

EXPLORING ENGAGEMENT REPERTOIRES IN SOCIAL MEDIA: THE MUSEUM PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In our paper, we have developed a list of modes for audience engagement on social media on the basis of the Facebook posts of selected museums in Latvia and Estonia. Within the frame of our study, the museums' Facebook posts covering a timespan of one year have been analysed using the method of close reading and applying the principles of grounded theory. A multi-dimensional approach to various modes of engagement is proposed in order to involve different visitors in the activities of the museum, and considering different functions of the message. The results of the paper are applicable when considering diverse repertoires for modes of engagement with the museum's audiences on social media, as well as when engaging with them on-site. The paper contributes to the trend of democratisation within the museum context by exploring the potential of museums when forging their relationships with their visitors.

KEYWORDS: Estonia • Latvia • museums • online engagement • social media

INTRODUCTION

Recent years in contemporary societies have been characterised by the development of a democratic worldview accompanied by technological progress. This trend has also found its way into museums, which stress, probably more than ever, the need to become relevant to society (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010) and in particular, the need to be "in the service of society and its development" (ICOM 2010–2015). The museums respond to the changing needs of society by balancing their traditional functions, such as collecting, conservation, curatorship, research, communication (Mensch 1992) and the new commitments that are related to the interpretation of the cultural needs of the

community with a focus on the individual and liberty of information (ICOM 1974). Digitisation and democratisation trends are reflected in the museum institution and in museum relationships with audiences (Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt and Runnel 2011). The importance of focusing on the dialogue with audiences turns museums into places “where audiences can actively engage in a process of meaning construction and self-identification” (Stylianou-Lambert 2010: 137). Web 2.0 tools provide museums with a great participatory potential online allowing them to respond to democratisation and experimenting with audiences on social media. However, not all museums are open to intense online communication for both subjective and objective reasons (Vilcāne 2013; Lotina 2014).

Both online and on-site environments offer good audience engagement possibilities, although in this study we focus on online engagement from the perspective of the museums. The aim of the study is to explore what different engagement modes museums have developed to communicate with their audiences online. With social media engagement we understand “a multi way interaction between and among organization and digital communities that could take many forms, using social media channels to facilitate that interaction” (Heldman et al. 2013: 5), thus social media provide the context for our study. To help us achieve our aim we have developed an analytical grid consisting of two main components: a list of audience engagement modes that embraces online museum activities, and adaptation of the model of sign functions. This model was initially created by Roman Jakobson (1960) and later developed by Tony Thwaites, Lloyd Davis and Warwick Mules (2002). The decision to adopt the model of sign functions deals with the engagement modes present in different kinds of Facebook post by considering the complexity of the manifestations of engagement mode. However, we convey the semiotic approach to the sign’s functions in the social media context by analysing the different aspects of the ‘message’ as it relates to modes of engagement. This approach allows us to look beyond the content of a Facebook post and consider such aspects as textually, visually or the audibly embedded notion of various engagement modes. In this way, even though our primary aim is to explore engagement modes in social media, we can also map engagement modes offline because certain aspects surrounding the message exist independently from the particular medium chosen to convey the message. At the same time, we also consider the potential of social media to reach out to the museums’ audiences and provoke interaction between the museum and the audience. There are couple of reasons to do this, which we will elaborate upon.

Firstly, while previous studies cover museum communication and relationship with audience online and offline (Russo et al. 2007; Durbin 2009; Kelly 2009; Russo and Peacock 2009) and research democratisation trends in museums (Stylianou-Lambert 2010; Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt and Runnel 2011), we rely on the notion of social media. Social media communication demands trust and helps to reduce social distance between communicators and receivers (Servaes and Malikhao 2005). Secondly, social media facilitate exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences (ibid.) so it can be used in museum democratisation processes. Social media as such is grounded in the second generation Web, or the ‘participative Web’, and there are many social networking sites, each having its own specifics (Durbin 2009). At the primary stage of development the Internet was used to gain the information on how Web 2.0 opens up new ways to engage users by meeting, sharing, collaborating, as well as learning about audiences, interact-

ing them directly and allowing one-to-many communication (Kelly 2009; Russo and Peacock 2009). Thus, social media is considered to be a growing issue in the museum environment although few museums have clear strategies for engaging communities as most users do not participate very much (Russo et al. 2007). Therefore it demands much effort from the museum as communicator to overcome this barrier of the somewhat passive routines of users. We suggest that in order to do so, diverse modes of engagement can be used as a repertoire to assist this effort.

This article presents research about museum online communication with users in two Baltic countries, Estonia and Latvia. Facebook was used to collect data on museum communication. Both of these Baltic countries share many similarities, including a common historical background. The awareness of the democratisation of museums among the practitioners and among the academic community is additionally supported by the growing number of academic publications in the field of museum participation (Lepik 2013; Lotina 2014; Runnel and Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt 2014). The timespan of the posts analysed is from October 2013–September 2014; sampling includes two Latvian and two Estonian museums that are active on Facebook. The method of close reading coupled with the principles of grounded theory (specifically initial, focused and axial coding) allowed us to collect data and identify analytical categories, presenting museum online communication conceptualised through diverse engagement modes. In our study we do not reflect the audience perspective on online engagement: considering the aim of our study, our sample helps to outline the museum's perspective.

