

Master Thesis

Process or end destination? Museums in the 21st century

An analysis on how museums can further their educational mission into the digital space

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Abstract

This research project examined how museums can further their educational mission into the digital sphere by using the different phases of the customer decision journey: creating awareness, consideration, interaction and building relationships. Due to recent shifts caused by social media and the advancement of digital in general, a manifestation in the digital sphere is much needed in the museum sector. If inaction prevails, museums put themselves at risk in losing their societal and cultural relevance as public institution in their communities. This research project examined the museums' possibilities of upholding their societal and educational value by conducting interviews with 19 experts. These experts included museum professionals, academics, as well as persona working at agencies and foundations that work in the cultural sector to gain a highly diverse perspective and valuable insights in best practices of digital museum experiences.

The interviews with this broad spectrum of experts revealed several key findings that can be implemented to further the museum's educational mission online. Due to a user-centric approach, the starting point should always be the user. When creating awareness about the digital educational product or the digital presence itself, it is paramount in the first phase to use partnerships, build communities and make the art relatable for the user to create entrance points. This happens through channels that are already heavily used by the audience. The second phase serves as extension of the first phase and focuses on reinforcing the message through the appropriate channels. In the third phase, the platform itself is at the core, which have an emphasis on interactivity, personalization and active participation. The museum is brought to the audience, instead of the user coming to the museum. After the interaction, it is essential to focus on building museum communities through different channels to continue the creation of an added value for the users. An important emerging topic was the topic of inclusion. These findings show that by using the phases of the customer decision journey, museums can further their educational mission into the digital sphere by making use of a multi-channel environment in order to orchestrate the channels and satisfy the user needs. This field is still unexplored to a great extent. This research gives a multitude of inspirations for further research

Keywords: customer decision journey, museums, user-centric approach, personalization, community building

For my parents who always trusted me, let me roam the seven seas and most of all, supported me in my decisions, both good and bad. For my extraordinarily awesome best friends Robin, Philipp, Adriano, Robin und Gregor, who I do not see as much as I want to but are always with me.

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The inspiration for undertaking this research project arose from my life-long interest in art, history, and the museum as an institution itself. Since I was a child, the sheer knowledge and treasures of humanity that have been accumulated by these massive institutions over time have always fascinated me. To me, the institution museum always was and still is one of the most important backbones of our culture as a world society that focuses on both positive and negative sides of human history. Museums are the massive and almost intimidating focal points that provide us answers of what was, what is and maybe even of what will be. As my fascination for these silent giants has never seemed to let me go, it was a no-brainer that my first priority would be the thesis project in collaboration with the Rijksmuseum.

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Special thanks to Beyoncé and Jay-Z for recently dropping the video to their song *APES**T*, filmed in the Louvre. The bridge will always be this work's secret, alternative title.

I think because museums have been around for 300, 400 years, we think we are always going to be here, but I think we are in a serious, serious struggle for relevance and if we do not place people at the centre of everything that we do and listen to the audiences and work with them to give them what they need, then we are going to be a lot of museums that are going to go out of business.

-Ryan Dodge

"Digital is not about technology but about attitude" ... So, digital is a mindset. And what digital has brought us is this open, collaborative, dialogue-based way of negotiating and experiencing the world. It is mediated by technology... but it has also developed our ways of thinking about other people, other cultures, and on a good day, we are more open minded, more willing to listen and to learn from people we do not even know yet. But we know that there are millions of people out there who have things of value to share with us.

-Merete Sanderhoff

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1. Introduction – Reconsidering the confines of the museum

At their best, museums today can create the tools to write the contemporary histories that are needed to understand the present. By building on the traditional role of modern art to question and provoke, contemporary art museums speculate about possible futures as well as reconsider the past (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015, p. 1450).

For public organizations like museums, the role of the education has always been at the core of their mission as Ernst, Esche and Erbslöh (2015) write. However, education is and has never been the sole objective of museums. By sitting right at the source, museums were able to draw from an immense human knowledge that has been accumulated over the centuries, museums were always at the forefront of innovation although being a rather conservative institution (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015). Therefore, it was not perceived as unprecedented when Werner Schweibenz (1998) wrote in his paper *The Virtual Museum* that the Internet would be “a great opportunity which the museums should use to broaden its audience” (p. 194). He was sure that museums would not hesitate to make the presumed power of the Internet their own with the purpose of widening their educational role by expanding into the virtual world and enabling audiences a virtual visit (Schweibenz, 2004).

