



# DIGI HELICON

Empowering current and aspiring artists through the development of  
digital skills and competences

2022-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000086615

## TRANSNATIONAL REPORT

(Germany, Greece, France, Italy, Netherlands, Cyprus)

**WORK PACKAGE N° 2 - ARTISTS GO DIGITAL: ASPIRE TO  
INSPIRE HANDBOOK AND METHODOLOGY**

**A2.1 MAPPING OF CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS, TRENDS, AND SKILLS GAPS**

DATE: JUNE 2023 | **Final Draft Version**

Erasmus+ Programme

KA220-ADU - Cooperation partnerships in adult education

## Document Identification

Work Package	WP2 - Artists Go Digital: Aspire to Inspire Handbook and Methodology
Activity	<b>A2.1 Mapping of current and future needs, trends, and skills gaps</b>
Result	<b>Transnational Report</b>
Lead partner	<b>Symplexis</b>
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Dissemination level	<b>Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including Commission services and project reviewers)</b>
Status	<b>DRAFT</b>
Version	<b>FINAL DRAFT</b>

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Rationale of the DIGI HELICON project	1
1.2 Purpose of the mapping and the transnational report	1
<b>2. Desk Research Results overall</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Local context and policies regarding the adaptation to the digital era by artists	2
2.2 Missing skills of artists on the use of digital technologies	4
2.3 Audience preferences and consumption trends	5
<b>3. Field Research Results</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 Results from the focus groups with artists and aspiring artists.	6
3.2 Results from field research on skill gaps, needs, and challenges of artists and aspiring artists.	8
3.3 Results from the field research on art consumers patterns and preferences.	10
<b>4. Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>12</b>

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Rationale of the DIGI HELICON project

DIGI HELICON is a European project approved by the DE02 - Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa beim Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (DE) in partnership with eight (8) partners, from six (6) European countries (Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy, Cyprus, and Greece) focused on “empowering current and aspiring artists through the development of digital skills and competences”. The DIGI HELICON project aims to support emerging artists with a focus on women and vulnerable/disadvantaged groups to acquire digital skills so that they can be empowered and continue to make art in the future. To achieve this, the project plans to develop innovative materials for artists and adult educators, develop flexible training opportunities, and support artists in their entrepreneurship and employability. In addition, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion should be initiated.

### 1.2 Purpose of the mapping and the transnational report

The mapping of the needs and challenges faced by artists & aspiring artists in relation to their digital skills during the pandemic, was carried out from February to the end of May 2023 with the participation of the project partners in the six (6) participating countries (Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy, Cyprus, and Greece). The mapping was divided into:

1) desk research where relevant sources from policy documents, strategies, projects and surveys were investigated on both the current level of digital knowledge of artists and the provision of training and other digital support measures to artists in the participating countries during the COVID-19 pandemic and the period following the lifting of the pandemic restrictions.

2) in field research where artists and aspiring artists' views and challenges they faced in relation to their digital needs and skills during the pandemic were explored, as well as the shortcomings they perceive they have in terms of digital skills to respond as artists to the needs of the modern digital era. At the same time, the audience's consumption preferences and the ways, means, habits and criteria by which they purchase artistic products and digital services online were examined.

The purpose of the mapping and this transnational report is to provide the Digi Helicon project consortium, and interested audiences, with a better understanding of the needs, skills and competences and gaps in all the above of artists and aspiring artists, as well as a better understanding of audience consumption preferences and trends on a transnational level. This data will help us to draw useful conclusions about the targeted needs, areas of focus, gaps to be filled, and the education and training measures that should be developed and implemented to meet the needs and gaps of artists and aspiring artists.

The mapping exercise used the techniques of focus groups / in-depth interviews, and structured questionnaires, to triangulate through different techniques and target groups, aiming at improved and more reliable data collection, on two different multi-level but different target groups, specifically to extract and use qualitative data that were examined alongside quantitative data to draw any conclusions. Random methods and the small sample size, per partner country, do not allow for generalizations. Nevertheless, the results can provide a very rich insight into the relevant aspects of the issues discussed and should be used accordingly.