In the first sections of the study both online and on-site engagement modes are reviewed. We also define our own conceptual engagement modes in museums based on previous studies and our own research experience. The next section underpins the methodology used and explains the development of the analytical grid as a tool for data analysis. The final section of the paper contains analysis of the results and conclusory discussion.

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

For the needs of the research we use the term engagement to study the relationship between museums and online audiences because we consider engagement is a broader term capable of including all social media activities of both organisation and digital community. In fact, the term engagement has been applied in different fields (information technology, various sectors of culture, marketing, etc.) and has been used to describe a wide range of physical, emotional, social, and intellectual activities on the individual or public level, even though understanding of the term has occasionally been taken for granted. Peter Dahlgren (2006: 24) argues “engagement generally refers to subjective states. That is, engagement indicates a mobilized, focused attention on some object. It is in a sense a prerequisite for participation.” This definition allows us to consider engagement as crucial for participation and thus for museum democratisation.

Previous applications of the term public engagement involve both online and offline activities (Buraimo et al. 2011; National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement 2014) and can be organised in a traditional or innovative, even experimental manner. The engagement involves a wide spectrum of individual and public activities starting

from hardly visible individual psychological processes such as engaging the public with art works or small stimuli – for example, colours or lights – to gain their attention. For the needs of this research on public engagement in museums we have adapted the rather general understanding of social media engagement “as a multi way interaction between and among an organization and digital communities that could take many forms, using social media channels to facilitate that interaction” (Heldman et al. 2013: 5).

As previously mentioned, engagement is a widely applied concept despite there being several definitions of the term. Some studies use the type of activity to distinguish various modes of engagement. To mention some of them: the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (2014) in Bristol categorises engagement activities: (1) informing; (2) consulting; (3) collaborating. Further, each mode of engagement involves several subdivisions (for example informing also involves inspiring audiences, education, improving access, etc.). The study of digital engagement classifies a framework for online engagement specifically with arts and culture: (1) access covers “a range of activities centred around discovering what’s on, filtering opportunities and planning attendance or participation”; (2) learning refers to “a range of activities with an educational purpose such as searching information or improving creative skills”; (3) experience refers to an activity where the user is “experiencing the full creative or artistic work online”; (4) sharing refers to sharing content, experiences and opinions; (5) creating content demands the most sophisticated skills and behaviour as it involves the use of the Internet “to assist with the creative process itself” (MTM London 2010: 26).

Only a few sources conceptualise engagement in the museum context by focusing attention on the engagement process (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre 2006; Bitgood 2013). Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (2006) uses varied human needs as the basis for engagement in order to explain why an individual chooses to engage with a museum, identifying four types of engagement – intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social. Bitgood (2013) uses a continuum of attention to explain the process of engagement with museums. In accordance with the Bitgood’s Attention Value model engagement is the highest level of attention and there are three stages of attention: capture, focus, and engage (ibid.: 194). Thus engagement with museum collections is associated with learning and requires deeper processing and longer viewing time than the focus level of attention. Summarising the above, the approaches to explaining why and how engagement occurs depend less on context – the motivation to engage or the stages of attention would also take place outside engagement with museum collections. Referring to sources identifying the type of engagement activity, there is no agreement among the different sources because engagement activities depend on the aim that is to be achieved using these activities, which are thus context sensitive. Therefore we suggest that in the specific research context – museum audience engagement online – we have to develop our own engagement modes (see our engagement modes in the Methods and Materials section below). Regarding the previously mentioned MTM London 2010 study of digital engagement in the arts and the similarities to our research topic, we can learn how to develop engagement modes. However, for us it is significant to differentiate between audiences (a general audience, professionals, stakeholders) and therefore we can only use ideas for content of engagement activity.

We review the specifics of social media, and specifically Facebook, from the museum perspective to be aware if there are some limitations which should be taken into account.

On the basis of previous research, suggested social media practice for museums includes: (1) encouraging networks and connections; (2) taking risks; (3) acknowledging that a healthy community will self-monitor and self-correct; (4) remembering that some areas will still need 'discipline' and organisational input; (5) learning from users (Kelly 2009: 12). However there are some reasons why museums might have a cautious attitude towards social networking sites instead of following the above-mentioned recommendations. The social media environment for museum professionals may seem trivial (Lotina 2014) and not an appropriate communication platform for the museum institution because in the social media environment entertainment and commercialisation are placed next to substantial content (Jenkins et al. 2006) which may seem to create a conflict. This challenge for the museum is reinforced by the fact that most people find museums to be trustworthy and reliable (Rosenzweig and Thelen 2000; Stylianou-Lambert 2010: 139). Our research results will also give an insight into how Latvian and Estonian museum communication copes with these challenges.

Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2010: 65) suggest that "being active" online and carefully choosing with what social media to engage is significant in reaching the target group. In this study we focus only on Facebook and comment on the specifics of this social media portal. The authors of this article argue that this social networking site constrains participation because it "supports media uploads upon which others can comment, 'like' or recirculate, but little more" (Lewis et al. 2010: 356). Consequently despite the fact that the Web 2.0 platform has participatory potential, the daily usage practice of social media does not help to strengthen participation, an idea that is supported by other authors in the specific context of museums (Russo et al. 2007). However, the online environment is in a constant process of technological development, meaning that innovative tools open up new options to interact with users; therefore to some extent the communicators always have to experiment with social media to understand how these new possibilities can be used in their work.

Each museum's online engagement modes should correspond with the goals and functions of that museum, something that is particularly true of the communication function, which defines the content of engagement activities. André Desvallées and François Mairesse (2010: 29) claim that communication is the instrument with which to present the value that museums create in order to become relevant for society. These authors also define communication as the presentation of research undertaken into collections, and as the provision of information. Bernadette Lynch and Samuel Alberti (see West 2012: 110) argue that initiating controversial discussions and inviting participants to engage in discussion is also part of the museum's communication with society. Peter van Mensch (1992) refers to museum communication using the broader terms of exhibition design and education. In the contemporary world "museums struggle to attract communities and compete for the leisure time of the audience with other leisure time offers" (Falk 2009: 186); through communication and marketing museums strive to provide access and reach new audiences who would otherwise never go near a cultural institution (Ovenden 2004). A fight for visitors' interest encourages entertainment in the museum as it is considered the most influential instrument to involve audiences (Hermes 2006; Jenkins 2006). Thus, when communicating on social media, museums are challenged to engage users in a communicative way, to market, to entertain, to educate and to bring up socially significant issues, etc. Thus it is significant to find a balance

between communicating, marketing and entertainment on one hand and the missionary functions of museum on the other.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Sample and Data Collection

The source of data is profiles of Latvian and Estonian museums in Facebook. The usage practice of social media in Latvia and Estonia is different. Facebook is the most used social network in Estonia, also among museums. The Latvian Internet Association (2014) listed statistics on its website confirming the following are the most popular social network services in Latvia: the local Latvian network Draugiem.lv – engages 52 per cent of all Latvian Internet users or 32 per cent of inhabitants (January, 2013); Facebook.com engages 33 per cent of all Internet users or 20 per cent of inhabitants (April, 2013); Twitter.com accounts for 10 per cent of all Internet users or 6 per cent of inhabitants (January, 2013). Latvian museums that are engaged in social media use all three of these social networking sites. To provide data from both countries we collected data only from Facebook as each social network site has its own communication specifics. Estonian museums use Facebook more actively and their Facebook pages have gained on average more recorded attention from the friends of the museums (in the form of likes and friends) than Latvian museums (Lotina and Lepik 2013) because the latter share their presence across several active social networking sites.

The sample includes four museums, two institutions in each country, with the sample representing ethnographic museums and art museums, all of which have active Facebook communication. In Latvia, the sample consists of the Ethnographic Open Air Museum of Latvia (in this text presented as LV EM) and Art Museum Riga Bourse which is the affiliate of the Latvian National Museum of Art (in the text presented as LV RB). The sample from the Ethnographic Open Air Museum of Latvia consists of 875 posts, while Riga Bourse 281. In Estonia the sample includes The Art Museum of Estonia KUMU (cited as EE KUMU) with 173 posts and the Estonian National Museum's (cited as EE ENM) 208 posts. The selection of the museums is explained by the diverse nature of these organisations and consequently the potential diversity of engagement modes and communication. We argue that if different types of museum displayed comparable results, the model we use to understand communication through different engagement modes could be used for any museum. To collect the content created by museums, we used the free software program *Digital Footprints* and retrieved the museums' Facebook posts between October 2013 and September 2014 (12 months in total in order to cover various seasons and occasions throughout the year). The retrieved data included post (text and visual material) and all the related information, including users' feedback. Because of the aims of this study, our main interest was focused on the museum-created content because the research questions stress museum communication.

The aim of the paper is to understand how museums communicate online through different engagement modes and to develop an analytical grid consisting of different engagement modes and functions of language. The development of the analytical grid is explained below. The first phase of the data analysis started with close reading and labelling of the diverse analytical categories museums use to communicate with online communities. The second phase of analysis involved coding and a generalisation of each analytical category to generate a list of dominant categories that describe the online communication of museum in terms of engagement modes. By applying the principles of initial, focused and axial coding (Charmaz 2006) to the data corpus we extracted the characteristics intrinsic to each mode of engagement.