As innovative as Schweibenz' (1998) thoughts might have been 20 years ago, in hindsight, his ideas then seem close to reality in this day and age. However, it seems like the idea of the virtual museum went astray in the digitization process, when recognizing that research on the field has only recently increased their focus on innovating and finding ways to keep museums relevant in the digital age (Eid, 2016; Borelli, 2017). Most of the more recent studies only show how museums can use innovation to create digital products to improve the customer experience during the physical museum visits (Eid, 2016; Fillis, Lehman & Miles, 2016). What these studies lack is how museums can create a digital entity for people that are not able to physically visit the museum. Neither does previous research seem to focus on the development of frameworks like digital customer decision journeys (CDJ) that can enable museums to broaden their reach beyond the confines of the physical museum. This field of interest is still in early stages as Devine (2015), Eid (2016) and Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017) point out.

What is sure is that digitization has led to an increase in data and to an exponential growth of possibilities of human communication. Without a doubt, the most used technological advancement in human communication is social media platforms. The amelioration of social media channels has prompted the evolvement of a myriad of multiple different digital channels, which create human connections and communicate through

varying visual media like images, video and text. These different components exacerbate the orchestration of individual channels within this enormous ecosystem in order to pursue the objectives that have been set by the museum. Before digitization had an impact on how humans communicate, there were only a few channels with which target audiences were reached. As technological advancement does not seem to be the strong suit of public institutions and museums seem rather slow in keeping up with newest technologies, it is not surprising that nowadays most institutions have not yet found an appropriate way on how to orchestrate the abundance of digital channels that are available to them today (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015). This prompted an uncoordinated online presence of humans, brands and institutions as channel preferences differ between these actors (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015).

Therefore, the objective of this research will be to find ways how museums can use the customer decision journey as framework to orchestrate the myriad of digital channels in order to further their educational mission online. Especially in the museum sector the focus is on the singular customer experience at a specific time but not on the whole journey of the customer. This perspective restricts museums from embracing opportunities to make the singular experience to a more multi-faceted one and build customer relationships beyond the visit. The problem hereby is that it is a hard endeavour for museums due to the lack of knowledge on how to translate the museum's mission into the digital sphere and the uncoordinated orchestration of channels. This could also enable museums to identify the most important touchpoints that should be the focus of attention in the process of successfully translating the museum's mission into the digital sphere. Finally, this could enable museums to reconsider their structural confines, think outside their institutional box and change their status as an end destination.

1.1 Scientific relevance

As Schweibenz wrote in 1998, “at its best, the virtual museum connects the visitors with valuable information across the entire globe and gives the museum a dynamic, multidisciplinary and multimedia approach” (p. 191). Museums will still be the paramount institution to occupy the role of a public educator in the digital age. However, they seem to have failed to keep pace with the digitization of communication and to transfer their mission of education in the digital space (Fillis, Lehman & Miles, 2016; Tsai & Lin, 2016). This becomes most apparent when looking at how museums have struggled “to find long-term relevance in a digital, connected world and are seeking new ways to add value” (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015, p. 1450). Now, the creation of value is dependent on the stakeholder perspective. Most importantly, at the core of the museum is the creation of social value by educating the public (Azmat, Ferdous, Rentschler & Winston, 2017). For museums, such social value is essential to ensure a continuous flow of visitors in order to maintain a continuous flow of financial income (Azmat, et al., 2017). This creates an economic value that is seemingly dependent on the social value as a social value must be present to attract visitors. The problem is that “most museums do not brand their values, ideas, mission or substantive contributions” (Janes, 2010, p. 331).

One solution on how to brand this societal relevance and create more social value can be by clearly describing their mission and value propositions. Museums need to show that they are able to satisfy their audience by anticipating their exact needs and problems (The Economist, 2013; Devine, 2015). Customer decision journeys are usually used to visualize the process with several brand-customer touchpoints that a customer encounters when deciding on a purchase. With the digitization multiplying a once rather singular channel of communication into a myriad of channels, this customer decision journey has become more complicated. Museums have serious issues dealing with that because most still approach the multi-channel environment as a single channel environment (Devine, 2015). This creates an uncoordinated digital appearance with rather solitary channels, whereas visitors expect a unity of multiple channels without any frictions in between (Devine, 2015; Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros & Schlesinger, 2009).