## 2. Desk Research Results overall

### 2.1 Local context and policies regarding the adaptation to the digital era by artists

During the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany, there is a plethora of projects to support digital training for artists and support them in the time of pandemic constraints, and several local interventions and policies to support artists and their adaptation to the digital age. Programs such as Stiftung Zukunft Berlin's Artists@Work supported and trained artists to develop/promote their work, including workshops on social media marketing, website design and online sales. But also, the Art Connects programs of the Kulturstiftung Hamburg which offers ongoing support and resources to artists, including training, networking, and promotion of their work. In Germany there are examples of festivals and groups that have successfully met the digital challenge. The annual Transmediale festival in Berlin for digital and media art succeeded in launching a fully virtual festival in 2021 using a range of platforms, virtual exhibitions, online live streaming services, and chat rooms. In the case of Germany there are public rather than private institutions such as Kunstbüro Baden Württemberg that offer a wide range of consultancy and further education programs for visual artists and on digital tools and strategies. **Germany presents significant opportunities for cooperation between NGOs, public institutions and artists in support, collaboration, and digital training programs for artists.**

**France, like Germany, has a plethora of publicly funded programs for digital access for artists,** such as the "Innovative Digital Services" program which funded artists' associations, private companies, and research organizations to develop cultural innovation, digital technology, and new practices for cultural institutions.<sup>1</sup> Between 2016 and 2020, the French government supported 70 projects through this program. In parallel, the partnership between the National Film Centre, the National Book Centre and various departments of the Ministry of Culture and Communication provides funding to: i) support, ii) produce and iii) disseminate innovative or experimental projects in the field of multimedia and digital artistic creation. Development support is targeted at artists and authors, while support for production and dissemination is only available to producers. The aid supports projects experimenting with the use of digital tools. Aid amounts range from around €8,000 for development, €12,000 for production and up to €10,000 for broadcasting. Finally, in France, the FACI<sup>2</sup>, with an annual budget of €2m, is a fund for artistic creation projects in virtual, augmented, or mixed reality. This fund supports the development, production, and dissemination of innovative and experimental projects in the field of immersive creation, enabling creators to benefit from financial assistance. The program is open to artists, writers, and producers, natural or legal persons, resident in France or within the EU.

**In Italy, the Ministry of Culture Directorate General for Contemporary Creativity) and managed by Invitalia, made an important step forward to promote and give strength to art and cultural sector is the incentive 'Digital Transition Cultural and Creative Organizations' (TOCC) that promotes innovation and digitization of micro and small enterprises, third sector entities and profit and non-profit organizations.** The incentive can count on a budget of EUR 115 million provided by the NRP. More specifically, TOCC falls under Mission 1 - Digitalization, Innovation, Competitiveness and Culture,

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of such technologies include robotics, artificial intelligence, blockchain, the internet of things, and semantic web.

<sup>2</sup> Immersive Creation Support Fund

Component 3 - Culture 4.0 (M1C3), Investment 3.3, Sub-Investment 3.3.2. The facilities are aimed at micro and small enterprises, in corporate or partnership form, including cooperative societies, unrecognized associations, foundations, organizations with non-profit legal status, as well as Third Sector Entities, registered or in the process of being registered with 'RUNTS', which were established on 31 December 2020 and which operate in the cultural and creative sectors and in the following areas: Music, Audiovisual and radio, Fashion, Architecture and design, Visual arts, Live performance and festivals, Tangible and intangible, cultural heritage, Artistic handicrafts, Publishing, books and literature, Interdisciplinary area (for those working in more than one of the listed areas).

**Netherlands** is one of the most advanced countries in Europe together with Finland in digital skills and digital literacy of citizens with almost 80% of the Dutch population having basic or higher digital skills compared to the European average, however there are no specific figures exclusively for artists. **There are several initiatives in the Netherlands on digital inclusion that can include artists such as the Towards Better Digital Inclusion (Part) 2 project.** One of the partners, STBY, also contributed as a research partner to a nationwide project "Tel Mee Met Taal Experimenten" initiated by the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision (Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid). The project involved digital experiments that looked at possible new ways of helping people with low digital skills using artificial intelligence. Both projects informed the further development of inclusive online projects, with an AI detection model and a support methodology for people struggling with online processes due to their low digital skills.

