How does Google Cultural Institute Affect the Collections of Museums? The Case of Turkey

Sümeyye Akça, PhD

Introduction

In recent years, progress on information and communication technology (ICT) affects the management of cultural heritage. While ICT plays key role in the accessibility and informed experiences of the public, it is also becoming more apparent in creating a participatory platforms for people and manager who managing and enjoying cultural heritage (Lekakis and Chrysanthi, 2011). Thus cultural memory institutions use this technology for creating digital content about their collection and make them available from all over the world. Increasing the value of collections using sophisticated and innovative new media also affects the economic development of countries and provides more integrated awareness about cultural identity and cross cultural communication (Brizard, Derde, Silberman, 2007).

ICT has provided wide range tools for cultural heritage management. Implementing these new tools provide also a lot of advantages for both memory institutions and users. Memory institutions can manage their collections more easily taking support about image processing, advanced publishing systems, and etc. The other side, while public involvement in the cultural heritage objects accessing without any restriction improves the public awareness and sense of belonging to the society, it also develops the content of the objects with crowdsourcing from all over the world. In order to benefit these advantages of new media tools, cultural memory institutions have opened their collections to the global access regardless of geographic location. Thus, memory institutions get advantage also raising their promotion and advertising among the others countries and institutions (Myat, 2012).

One of these new media platforms is Google Cultural Institute which has been applied to the cultural heritage area in recent years especially in museums. The purpose of this institution is to provide widely public awareness, use and augmented access online for the cultural heritage objects. It offers a lot of tools that makes easy for memory institutes put the collections online. With the online exhibitions, memory institutions can create stories about their collections. People can reach these collections all around the world with using wide range of platforms and can share the images they like with friends in their social accounts (Google Cultural Institute, 2016). In his 2016 TED talk, Head of Google Cultural Institute, Amit Sood says “The world is filled with incredible objects and rich cultural heritage. And when we get access to them, we are blown away, we fall in love. But most of the time, the world's population is living without real access to arts and culture.” This new platform allows users to experience the world’s cultural heritage objects and to add comment about them as well.

Method

There are ten museums in Turkey putting their collections to Google Cultural Institute. All of these ten museums are private. These are as follows:

1. Salt
2. Rezan Has Museum
3. Elgiz Museum

---

1 Hacettepe University Department of Information Management, Ankara, sumeyyeyakca@hacettepe.edu.tr
4. Sakıp Sabancı Museum
5. Borusan Contemporary
6. Mural Istanbul Festival
7. Masumiyet Museum
8. Istanbul Museum of Modern Art
9. Istanbul Research Institute
10. Pera Museum

Figure 1. The partners of Google Cultural Institute from Turkey (accessed on Google Cultural Institute, 2016).

In this study, the data about visibility and access of these ten museums is analyzed looking at the previous and next data of the collections that added to this online platform. For detailed analysis of this issue, interview is done with curators and managers of these ten museums about their observations of this new platform. Web activities of the museums -before and after- are also visualized. In addition the data about usage of social media of these museums and their effect on increasing visibility and access of the collections are discussed. To understand the data in this study, these research questions are answered.

1. How does this online platform affect the visibility of these collections?
2. Does it affect the diversity of visitors being national or international?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this new platform?

References


https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/partner?tab=map