To create such a seamless experience, museums and organizations have to know where users sojourn to strategically design a digital experience with effective touchpoints to fulfill. Thus, the emergence of multiple digital channels requires museums to contemplate “the larger ecosystem that these digital initiatives exist in” (Devine, 2015). Here, the customer decision journey can help to unify and improve their use of digital channels to give museums the opportunity to increase their responsiveness and eventually enable them to anticipate the needs of users (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015). Developing such strategies can be essential to develop touchpoint patterns and experiences that create and illustrate the value

to their users and help to add more value to the museum's social mission (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015; Janes, 2010). Furthermore, museums could eventually reach untapped audiences that are not able to visit the museum in-person.

With this background, this research will use the customer decision journey as a framework in order to examine *how museums can use customer decision journeys to further their educational role in the digital space*. The educational mission of the museum is the constant overarching theme in this research. From this overarching theme, four sub questions derive that will assess how every phase of the customer journey can be put to full use in order to further the educational mission.

The thesis will draw theories from the field of museology and uses the newest developments in research about multi-channel ecosystems (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros & Schlesinger, 2009; Tsai & Lin, 2016). Most important are recent research papers on the field of customer decision journeys and user experiences, which suggest the deployment of personalization and other developments in order to improve the museum user experience. This might help the museum with the overall endeavour of increasing their digital relevance for educational purposes. From this research problem, the following research questions derive:

RQ1: How can museums use customer decision journeys to further their educational role in the digital space?

SQ1: How can museums use customer decision journeys to create awareness about their digital educational product?

SQ2: How can museums use customer decision journeys to influence users in the digital sphere to interact with their digital educational product?

SQ3: How can museums use customer decision journeys during the interaction of user and their digital educational product?

SQ4: How can museums use customer decision journeys to foster customer relationships with the users in the digital sphere?

1.2 Societal relevance

Museums as social institutions are considered to occupy the role of educators and are preservers of knowledge (The Economist, 2013; Ernst, Esche & Eberslöh, 2015). However, as *The Economist* (2013) reported, museums must appeal to radically different audiences to stay relevant in the future. Museums therefore need to develop new digital educational value propositions and strategies to clarify their value to both their visitors and users. Museums must satisfy the needs of their broad set of visitors and users online and give them new incentives to educate themselves about arts, history or science. Simultaneously, the development of new value propositions possibly helps to reaffirm the museum's social value in the digital world. Otherwise, its societal significance could be decreasing in a world that becomes increasingly digitized. Therefore, this research might be an opportunity to strengthen these essential societal roles museums have. A successful orchestration of a digital multi-channel ecosystem that aims to satisfy user needs can definitely help museums to increase attractiveness to users and further its educational role (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015). The framework of the customer decision journey is key in this role and has been only sparsely applied to the cultural sector.

Looking at digital projects from a multi-channel perspective instead of singular channel experiences seems to be a legitimate course of action. Optimally, the results of this research will therefore draw a link to a broader issue of the struggle of digitization for the cultural sector in general. Even though, this thesis will not be the overall solution to create more value for museums that are struggling to maintain their performance in the digitized world, it might offer one solution on how to both efficiently and effectively face the issue of translating the educational mission of museums into the digital space. By examining how museums can further their educational mission in the digital sphere channels, this thesis tries to demonstrate that the use of the customer decision journey could be a great opportunity for museums to really broaden their educational mission. Since the focus of museums still seems to be on conversion, meaning using digital as a ways to bring people to the physical museum, putting the focus on a digital educational product could be extremely interesting for the future of the museum work. It could help to reinforce the social value of museums and make a seemingly immobile institution more mobile and interesting for younger groups as well.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Museums in the 21st century – opportunities and challenges

One of the recurring themes in the literature revolves around the mission of museums. It is important for the evolving topic to discuss the mission of museums in order to apprehend the well-known obvious traits of museums as well as the underlying nuances that are crucial later on in the analysis. So, what exactly is the mission and the purpose of the museum as public institution in the 21st century?

2.1.1 Digital opportunities of museums

As a public institution, museums serve as cradle of knowledge. Museums comprise the greatest treasures of mankind. The percentage that is exhibited seems rather miniature compared to the archived historic artefacts behind the scenes. Therefore, museums are first and foremost non-for-profit institutions that function as preservers and guardians of artefacts and collections, which are indispensable for mankind (Tsai & Lin, 2016; The Economist, 2013). Logically, this concludes that the main mission of museums is being a servant to the public by being a repository for these treasures and by providing a valuable service in educating the human society (Tsai & Lin, 2016). Furthermore, museums serve also as advocates of social development (Tsai & Lin, 2016). Education in the museums is a reciprocal process between the visitor and the exhibitions themselves (Yi, 2013). Humans need museums and the exhibited artefacts to learn more about the synergy between themselves and the world (Yi, 2013). Museums therefore serve as mediators that ignite this pedagogical process for humans. Due to their massive accumulation of artefacts over time, museums transform these artefacts into a cultural knowledge and memory of past times (Yin, 2013). This constitutes the museums immense social mission today: education.