**The opposite is the case of Greece** as no institutional policies and actions regarding the adaptation of artists to the digital age and digital training of artists were taken during the COVID-19 pandemic but only extraordinary benefits for artists and cultural workers. **As of 2021, projects concerning the digital transformation of cultural structures and digital training of artists have been announced but have not been implemented.** Most artistic digital education efforts for artists in the pandemic in Greece were private initiatives of local artists and groups who insisted on producing art and reaching out to the public in the era of lock downs. **From 2017 to 2022 digital upskilling, education and digital artist entrepreneurship initiatives were carried out by major private cultural institutions such as the Onassis Foundation's, Stavros Niarchos Foundation.** An important role for education and promotion of digital upskilling, technology and art is played by the educational workshops of the Athens Digital Arts Festival (ADAF). Moreover, in Greece there were zero initiatives, governmental or private, specifically targeting women, LGBTI, refugees and other vulnerable communities.

A little closer to the reality of Greece, **Cyprus has not developed targeted policies for the digital transformation of artists**, but unlike the aforementioned countries had delayed policies for digitalization in general. The pandemic created an opportunity in Cyprus to develop the "Digital Strategy for Cyprus 2020-2025" which has as its main pillars Digital Government and Digital Infrastructures of Economy and Society, which is relevant for the whole society and in the long term can help artists. **There were however some small initiatives to promote digitalization in culture especially in terms of digitalizing cultural heritage, and providing public access, especially by universities such as the Cyprus University of Technology.** At the same time, an online course in digital arts entitled "Ethics of Digital Art & Design" has been offered by SUNY Empire State College from Spring 2021. New challenges and European support are driving Cyprus towards digitalization in all sectors and in culture, and the new opportunities it offers.

## 2.2 Missing skills of artists on the use of digital technologies

Regarding the missing skills of artists on the use of digital technologies, **at the level of desk research there was convergence between the countries participating in the DIGI HELICON project.** There were cases of countries such as Cyprus where no research had been done specifically on the missing skills of artists on the use of digital technologies, and we did not know much beyond the low level of digital skills of the general population, as well as cases of countries such as Greece where there was no specific governmental research but where the skill gaps and upskilling needs of artists were clearly reflected in specialized successful programs of Stegi of the Onassis Foundation for the adaptation of artists to the digital age and in curricula of departments of the Onassis Foundation for the adaptation of artists to the digital age. On the other hand, there were cases of countries with significant data, studies, and reports such as in Germany where the Report of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy and the Study by the Federal Association of Visual Artists identified various gaps. Both identified lacking skills, of artists, the need for upskilling of women and highlighted the art sector's gender gap in terms of income/visibility. At the same time, in France, useful data emerged from the Report of the Ministry of Culture and the Directorate General of Artistic Creation (2021): The report pointed a change in the approach to art. It stated that a completely different approach from the past must be taken where art must go and find the viewer, not the other way around, and artistic content must be studied in advance depending on the distribution channel through which it will be transmitted. It further identified similar skills gaps for artists like to findings did for Greece and Germany. In addition, in the Netherlands, the University of Twente study (2020) on creative industries professionals showed that artists have the most difficulties with digital information evaluation and problem-solving skills. It further highlighted the need to quickly adapt to new requirements. In Italy, the available data indicate that artists lack knowledge & skills to use platforms to promote and sell products, as well as deficiencies in terms of implementing business strategies, focusing on the right audience, appropriate communication strategies in the available communication channels especially through social media.