First we defined the audience engagement modes that are displayed in the museums' Facebook contents. To develop these categories, different sources were used to get insights into a variety of perspectives on the audience engagement discussed in the theoretical review. We mixed different theoretical approaches and our own empirical experience to develop a comprehensive list of engagement modes that are significant for the museums. The first stage of development categories started with close reading of retrieved Facebook content to identify the main engagement modes. The second round included the application of engagement categories to content and was followed by several redefinitions of engagement modes. As we conducted our study in the two relevant languages (Latvian and Estonian), each researcher needed to work individually during data collection and the first stages of analysis. Later on, after initial close reading and coding, Skype or face-to-face meetings were arranged in order to come to an agreement and achieve inter-coder reliability for the analytical categories used to identify modes of engagement. Finally we developed our own list of online audience engagement modes and their detailed descriptions as they relate to the context of museums. The list includes: (1) informing; (2) marketing; (3) consulting; (4) collaboration; (5) connecting with stakeholders; (6) connecting with participants/audiences; (7) connecting with professionals.

From our perspective 'informing' refers to strictly educational activities and excludes any promotional intentions on behalf of the museum, the exhibitions or other products offered by an organisation or stakeholder. 'Marketing and advertising' refers to promotion of any of museum activities and contains the invitation to attend the museum, its stakeholders or to participate in related events, including functional information about access. Occasionally, educational information may also be a part of promotion because posting marketing information does not exclude delivering educational content. To make promotion of the museum more attractive, museum posts enchain users' attention by adding playful activities like quizzes and other type of game with or without prizes. A type of marketing related post strives to trigger emotions in users and so messages may integrate emotional motifs such as sadness, joy, etc. For example, a post containing a funny picture or joke is considered as engaging attractor of attention. The 'consulting' category refers to the posts that actively raise issues and debates and invite feedback from users, such as expressions of opinion. Posts under this label may include socially significant issues, for example, politically, socially and historically sensitive matters and decisions, controversial issues. The main intention of this category

is to label the posts that invite collective expertise from the community although it excludes inviting the visitor to attend the museum or event that is labelled as marketing and excludes invitation to participate in activities labelled 'collaboration'. Collaboration refers to the posts that invite users to participate in social processes, to act as volunteers, fundraisers, donors, etc. This type of post stresses the significance of a temporary activity that is about to happen and refers to activities beyond temporary verbal or written expressions. The 'connect with stakeholders' category emphasises the museum's role as stakeholder in the network of related organisations and includes reposts to news posted by others; it is influenced by Facebook's sharing function thus supporting the goals of other institutions. 'Connect with participants/audiences' refers to the posts that stress the duration of the museum's relationship with a community. It might contain information that provokes emotions by sharing memories and strengthening the link of publics with the organisation by allowing the museum to look into that organisation's processes – shared information or pictures reflecting a less formal type of organisation. The 'connect with professionals' category refers to the users who already have some kind of professional knowledge in the specific field of museum. These posts inform the online community about events like scientific conferences, thematic workshops, press conferences for journalists, etc. These posts show that the museum organisation is part of a professional network, it communicates with and is trusted by colleagues.

These categories reflect list of online community engagement modes that from the perspective of other authors are viewed separately. Our analytical grid is based on previous analysis of online content (Lotina and Lepik 2013) and was developed for the specific purpose of exploring online audience engagement modes in the social media communication of museums.

Roman Jakobson (1960) developed a model with which to investigate the language in the variety of its functions where each of the factors in the model determines a different function of language. The model by Jakobson has become well established in both linguistics and in many other domains (Ephratt 2008: 1913). We used the later adaptation of this classical model developed by Tony Thwaites, Lloyd Davis and Warwick Mules (2002) to investigate the functions of messages that museums create in Facebook. In the grid we included the following message functions: (1) content; (2) code; (3) form; (4) addresser; (5) contact; (6) addressee; (7) context (see Table 1). Regarding the online environment and specifics of this research we neglected the element of the addresser. The reason for doing so is that the imagined addresser is always the same – a museum – even if there can be several senders, different people working in the institution and posting in the name of the museum.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section of research reflects the results and the analysis of the results from the perspective audience engagement modes. From a number of the museums' Facebook posts we have generated examples of museum communication in terms of the engagement modes: (1) informing; (2) marketing; (3) consulting; (4) collaborating; (5) connecting with stakeholders; (6) connecting with participants/audiences; (7) connecting with professionals. The modes of engagement in this paper are conceptualised through differ-

ent aspects of communication. Communication can be framed through several aspects as has been done and widely applied in models of the communicative functions of language (Jakobson 1960; Thwaites *et al.* 2002). In Table 1 we can find the message functions presented to enable the analysis of the engagement modes of the museums. Each of these communicative functions helps to add depth to the message and make the repertoire of the museums' communication more nuanced not only in terms of the content, but also other functions.

Informing

Compared to other modes of engagement, informing can be considered one of the most dominant ways to engage museum friends on Facebook. Regarding the content, museum messages often display educative and informative characteristics and thus a large number of posts can be categorised as informative audience engagement mode. The created content allows us to generalise about several ideal types of engagement mode: (1) educative and informative descriptions of museum objects and/or activities; (2) information related to the broader context within which the museum works – for example, in the case of ethnographic museums it is cultural traditions, including traditional skills, food, holidays, while in the case of art museums it is the history of art, stories about artists, etc.; (3) interesting facts that both captivate and educate. For example, a typical message representing how a museum informs its audience about educational content: “The holidays are just about to arrive. From our blog you can find a story about gingerbreads, and a nice recipe.” (EE ENM December 23, 2013).

