Digital participatory practices

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MUSEUMS AS SOCIAL SPACES AND ARENAS FOR PARTICIPATION
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UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

MVUOSREEUSM

Digital Museum Mediation in Denmark

General research aims:

A critical evaluation of the implementation, uses and perceived affordances of digital museum mediation

→ Establish evidence for values and impact of digital museum mediation

Q: In what ways does digital museum mediation promote knowledge sharing, visitor-user experience, and participation?

**The internet is just where people live their lives these days.
Social media gives a voice to those whose histories have often been overwritten by heritage institutions:
Museums should use the chance to listen as much as to educate.
…
As long as museums are part of life, they are part of the digital world.**

Digital

Meditative, not interactive

This is my final digital column, and I offer a mea culpa: looking back, I've often been more sceptical than enthusiastic about new developments in technology. What I've tried to propose is an alternative to the two opposing modes of thinking about the impact of digital.

In innovation-mania mode, digital promises the midas touch, transforming museum experiences and blowing away barriers to access. But the reality is often expensive one-off projects that aren't properly evaluated. At the other end of the spectrum, the databean counters promise to analyse and track users' needs, tweaking the museum's offer to ever-better accommodate them. The danger here is that inspiration and intuition get sucked out of museum programming and the unexpected is eliminated.
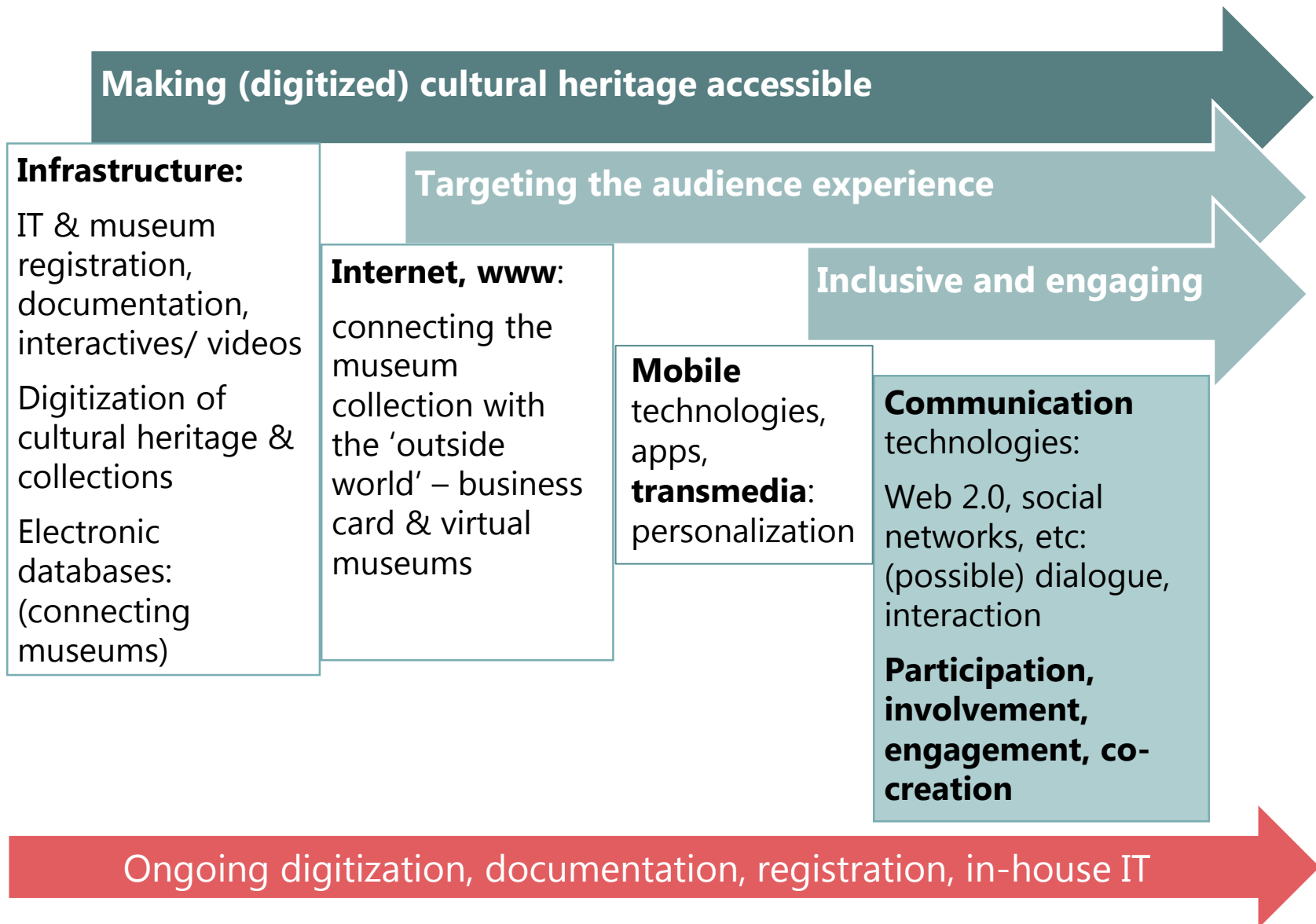
The real magic of digital is more prosaic: the internet is just where people live their lives these days. Social media gives a voice to those whose histories have often been overwritten by heritage institutions: museums should use the chance to listen as much as to educate. The intricacies of the licensing on your creative commons drop is not as important as simply making images available for teachers, students and bedroom photoshoppers. And while museums will never be shopping malls, we should savour the excitement with which visitors use their phones to save, shape and share their experience of cultural heritage.
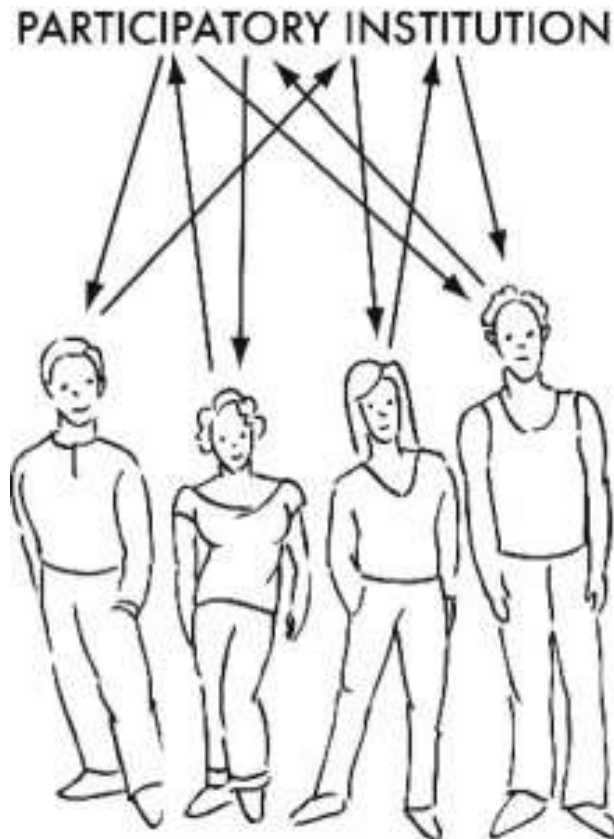
As long as museums are part of life, they are part of the digital world. Thanks for reading.