**Summarizing the desk research, it can be noted that the missing skills that emerged from the desk research in the participating countries are the following:**

- **Skills in using digital tools, platforms etc. for online sales and provision of artistic products and services [skills in online sales].**
- **Skills in networking communication skills, and skills in finding and getting sponsorships, and funding, hosting, and promoting their work.**
- **Strategic skills in terms of digital business models, and marketing.**
- **Skills in understanding copyright and copyright laws, particularly in art sold on the metaverse, such as NFTs to protect their rights and make money from third party use of their work.**
- **Ability to flexibly adapt to changing audience preferences and behavior.**
- **Abilities to leverage technologies such as data analytics and artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, and personalized and interactive experiences.**

## 2.3 Audience preferences and consumption trends

In **Germany**, the analysis of **all sources reveals a growing trend towards digital consumption of cultural and entertainment content, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic**. But it appears that digital platforms for the sale of artworks or artistic services have been used to a limited extent. Nonetheless, **there are significant opportunities for artists to succeed in the digital marketplace with targeted training and resources**.

In **France**, a 2019 report by the French telecoms federation showed that two out of three French people say that culture occupies an important place in their personal lives, the importance of culture increases according to the social status and educational level of the respondents, **while the majority of young people consider that art is accessible to all in terms of content, and the majority of the consumer public supports new technologies and digitalization in the arts**, considering that it opens up cultural works and heritage to new audiences. It is clear from the research that **digital culture is responding particularly well to the expectations of young adults and teenagers**.

In **Italy**, surveys have shown that while most of the Italian public (69%) has returned to live performances and visits to cultural venues, **a quarter of the public enjoys cultural events digitally and around 9% of Italians attend cultural events exclusively using online and digital media**.

In the **Netherlands**, according to Statista data, **the demand for online communication and entertainment has grown exponentially as social media has become the main medium where audiences consume online content**, with platforms such as Netflix topping the streaming charts. At the same time, a larger portion of consumers are listening to and consuming music through music streaming services, while digital book publishing is also growing significantly, without overtaking print.

In **Greece**, there are no recent and sufficient documented data or reports on public preferences and consumption trends at the level of a literature review. **After the COVID-19 lockdowns, audiences have very easily returned to physical event spaces, which, from early 2022, are fully operational, while others have retained some consumption habits acquired during the lockdown especially with regard to streaming content such as music, series and movies**.

In **Cyprus** there are no reports or official statistics available on audience preferences and consumption trends. However, **the field research revealed that Cypriot consumers did not prioritize arts and culture particularly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic**. Given that there is also a lack of governmental and legislative measures for supporting digitalization in the arts, it can be assumed that there is little progress and interest to promote new technologies in the arts and culture sector. **Cypriot audiences are mainly interested in cinema, theatre, music, live concerts, and tattoo art**.



### 3. Field Research Results

#### 3.1 Results from the focus groups with artists and aspiring artists.

The research in the form of local focus groups/interviews was conducted in March - May 2023, with a sample of 32 artists and aspiring artists from the six (6) participating countries. The aim of this particular piece of field research was to gather valuable data and testimonies about the difficulties and challenges faced by the artists during the pandemic. The participants in the focus groups, came from different categories of arts [visual arts, theatre, performing arts, literature, applied arts, etc. ] and the majority of them were women and people from different vulnerable and disadvantaged groups [refugees/asylum-seekers/migrants, economically disadvantaged, unemployed, LGBTQIA+, people from ethnic minorities, elders, ex drug users, people living in rural and remote areas, ex-prisoners, people with disabilities etc.]. Several important qualitative findings emerged from the focus groups.

At the beginning it became clear that in all participating countries the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the challenges and pathologies of missing skills as well as training and support systems for artists and aspiring artists. Artists, especially those from marginalized communities, faced significant challenges during the pandemic especially in terms of lack of access to tools and means of producing their art, difficulty of access and lack of knowledge & skills to use digital media to sell/make artistic products available to the public. As well as the lack of knowledge and skills for professional use of social media and finding targeted audiences.

In addition, we found that in almost all participating countries artists have turned mainly to social media, with Facebook and Instagram being the most widespread, to promote their artistic works and services and to communicate with the public, as social media occupy a large share of the visibility and time spent online by both artists and potential audiences and consumers. Moreover, most of the interviewed artists & aspiring artists did not identify any good practice within the artistic communities in their countries that helped them to cope with the digital challenges and the adverse conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the health measures and restrictions taken.