The text museums create is rich and thus meant not only to teach or inform but also to amuse readers and create an emotional response. The informing mode of engagement follows the code or genre of short stories or pictures to create the proper atmosphere, both for the museum and the other educative materials that aim to introduce the topics covered by the museum.

The context of messages is defined by the events taking place in the museum and in the broader context also by cultural traditions like Christmas festivities, etc., significant events that provides motivation for the museum activities such as anniversaries (birthdays of artists, etc.) or any kind of topicality defined by the specific nature of each museum. Another contextual background for the museum is related to delivering information about the unique museum items that are part of the collections. The contact between parties can be described as a teacher-pupil relationship as museum-created content conveys its vast knowledge to the online community. Because of the diversity of themes that museums cover, audience interest can become divided and thus their interest in using the learning opportunities provided by the museum may be rather short-term. The addressees of the museum posts can be derived from the contact: as museums can be treated as an education institution, meaning the addressees could be potentially anyone (Lepik and Carpentier 2013) visiting the museum's Facebook page.

Marketing

Marketing related posts form the highest number of museum messages in Facebook, something that is also closely related to the fact that almost any event hosted by museums or their stakeholders can be promoted actively and repeatedly: in the form of several reminders when looking forward to the event, reports during the event, and reflections afterwards. Thus, marketing as a mode of engagement is conceptualised by following the analytical categories of content: (1) Promotional information about the museum, its events and the production process of museum products. (2) Playful activities such as quizzes, competitions and games organised to attract the attention of users together with encouragement to participate in these activities composes another part of museum communication. The analytical categories show that language is not only informative and persuasive but also entertaining and teasing, as in the example below:

In fact, a cow is hidden in the courtyard of KUMU. On the hour one can hear sounds of Alpic horns, the entire courtyard is filled with doors taking you to artworks, Ping Pong and parallel worlds. You can download the treasure map of the courtyard from here. (EE KUMU July 21, 2014)

(3) The museum also regularly keep users updated about the institution's and/or related persons' appearances in traditional and online media. (4) Eventually, museums use Facebook as a newsboard to post functional information about prices, opening hours, access limitations to the museum or its digital resources. Museums used to supplement promotional content with educational material, thus often avoiding simple adverts and producing versatile and well-written content, as in the message below:

Eugène Laermans is one of the most outstanding figures in Belgian art. His works most directly express the Flemish sense of life creating a unified image of the landscapes and people of his native land. You can see this artwork in the *Impressions and Parallels* exhibition. (LV RB December 19, 2013)

The market-related content can be viewed predominantly in shape of genres such as advertisements or promotional information, and invitations or 'teasers' from the museums' collections. Within marketing the overall emotional elements work to evoke interest of potential visitors, being related to joy, eagerness, curiosity, etc. Different means of advertising are considered hereby as follows: instead of one-time advertisements visitors to the museum's Facebook page can be continually reminded about the event through encouragement to participate. In addition to mediatised advertising and public relationships, promoting the museum elsewhere is linked to the Facebook news feed: such examples include links to TV or radio broadcasts that relate to museum content. In such broadcast, the museum is the topic, or a museum representative is a guest on the broadcast.

The context that defines marketing communication overlaps with the context of the informative mode of engagement, although compared to informing there are differences in the relationship between the museum and the online community. The marketing related content defines that it can be characterised as a short-term traditional museum–visitor relationship based on museum invitation issued to users to attend and experience products offered by the organisation. On the basis of the contact, the

addressees of marketing-related posts can be anyone, although regarding the particular events, we may as well consider more or less clear target groups who are kept in mind by the museum professionals. The “treasure map of the courtyard”, mentioned previously, probably has in mind a playful activity that engages younger museum audience members (children and adolescents) or those associated with them (parents or teachers) who are possibly considering some interesting activity for their children or pupils.

Consulting

The engagement mode related to consultation demonstrates that it is an existing practice although not an everyday habit. The content of messages communicates: (1) the need for collective expertise; (2) an invitation to share emotions; (3) the raising of socially significant issues; (4) requests for feedback following usage of consulting information. Analysis of content posted over a year shows that organisations have asked users online for advice about the use of mobile application or the most effective advertisements. A typical message demonstrating the need for collective expertise is:

Recently in the museum’s photo archive an old box was found full of completely unknown glass-plate photos and negatives from the 1930s. The pictures were probably taken in Latvia but we have no information about when or where or who the people are. Here are some of the pictures, perhaps we will find some clues. (LV EM February 11, 2014)

When consulting, the code used can be described as part of a discussion or argumentation, or an invitation to express one’s opinion. Consulting can be said to be asking questions of, and seeking advice from, members of museum’s online community. Eventually, because one element of consulting is a two-way process, the museums also present feedback on the usage of the information received from these consultants. In this way, the significance of the consultation process and the important role of visitors-as-consultants is stressed.