Danny Birchall is the digital manager at the Wellcome Collection

14 | Museums Journal | May 2017

Development of digital mediation

Making (digitized) cultural heritage accessible

Targeting the audience experience

Inclusive and engaging

Infrastructure:

IT & museum registration, documentation, interactives/ videos

Digitization of cultural heritage & collections

Electronic databases: (connecting museums)

Internet, www:

connecting the museum collection with the 'outside world' – business card & virtual museums

Mobile technologies, apps, **transmedia**: personalization

Communication technologies:

Web 2.0, social networks, etc: (possible) dialogue, interaction

Participation, involvement, engagement, co-creation

Ongoing digitization, documentation, registration, in-house IT
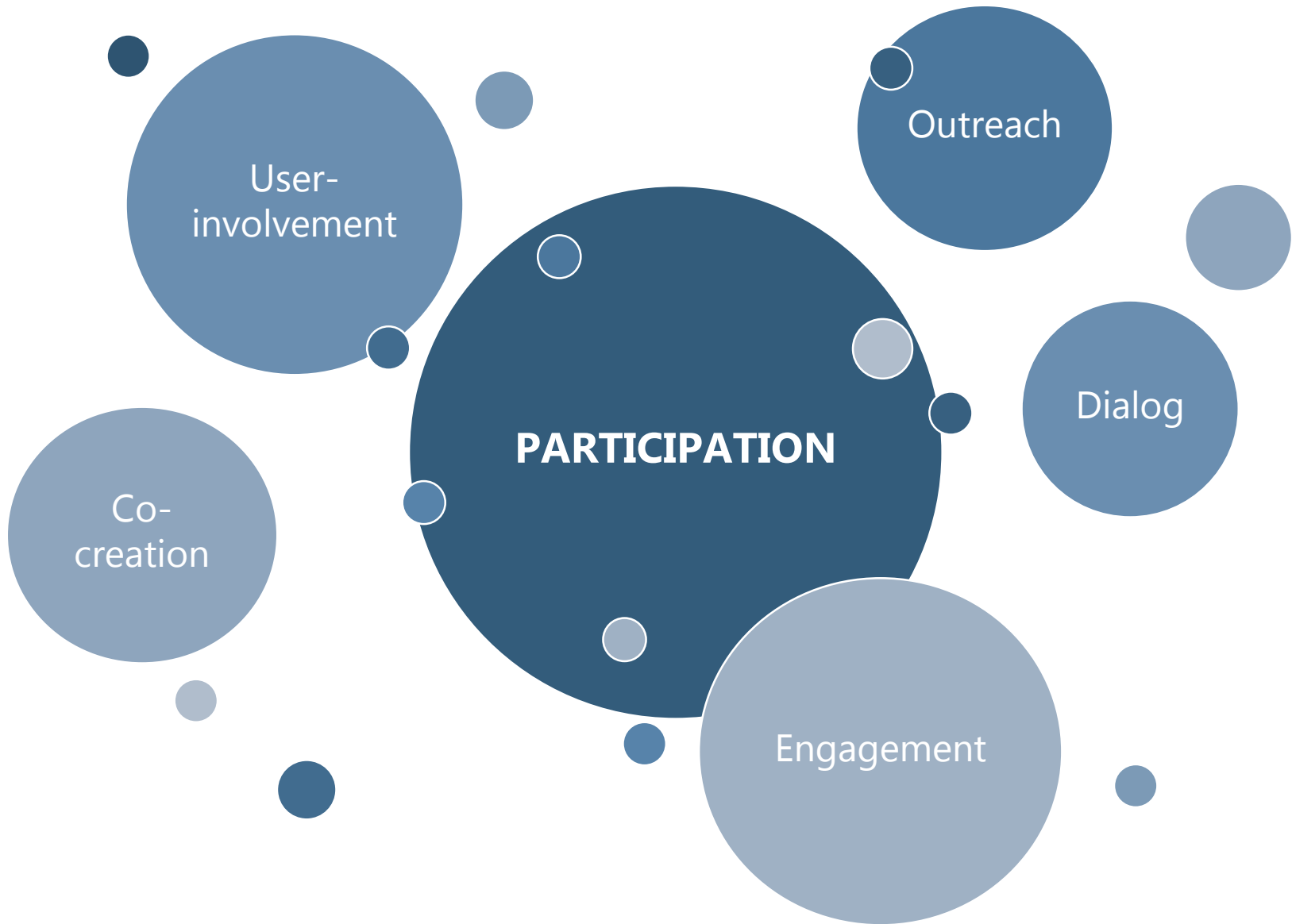
PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTION

"Particularly for cultural institutions with a mandate to use their collections for public good, **digitization and accessibility of content** has become a top priority."