**Finally, all focus groups of artists and aspiring artists in the participating countries acknowledged the necessity of acquiring digital skills in terms of i) the promotion of their artistic work and the targeted expansion of their audience, ii) the legal and copyrighted sale of artistic products and services to generate profit, iii) the direct daily communication with their audience through various social media and platforms, iv) the search and management of sponsorships.**

Regarding the gaps detected in terms of skills and knowledge from the focus groups/interviews, they can be grouped and summarized as follows:

**Digital skills identified as having a need to promote artistic work & broaden audiences:**

- Basic Social networking skills.
- Basic Social media campaign & advertising to targeted audiences.

- Skills of using tools to promote through social media and digital platforms their work to an expanded or new targeted audience.
- Basic knowledge and skills in the use of professional social media accounts.
- Basic Newsletter skills.
- Ways to monitor online trends, understand the algorithm, monitor trends and audience preferences.
- Live streaming basic skills.

**Digital skills identified as being needed for the online sale of artistic products and services:**

- Cultural branding knowledge and skills for their products or services.
- Digital sales strategy skills.
- Managing and operating services for organized live streaming on YouTube, relevant social media and other platforms or applications.
- Basic knowledge of digital marketing and basic knowledge of legal and financial issues of online sales of artistic products.
- Linking external platforms, services and online transaction methods to websites or social media profiles and pages.
- Management and operation of digital pass and digital ticketing.
- Basic skills in using platforms/services for selling artistic products & services.
- Management of financial services and applications related to services and product sales services on social media, platforms, and applications.
- Basic knowledge and skills to use the internet in a safe way.
- Persuasion and negotiation skills.

**Digital skills identified as being needed for direct communication with the public in social media:**

- Basic knowledge of sending and replying to messages & comments on social media
- Basic knowledge /skills on using different social media platforms.

**Digital skills detected to have a need to seek and support from sponsors:**

- Basic knowledge and tools for identifying and approaching potential sponsors.
- Basic knowledge and tools to manage sponsorship by type and exploit/retain sponsorship 'profits'.

From the discussions in the focus groups, it became clear that the majority of artists want access to free and recognized training that covers the above digital skills and knowledge needs, as well as personalized guidance/support from experts in digital marketing, e-sales, copyright, sponsorship managers and other specialists.

### 3.2 Results from field research on skill gaps, needs, and challenges of artists and aspiring artists.

During the period March - April 2023, field research was conducted to identify the difficulties and challenges faced by the artists and aspiring artists as well as to identify their needs in terms of digital skills to face the current digital challenges. The field research was conducted in the six (6) participating countries of the Digi Helicon project, using an online questionnaire of twenty-one (21) questions. A total of ninety-four (94) participants responded to the questionnaire. All participants identified themselves as women or people from various vulnerable and disadvantaged groups [refugees/asylum-seekers/migrants, economically disadvantaged, unemployed, LGBTQIA+, people from ethnic minorities, elders, ex drug users, people living in rural and remote areas, ex-prisoners, people with disabilities etc.]. In addition, more than 20 artistic qualities/titles that the field research participants were involved in such as musicians, painters, actors, dancers, photographers, etc.

The findings in all six (6) participating countries showed that:

#### At the level of basic digital skills knowledge gap overall:

- ❖ **Most respondents 50% are independent users, 30.4% are basic users and only 19.6% are proficient computer and internet users.** This shows us that artists are at a relatively good level in terms of basic computer, mobile, tablet, and network usage.
- ❖ **74.4% of artists & aspiring artists claim to know how to use social media to promote their work to the public and expand their audience.** While for this they mainly prefer social media like Facebook, Instagram, but less platforms like YouTube, Tik Tok, Bandcamp, Twitter and WordPress.
- ❖ **55.3 % of artists & aspiring artists did not know how to use digital media to make profit/revenue from their artistic work.** While those who knew stated their preference for social media Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok and platforms like Bandcamp, YouTube and Pinterest.
- ❖ **78.7% of artists & aspiring artists claim to know how to use digital media & social media to communicate directly with the audience.**
- ❖ **75,6% of artists & aspiring artists do not have the appropriate digital skills and competencies to attract all types of sponsor support or sponsor communication on online digital platforms and social media.**

In terms of **difficulties and challenges** all artists from all countries faced common difficulties and challenges in all countries in terms of:

- lack of personal in person contact with the audience and with the artist communities,
- using appropriate language digitally,
- identifying or finding the right audience online and promoting their work online,
- handling platforms, media, and applications to sell artistic work or services and doing business,
- digital marketing and branching skills as well as lack of knowledge to do live streaming and real time broadcasting online etc.