These results indicate that institutions rather operate in an environment in which there is a certain amount of need to consult their online communities. This mode of engagement defines the temporary, but also potentially continuous, relationship between the museum and the online audiences in which the museum takes the role of seeker of advice from informal external experts. When consulting, museums are attending to all of their online friends in a way that opens up the possibility for visitors to become stakeholders. The relationship in the consulting engagement mode *per se* is a temporary one, and thus the role of stakeholder is also temporary; nevertheless, the possibility to consult a museum is not limited, there is the potential that a person who has consulted a museum once, might also be interested in a similar type of engagement mode in the future.

Collaboration

Just like consultation, collaboration is also not widely spread in the Facebook content created by the museums. In the year under analysis the analytical categories include: (1) an invitation to participate in research related to socially significant problems; (2) volunteers' work reflections – gratitude, invitations; (3) gratitude for a donation the museum had received; (4) participation possibilities (announcements, invitations, updates) in museum projects such as art competitions, etc. Communication with both potential and existing volunteers and donors indicates that online communication does not present the entire spectrum of engagement related to engagement of various groups; in fact it does show the significance of volunteer work for these organisation. The online environment is apparently not the platform most used by museums to establish and sustain communication with volunteers and donors; rather, museums communicate with these groups without the mediation of social networked sites in face-to-face situations.

Similarly to consulting, the (code of) collaboration is manifested in terms of invitations (to contribute something as a donation, participate in research, etc.) or gratitude (feedback related to collaborations). The main difference is, though, in the relative size of the contribution: in case of consulting the opinion or expertise of potential audiences of the museum is asked, yet in case of collaboration, the museum's friends are invited to act in some way: contributing more or less tangibly in terms of voluntary work, responding to a questionnaire, etc. The collaboration, in some cases, also occurs without invitation from the museum – that is, someone finds her or himself ready to contribute artefacts and brings them to the museum as a voluntary donation. In this case, the museum's professionals may be caught by surprise:

The Estonian Art Museum has received an unprecedented grand gift. A living classic of Estonian avant-gard art, Raul Meel, has given the museum all the works from his exhibition at the Estonian Art Museum. The Estonian Art Museum has never received such a gift before. (EE KUMU May 9, 2014)

We may assume that notifications about such acts and the publication of gratitude from the museum may provoke interest in other potential museum-goers who may also want to see themselves as contributors, although this assumption needs confirmation from further research.

The context of this engagement mode is related to situations where museums are willing to invite and accept the input of the audience using the online environment. This engagement mode establishes both temporary and continuous relationships between museums and audiences. It is hardly possible to identify an unequivocal role for each part as a museum and a partner give and take at the same time. In the case of continuous relationship a more balanced level of receiving and giving are established, otherwise one party would not be interested in a long term relationship. The addressees of the collaborative engagement mode are firstly stakeholders (donors, volunteers, etc.) who have contributed to the museum. Yet, considering the nature of social media, by posting such news to the online community the museum can indirectly interest of all their online community members in becoming potential stakeholders.

Connect with Stakeholders

Museums clearly communicate to their online community that they are part of wider network presenting relationships with a variety of stakeholders on Facebook, in various ways: (1) giving information about stakeholder's media appearances; (2) giving information about cooperative activities such as learning each from other, visits, common projects, asking for and providing expertise; 3) greetings and gratitude to stakeholders. The example below presents how the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia displays its connections: in this case the community is informed about the fact that the museum has been chosen as the place to shoot the video *Cake to Bake* of the band *Foreigners* representing Latvia in the Eurovision song contest: "Today, the Liiv farmstead at the museum is full of 'Foreigners' :) Do they bake something for the coming Eurovision in Copenhagen?" (LV EM March 12, 2014). The museum also played with the words of the song to create a more engaging text that can be understood only if the reader is familiar with the lyrics. The code of this mode of communication aims to represent the museum as part of a wider network, emphasising the ties this memory institution has with similar institutions and their stakeholders. This bond can be described in terms of a friendship, where the official mask of the museum has been somewhat shifted and the developments of the museum and the gratitude of its professionals to their stakeholders are exposed.

The connection to stakeholders is shaped by the context in which the museum professionals themselves are in the position of learner, experiencing new things (that need to be shared with their friends) presented by their partners. Online communication shows that the museum-stakeholder relationship within a wider network of professional institutions might be both temporary or continuous, depending on the relationship with each stakeholder. On the one hand, as possible addressees for this mode of engagement – everyone who visits the museum's Facebook – site can be considered, while on the other hand, the relationship with the stakeholders mentioned above is also nourished in Facebook.

