or building from a historical or artistic perspective: they are a document. We experimented with a way of constructing narratives in which the first rule was to act out the story by narrating it with the invisible presence of a narrator who becomes, when needed, a common part of the same objects used in the story. The narrative is not the label of the object, but turns established rules upside down, uses history to reaffirm the function that objects, for us artistic relics of a distant world, have had in that civilization, representatives of true foundations of the civilization that created them. It is history that will make room for objects and not objects that will be documents of history. By constructing the route with this method, each artefact ceases to be a past fact and becomes a "making itself" contemporary to the civilization that created it. The idea that past civilizations analyzed with the yardstick of the present has a counterproductive effect, when applied. It is one of the results of the many television

series based on historical characters, created for the sake of simplicity: to encourage identification with the character we make them act, love, suffer, and live in the same fashion as we do today. The consequence of this is to risk going to the theatre to see Medea, with our penal code in mind, and judging her a serial killer, desecrating one of the humankind's representative works with a higher content of values.

The heritage narrative is not an archaeological or philological reconstruction, but a fictional one, aimed at creating the environment to which the narrative refers, made up of artworks. Thus, contents are deliberately constructed around these artworks. This approach allows the audience to transcend to the other and the elsewhere becoming contemporaries of the heroes precisely to acquire its significance of the myth or story. For this to work, any scene embedded in the narrative, although totally imaginary, must give the idea of being verisimilarly possible, the narrations are constructed to erase, in the spectator, the idea of the special effect. To make all this possible, an extremely sophisticated technical-artistic procedure is now in place that merges reality and virtuality in a way that is invisible to the audience.

Substantial effort has been invested, that references to the past are artfully inserted into 60 narratives in a comparative and contrasting way, as in this way the narrators, who are the story heroes can unveil what would be difficult to comprehend at the UNESCO-listed sites in the project area. A tale conceived in this way moves away from the logic of viewing from the outside, from the vision of an interpretation to be suggested, and becomes internal to the facts and to the spectators themselves, who are led to be the protagonists of the narrated beacons. Each story becomes a theatrical, or rather meta-theatrical, mise-en-scène in which the rules are made explicit, and the tale is illustrated as a mise-en-scène. By accepting the key, a code is organised to decipher images and stories that were unknown until recently, the audience takes the first steps towards a culture of the past. It is precisely the code that provides the key to understanding that the heritage of the past is not limited to the stones on display in the museum, a collection, or a site, but to the set of ethical codes typical of a civilization or society.

5 Conclusion

Traditionally a book is read and not viewed. It is on books that civilization has been founded and evolution organized, for the simple reason that the word contains the dose of abstraction necessary to define concepts that we would be deprived of, if it were not there. The image traditionally becomes illustration, sometimes the text becomes the caption of the image.

One of the great challenges of representation in the new world of innovative technologies is to define digital publishing. It is the new frontier in the experimentation of audio-visual languages because it has become the place where the forms of digital audiovisuals converge and, at the same time, the place where text and context can mutually mutate their roles so that the effects of a cognitive experience can be amplified, of a loyalty to the use of the instrument as a place to excite.

Confusing a novelty with an innovation, that is the case of the digital television, means to consider a revolution the changing of the antenna. The tendency to define the digital book as text exported to tablets, has not only put the brakes on the development of the sector but has shifted the focus from the valuable innovation, that is to induce knowledge and experience, to a mere novelty of the reading medium that has nothing innovative per se.

The digital environment allows transposition between text and context, unimaginable in traditional media, through audiovisual crops, animations, allegories built in computer graphics and much more. The challenge, to build a paradigm and experiment with it in the field of culture, is still there. Cultural institutions would be the most interesting sources of data, information, and studies to generate an international audience and put the new digital grammar at the service of an economy that can enhance it, to build a bridge to other creative industries and build economies of scale, all on the condition of knowing the possibilities and opportunities for integration.

As was the case with the birth of newspapers, economic sustainability should not be sought directly (who pays for the newspaper), but indirectly (sustained value growth, in the case of our example, for museums, for culture, for tourism). It should not be the task of cultural institutions to increase the customer base, but to intervene in the degree of emotion and thus the experience of enjoyment. Therefore, the real innovation does not lie in the technology used, but in the methodology of approach to the production of stories and the integration of languages, the ability to construct a path where the e-readers can safely travel by raising the awareness in which *the new* is embedded in his or her or his *previous baggage*. This is what we call a transformative cognitive and emotional experience. Understanding a small mystery opens the door to enthusiasm and becomes leverage to continue and turn the page. The reaction continues at a higher level precisely because knowledge makes one happy and satisfied. One gets a little tired, but it is worth it.

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