In addition, several artists pointed out that the cost to get skilled/trained online or in person and fill their deficiencies is too high or not provided by government recognized institutions. Finally, in several cases

the lack of support from the state during the COVID-19 pandemic was mentioned in terms of addressing the digital challenges & difficulties it caused.

**At the level of needs and skills identified:**

**Most participants do not consider that they have the appropriate digital skills and competences to promote their artistic work online and expand their audience.** Some of what was mentioned as desirable skills can be summarized as:

- **Digital marketing & branding development**
- **Website development**
- **Video making skills**
- **Creating professional social media channels [Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc.]**
- **Interacting and posting easier on social media platforms**
- **Professional campaign, advertisement & promotion online and on social media.**
- **Increasing followers.**

**Most participants do not consider that they have the appropriate digital skills and competences to sell artistic products and provide artistic services to their audience online and on social media.** Some of what was mentioned as desirable skills can be summarized as:

- **Management of secure payments**
- **Creating and managing profiles on platforms for selling artworks & services online to generate income.**
- **Creating and managing an e-shop**
- **Knowledge of digital marketing**
- **Organizing a performance /live show/ exhibition online**
- **Issuing and selling online passes and digital tickets or subscriptions online**

**Most participants consider that they have the appropriate digital skills and competences to communicate with their audience on the internet and social media daily.** Their desirable skill(s) can be summarized as:

- **Basic knowledge of direct communication messages, emails, via various social media & platforms.**

**Most participants do not consider themselves to have the appropriate digital skills and competences to attract all types of sponsor support or sponsor communication on online digital platforms and social media.** Some of what was mentioned as desirable skills can be summarized as:

- **Basic knowledge and skills on identifying targeted potential sponsors.**
- **Basic knowledge about the different types of sponsorships and their benefits.**
- **Basic knowledge and skills on communicating and negotiating with targeted potential sponsors.**
- **Basic knowledge and skills on managing sponsorship by type and leveraging/retaining sponsorship 'wins'/benefits.**

### 3.3 Results from the field research on art consumers patterns and preferences.

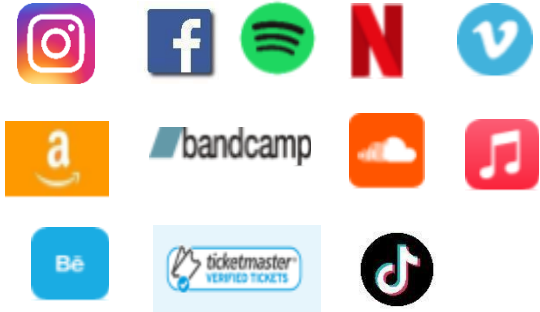
During the period February - April 2023, field research was conducted to detect the patterns and preferences of art consumers. The field research was conducted in the six (6) participating countries of the Digi Helicon project, using an online questionnaire of eight (8) questions. A total of one hundred and thirty-eight (138) participants responded to the questionnaire. The participants were both men (40%) and women (60%). Regarding the age of the sample, most of the participants belonged to the age group 25-39 years old (78 out of 138), while 29 people in the age group 18-24 years old, 27 people in the age group 40-60 years old, and only 4 people over 60 years old responded to the survey.

#### In terms of online/digital consumer preferences of public products & services:

We chose to report on the top 10 categories of products and services where the public seems to prefer to buy/consume online, as they also garner the highest percentage of responses.