Connecting with Participants/Audiences

Connecting with participants and audiences is a well-represented engagement mode in the Facebook content created by museums. It has the following characteristics: (1) Presenting the 'hidden' face of the organisation, discovering inner processes that might be hidden for publics in any other day. For example by showing that museum professionals learn during visits to other museums, the ways in which exhibitions are developed, moving collections to new spaces, etc.; (2) sharing memories and other emotional content, displaying human feelings such as nostalgia; (3) (seasonal) greetings and gratitude: "The exhibition *Double Reality* by Latvian born American artist Vija Celmins was attended by 19,646 visitors. Thank you for the wonderful reviews!" (LV RB June 25, 2014); (4) updating museum blogs (engaging in discussion) as a tool that helps to sustain the relationship with online communities. As is the case in relation to stakeholders, connection with participants/audiences aims to represent the museum as part of a wider network and show its friendly or homely face, although the focus in this mode

of engagement remains mainly on audiences and participants in the museum. Shared memories and past reflections dominate as a code with participants and audiences, reminding them about events enjoyed together or holidays celebrated in the same culture. Even more thoroughly, the works and processes performed out of sight of the visitors are introduced within this mode of engagement. A good example is links to blog posts by the Estonian National Museum explaining the reasoning and emotions behind the setting up of a new temporary exhibition, or reminding people from time to time about the construction process of the new museum building.

Cultural traditions and past events are the most prominent factors that form the context for this engagement mode, as well as topicalities and events in the museum or events experienced by museum professionals now or in the past. Connecting with participants and audiences is a mode of engagement which potentially helps to sustain a continuous relationship with visitors-as-stakeholders, reminding them about the interests they have in common with the museum and opening to them the possibility of becoming members of the audience and becoming active participants in the activities of a museum (Runnel et al. 2014).

Connecting with Professionals

This mode of engagement is visible in Facebook content but the specifics of this communication are defined by the continuous relationship between professionals – between a museum and other professional organisations or individuals. A restricted amount of communication would be accessible publicly, and the content in this case involves rather functional announcements, professional achievements, reflection of scientific activity: (1) information related to scientific matters such as defence of PhD theses, conferences, new research information and other professional events outside the museum; (2) job or stakeholder announcements – the search for employees, artists or craftsmen, participants in traditional fairs; (3) professional achievements such as prizes won or books published by colleagues; (4) planned purchases. Museums use language that might be described as informative when posting professional-oriented messages online.

At the same time it is important to stress that museums are willing to have professional discussions with the online community, for example, the museum publishes annual visitor statistics, although this information can become debate within the museum and among visitors, possibly affecting culture policy and the subsidies earmarked for museums. There are several examples demonstrating that the initiator of such a discussion is a user and that museums are happily to engage.

In the case of connecting with professionals, the code used to accompany the post is functional and evokes professional interest, specifically discussing the museum's activities and achievements. The broader context of this engagement mode is mainly management and curatorship activities, being used when a new employee is needed or something professionally interesting has happened or is about to. As has been mentioned above, the continuous relationship between the museum and other professional organisations and individuals shapes this mode of engagement, thus the addressees in this case are people who are also considered to be from professional communities.

To summarise the analytical categories of engagement modes describing museum communication the selected museums often create rich and versatile communication, making it difficult to refer to each separate example to an exact audience engagement mode. Museums used to create enjoyable and educative content, thus attracting the attention of the reader, although this did not challenge the user to respond; however, once users have demonstrated that they are active online, museums are ready to engage in discussion with an online community, thus extending the borders of initial communication and engagement mode.

In addition to the aforementioned message functions analysed in this study, there is also the aspect of the form used to communicate content. The forms of each different engagement mode partly overlap. Replying to the museum generating captures for shared links is widespread among all engagement modes. Storytelling is stressed as the significant mode in which to communicate messages when marketing a museum or informing users. Specific to marketing-related content, museums generate teasing and playful activities such as games or competitions thus provoking interest in the events. For marketing and professional purposes museums also use functional notifications to inform their audiences and partners, without expecting any feedback. Discussions and argumentation from the museum are displayed if users (audiences and/or stakeholders) are willing to have a debate, and also when the museum has invited users' opinions. Gratitude and greetings are often used to connect with stakeholders and audiences. Summarising this, there are slight differences in the form of communication in each engagement mode.

CONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION

In our paper, we analysed the modes of social media engagement of selected museums in Latvia and Estonia. The modes of engagement, which are (1) informing; (2) marketing; (3) consulting; (4); collaborating; (5) connecting with stakeholders; (6) connecting with participants; (7) connecting with professionals, were dealt with through various message functions indicating the possibilities that museums have in their repertoires to attract the attention of potential visitors. The modes of engagement can vary in the length and type of possible relationship to the museums' audiences, the type of content and the code of the message, and the ways in which possible addressees are engaged. Some modes of engagement are articulated more often (such as informing and marketing), while others are used more carefully (like consulting or connecting with other professionals). These findings allow us to discuss some of the features related to the modes of engagement used on the museums' Facebook pages.

Both modes of engagement and message function applied by museums in social media have been analysed above as separate analytical categories, in a way, as purified entities or ideal types, yet also our analysis has indicated the different relationships that may occur between these engagement modes or message functions. Critically speaking, a post by a museum *per se* can convey a mix of modes of engagement, for example, being sometimes both informative and advertising, or connecting with participants and stakeholders: "This week our ethnographers visited ancient musical instrument master craftsman Eduards Klints. He showed us his work and demonstrated several instru-

ments.” (LV EM May 12, 2013) Similar traits of message functions can be shared across several modes of engagement, for example, the code consisting of invitation can be a part of both the consulting and collaborating modes of engagement, it is the extent of the expected contribution that differs in these two cases.