Nina Simon, 2010

"But in asking museums to deliver specific, measurable, public value from our collections at a larger scale, we **might lose some of this diversity**."

Seb Chan, 2017

- **political, civic, or vertical participation**
- engagement of individuals with the various structures & institutions of democracy

Public participation

Social participation

Individual participation

- **'associational life', collective action, or civil, horizontal or community participation**
- collective activities that individuals may be involved in as part of their everyday lives
- "From me to we"

- **'everyday politics'**
- choices and actions that individuals make as part of their daily life
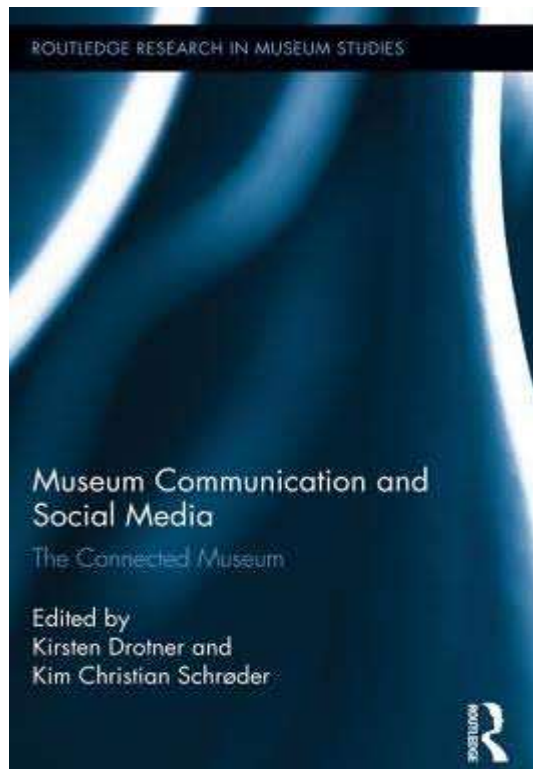
This reorchestration lets museums begin to find new answers to what they communicate, how and to whom they communicate, where and when their communication takes place, and, **importantly, for what ends.**

(Drotner and Schrøder, 2013: 3-4)

Analyzing participation

Participation as **activity in itself:**

Individual & Social Participation

User-involvement

Engagement (& Small Acts of Engagement) …

Participation for **impact** (society and its development)

Public Participation

Goal towards democratisation, civic empowerment, enlightenment …

social media and participation

HuskMitNavn
VISITORS, 2017

social media facilitate participation

- Acquisition
- Research
- Exhibition and curatorial practice
- Communication

Drotner & Schrøder: "Museum Communication and Social Media, In:
The Connected Museum, 5-6

This **visibility** is also why it's often hard to untangle participatory culture from new media. (⋯)

this new visibility **increases the impact of participatory practices, expanding their reach and scope, and accelerating their circulation**.

(Jenkins, Itō, and boyd 2015, 185)