In all participating countries consistently, **the public seems to prefer to consume/purchase music and songs online as this option received the most preferences** [119 responses]. At the same time, **music occupies an important part of the public's consumption interest with the purchase of tickets or online passes for online or in person live shows, music concerts or festivals being the second most preferred category** [83 responses]. **Podcasts** have a significant share of consumption, coming third in preference [70 responses], while **theatre and dance occupy the 4th and 7th place of preferences respectively through the sale of online tickets and passes** to attend online or in person performances. **Books and e-books in terms of literature and poetry is the 5th most popular choice of consumers** [44 responses]. This is followed closely by **videography, artistic videos & videoclips in 6th place**. While the last three places in the top ten are occupied by **short films** [8th place / 30 responses], **photos & photo albums** [9th place / 28 responses] and **digital prints** [10th place / 25 responses]. It is clear from the above that **there is a wide range of arts and their products which are in demand among the public. This does not mean that other categories of arts or products e.g., comics, paintings, sculptures etc. cannot be sold through digital online services.**

#### Regarding the preferred platforms, apps or social media for the purchase of online products and services

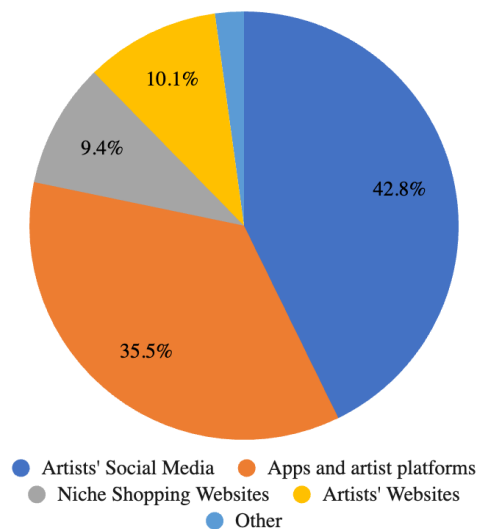
<p>In all participating countries <b>there were very frequent references by the public to social media such as Facebook, Instagram and their Live versions [Facebook Live, Instagram Live], YouTube and other sites and platforms such as Vimeo, Netflix, Spotify, Bandcamp, Amazon, Soundcloud, Vendra, Behance, Artsy, Etsy.com, as well as various sites and international services related to the issuance of online tickets and passes for music live, dance or theatre performances etc. such as Ticketmaster.</b></p>	
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Another interesting fact is that **art consumers prefer to shop and consume artistic products & services mainly through the social media of the artists they support [Facebook, Instagram etc.] 42,75% or 59/138 art consumers.**

While **very close to their preferences is also shopping from Apps of Niche Artist Platforms [Bandcamp, Vimeo, Spotify etc.] 35,51% or 49/138 art consumers.**

At the same time, **it became apparent that Niche Shopping websites garnered the least preference from the public, (9,42% or 13/138 art consumers) while Artists' websites also have very little preference, which may be considered obsolete for modern online consumers. (10,14% or 14/138)**

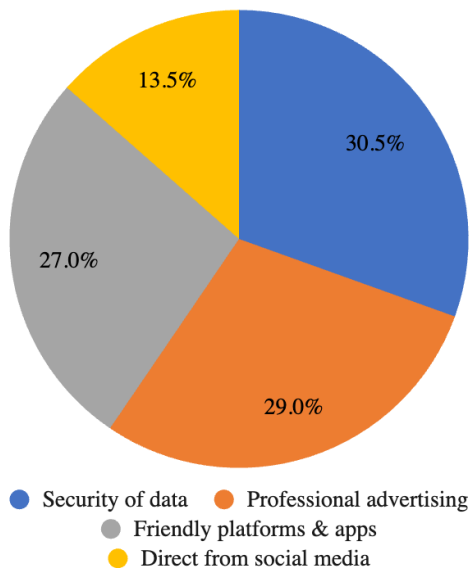
Public preference and frequency of consumption