In fact, the examples of modes of engagement we can see on social media are just the tip of the iceberg. Thus, the research regarding engagement modes could be continued by analysing the reasoning and attitudes behind content production, including a study of the museum professionals who create Facebook posts. Different ways to engage museum visitors may also be played out on the spot, so it is possible to study the modes of engagement in different on the spot activities, as has also been mentioned in Lotina 2014. Both ways to engage visitors can be treated as complementary, whereas the museum professionals in a particular institution can pick the repertoires that suit their audiences. Similarly, the perception and response to one or another choice from these repertoires can depend on the potential addressee, on his or her interpretation. All of the modes of engagement present in social media or on Facebook in particular can also exist in other contexts and channels, and can be analysed by applying our analytical contribution. For example, the marketing mode of engagement has been used to promote the museum in a news list, while invitation to reply to a questionnaire about a museum-related topic are related to collaborating, etc.

To conclude, we propose a multi-dimensional approach to the various modes of engagement, which, together, constitute a museum’s engagement repertoire, in order to involve different (potential) visitors in the activities of the museum. Inevitably, the content itself is a powerful component in constructing a message for a museum’s audiences, yet in order to establish a desired relationship, the latent aspects of the message – the functions of the message – also need to be considered. Audiences, naturally, have their intentionality and interpretations, which may also affect the ways of perceiving the modes of engagement, yet in the case of social media its possibility to provide multi-lateral interaction allows it to bring meaningful participatory activity a step closer for both the museum and its audiences.

ABBREVIATIONS

LV EM – The Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia
LV RB – Art Museum Riga Bourse (affiliate of the Latvian National Museum of Art)
EE KUMU – KUMU, Art Museum of Estonia
EE ENM – Estonian National Museum

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Table 1. Review of modes of engagement and functions of language.

	Informing	Marketing & Advertising	Consulting	Collaborating	Connecting with stakeholders	Connecting with participants/ audiences	Connecting with professionals
Content	Educational; Informative descriptions of the objects/activities; Informative descriptions of the contexts; Interesting facts and stories	Promotional information about the museum and events; playful activities; notifications about appearances in media; news board for functional information	The need for collective expertise; invitation to share emotions; increasing socially significant issues; feedback following usage of the consulting information	Invitation to participate in research; volunteers' work invitations and reflections; gratitude for donations; collaboration possibilities	Informing about stakeholder media appearances; informing about cooperation activities; greetings and gratitude to stakeholders	Inside works and processes of the organisation; sharing memories and other emotional content; (seasonal) greetings and gratitude	Information related to scientific and/or professional matters and other professional events outside the museum; job or stakeholder announcements; professional achievements; planned purchases
Code	Stories, pictures, recipes and other learning/educative material; reflections to create atmosphere	Promotional information; functional information; provoking interest and emotion; invitation; educational promotional information; repetitive messages; mediated advertising and public relationships	Discussion and argumentation; invitation to express opinion, asking for advice; reflecting the results of consulting	Invitation to collaborate: donate, volunteer, etc.; encouragement of on-going processes; examples and gratitude for recent collaboration	Gratitude to partners; representation of museum as part of network; representation of museums as developing organisations	Shared memories and reflections on the past; showing the other face of the museum; greetings and reflections to create atmosphere	Functional information; provoking professional interest and specifically discussing the museum's activities; reminder
Context	Traditions related to seasons, festivals; topicalities in the field; interesting objects from collections	Traditional festivals; museum topicalities; up-coming events; interesting objects from the collections	A situation in which consulting interest groups on Facebook is considered necessary	Supporting research; work with volunteers and donors	Events in partner organisations	Cultural traditions; past events	New colleagues are needed; a professional event outside the museum

	Informing	Marketing & Advertising	Consulting	Collaborating	Connecting with stakeholders	Connecting with participants/ audiences	Connecting with professionals
Form	Storytelling; reply; captions; conversation	Invitation; storytelling; reposts; captions; games; competitions, notification, reminder	reply; captions; conversation	Invitation; gratitude	Gratitude to partners; notifications;	Conversation; providing feedback; captions; gratitude	Notifications; captures
Addressee	All people	All people; target group	All people; potential visitors-stakeholders	All people; potential visitors-stakeholders	All people; visitors-stakeholders; other organisations	All people; visitors-stakeholders	Professional individuals and organisations
Contact	A temporary 'teacher-pupil' relationship as part of which the museum shares its knowledge	A temporary 'traditional museum-visitor relationship' in which the museum invites its visitors to come and experience the contents of the museum	A temporary/continuous relationship between the museum and external experts in which the museum asks for the advice from its friends	A temporary/continuous relationship between partners in which the friends have something to contribute and the museum is in a position to receive something	A temporary/continuous relationship with a wider network of professional institutions and visitor-stakeholders in which the purpose of the museum is to be visible in its network	A continuous relationship with the visitor-stakeholders	A continuous relationship with professional individuals and organisations