Four frames for successful participation

Jenny Kidd 2014
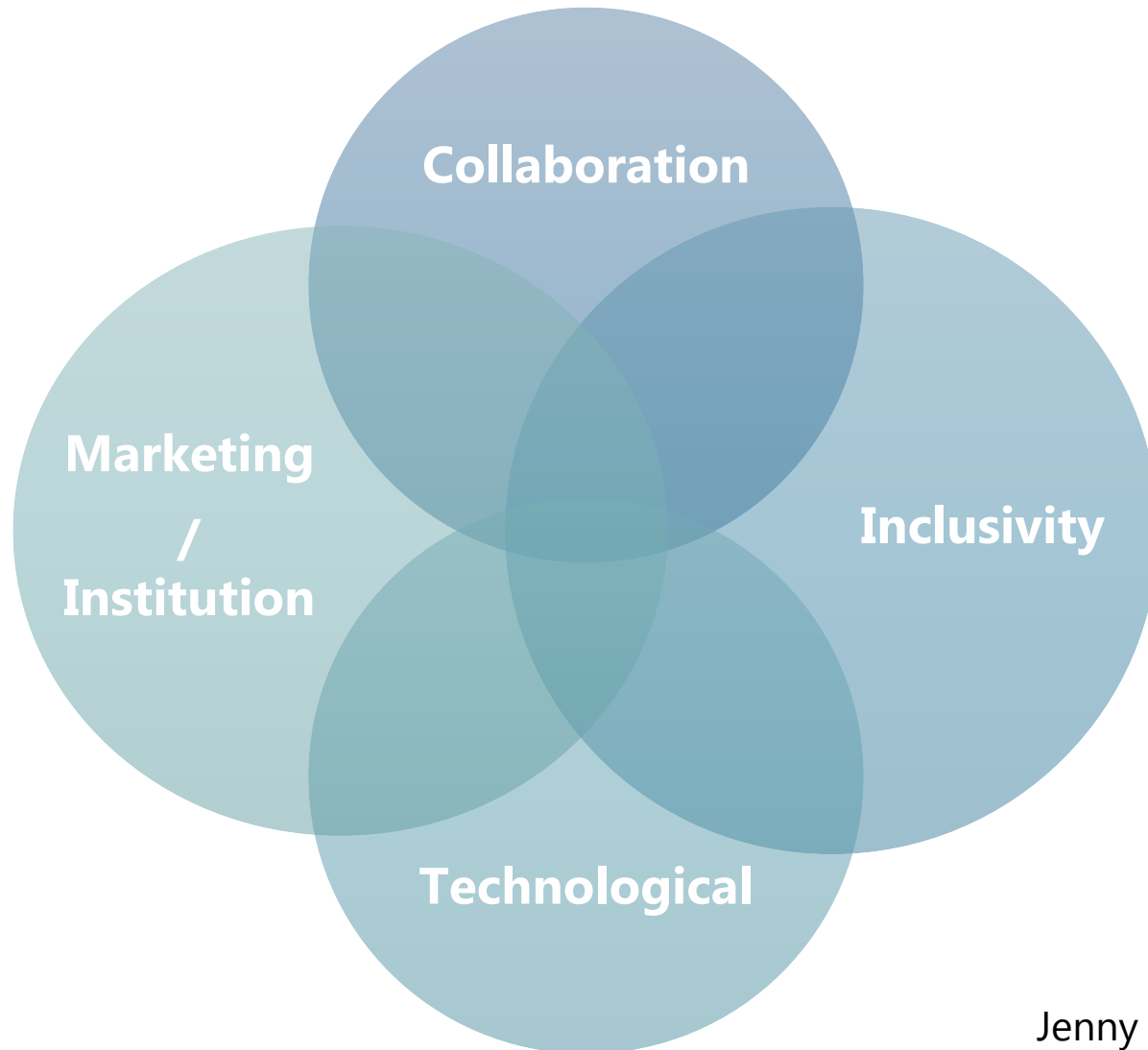
if digital is going to be an increasingly large part of the participatory paradigm, then we need to ask **who it will be in the hands of**

(Kidd 2014, 13)

ChemHeritage @ChemHeritage · Nov 20

This #museumsgiving, we're grateful for colleagues who are working to break down barriers in the field. Campaigns like #MuseumsAreNotNeutral make us thankful! Learn more: ow.ly/5AXh30gEfGU

♡ 1   ⟲ 7   ♡ 12   ✉

Mike Murawski @murawski27 · Nov 10

"We set out to be an activist museum...not to foster a single point of view, but to make America better.... doing things that matter, that give people knowledge as they grapple and debate these things." #MuseumsAreNotNeutral ❤️

digital, online participation