### What makes consumers confident in buying artistic products, digitally on the internet

Based on the overall responses of art consumers, **most of them when buying online art products and services [61 responses] give more importance to the issues of security offered for their personal and financial data (e.g., full name, address, credit card number, digital wallet number, bank account number) by a suitable platform for purchases/transactions.** At similar levels [58 responses] **the professional type of advertising on the internet or social media seems to create trust among art consumers.** At similar levels [54 responses] **the use of specific specialized digital platforms and user-friendly mobile or tablet applications for the purchase of artistic goods and services creates trust and facilitates consumers' purchases.** Finally, although many art consumers, as we have seen above, prefer to monitor or use social media to purchase products, **the direct purchase of art products through social media plays a much smaller role [27 responses].**

Building consumers trust



Overall, from the above, the useful conclusion is that **art consumers prefer to largely follow or find/locate artists' products and services through social media, but they want to be provided in social**

**media with links to external platforms and services used by artists to sell products that are friendly to mobile phones, tablets and that offer significant security in the transaction and financial data of buyers.**

### **Regarding the elements that boost the attractiveness of artists digitally**

Overall, the art consumers surveyed stressed that the key elements that give confidence and make an artist more attractive online are mainly having:

- Organized and active different social media that offer direct access to his work and news, direct communication, commentary and purchase of products and services [75 answers]
- Functional and user-friendly up-to-date artistic websites that provide direct access to his work in his news and are also suitable for purchases [65 answers]
- Their profile or artistic products/services available on a well-known and secure app or platform and updating regularly [44 answers]

### **In terms of digital media, apps, websites, where art consumers can keep up to date with the news of their favorite artists**

Most art consumers in all six (6) countries participating in the project responded that they keep up to date with news about their favorite artists mainly through the artists' social media. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter was mentioned in all countries. While to a lesser extent art consumers stated that they follow the news of their favorite artists from the artists' platforms and apps. However, it is notable that in none of the participating countries art consumers are updated from the artists' websites. This is another indication that artists' websites are now outdated by consumers also in terms of artist information and are not preferred at all.

## **4. Conclusions and recommendations**

From the mapping of needs and challenges that took place at the desk research level as well as from the field research, useful conclusions emerged regarding the immediate needs and skills gaps of artists and aspiring artists and where to focus on to match the requirements of the audience.

**In short, we can say that the research identified challenges and difficulties in relation to the new digital conditions in 3-4 areas common to all countries:**

- 1) the lack of direct contact between artists and the public.**
- 2) the difficulty of accessing and using digital media for the presentation and sale of artistic products and services to the public.**
- 3) the difficulty of using social media professionally and finding targeted audiences.**

While at the same time it was observed that artists and aspiring artists focused on the use of social media to promote their work and the fact that they were now unaware and had no information about good digital practices from artists and artist groups in the participating countries.

- At the same time, it was observed that there are grouped skill gaps that identify with the needs of artists and aspiring artists to face the challenges and difficulties of the new digitalized environment and can be divided into four (4) groups as follows:
- Digital skills & competences for promotion of artistic work and expansion of audience [e.g., digital marketing & branding, professional social media development and usage, promotion in social media etc.]
- Digital skills & competences in selling artistic services and products online with good knowledge of the legal status of copyright and sales licenses [e.g., managing selling platforms/apps, issuing online passes and tickets procedures, e- shop management, legal statuses, paid live streaming & content etc.]
- Digital skills & competences to communicate directly with their audience on the internet and social media daily [use of professional features of social media for direct communication e.g., messenger, live feeds etc.].
- Digital skills and competences to attract all types of sponsors support [identification and negotiation with sponsors, sponsorship management basics]

Finally, in terms of aligning their needs with audience preferences, a range of many different artistic products, services, and arts that consumers buy online were identified and it was generally recognized that there is potential in relation to online sales for all forms of arts. **All learning needs and objectives ought to focus mainly through the use of social media but also through the linking of social media with professional external platforms and services to be used by artists to sell products that are friendly to mobile phones, tablets and that offer significant security in the transaction and financial data of buyers.** At the same time, it is important for attracting the public to have **professionally updated social media, with professional advertising, a modern way of approaching the public and for the daily communication and information of the public.** For all the above, it is clear that digital and online educational resources should be created to meet learning needs and gaps in a way that takes into account the vulnerability and specific characteristics of the target group.