Museums construct stories and bring the intangible ideas of past epochs to life by facilitating the comprehension of history and arts through a learning-by-doing environment and showcasing artefacts (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015; Goulding, 2000; Schweibenz, 1998; Silverstone, 1994). How effective the museum's educational objective is, is dependent on the "ability to convey information about the objects and their context in an engaging, meaningful, diversified and self-controlled way" (Sylaiou, Mania, Paliokas, Pujol-Tost, Killintzis & Liarokapis, 2017, p. 63). Thus, education is the most important objective of museums by which the social value of museums is assessed by (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015; Hanquinet & Savage, 2012; Paulus, 2003).

More recently, as the digital world seems to progress and expand, entertainment has emerged in this mix as well. This means that entertainment has become another means to attract more visitors and factors by which the value of museums is assessed by (Barbieri, Bruno & Muzzupappa, 2017; Izzo, 2017). Museum audiences grow more and more

dependent on an immersive digital world, which museums try to implement within their physical locations to keep their visitors, who are constantly connected to the digital world, entertained. The label of the “always on customer” seems to be appropriate here (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015; Stone & Woodcock, 2014). As more and more customers seem to be found online, museums have to find ways to build new value propositions to address emerging user needs differently (Janes, 2010). However, as museums do not seem to be able to keep up with the pace of digitization due to mostly bureaucratic and financial reasons, the organizational models of museums seem no longer appropriate to address these needs (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015).

When considering museums as public cultural institutions, it becomes clear that museums do not only preserve past knowledge and educate society, but also bring contemporary culture further by being “‘tastemakers’ within a society” (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015, p. 1447). As institution, which continuously employs researchers from all over the world, museums are on top of contemporary cultural trends that can ignite social change. For example, international collaborations facilitate and increase researcher diversity and therefore depict a brisk exchange of knowledge (Drew, Moreau & Stiassny, 2017). Therefore, museums are able to drive social change, political change, and also innovation (Eid, 2016; Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015). Museums have to show their innovative abilities in this rather conservative field (The Economist, 2013). Similar to businesses, museums have to constantly overhaul strategies, effective operations and renew funding from investors to retain their relevance (Tsai & Lin, 2016). Thus, innovation cannot be neglected. And this is exactly what museums adhere to as well: experimenting with emerging technologies like virtual reality in order to provide their visitors with educational and delightful experiences (Devine, 2015; Barbieri, Bruno & Muzzupappa, 2017).

2.1.2 Innovation as a means for attracting the audience

Despite their rather conservative status as public institution, museums seem to have been early adopters of everything digital and everything that has to do with emerging technologies (Devine, 2015). However, these initiatives did not serve to compensate for organizational disparities or visitor needs, but digital initiatives were solely driven by a scientific desire of experimentation (Devine, 2015). This is an interesting paradox. Museums seem to be only keen on experimenting with new technologies for research and not to convey their educational value. Probably, such an attitude can be determined by their curatorial orientation as well as their status of being a non-for-profit organization (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017). Yet, museums should contemplate the use of emerging technologies in order to seize new opportunities because innovation in particular might be able to support museums in the pursuit of efficiently and effectively achieving their mission

also outside the physical confines of the museum (Eid, 2016; The Economist, 2013A). By implementing for example virtual museum applications that create experiences for digital users outside of the physical museum, museums could develop new value propositions and further their educational role.

Innovation as a means for attracting the audience is important to facilitate the satisfaction of the user needs. Furthermore, as recent research shows, the use of innovative technology can be used as differentiation strategy to gain competitive advantage, which becomes increasingly important when considering the limited funds (Izzo, 2017). Innovative technology can also expand the awareness and visibility of the museum, which again attracts more visitors online as well as offline (Izzo, 2017). Camarero and Garrido (2012) define such technology that helps to advance organizational and administrative processes (e.g. marketing) as organizational innovations. Furthermore, they distinguish technological innovations that help to advance products and services (Camarero & Garrido, 2012).

Innovation as a means does not only benefit the museum, but also the visitor or user in the end, which is essential. Innovative technology and digital communication can help museums bring across additional, educational information (Izzo, 2017; Vinent, Martín & Gustems, 2015); better provide otherwise ungraspable information (e.g. through astonishing visuals), “customize the visitor experience through the possibilities which the user selects among the information content of its interest” (Izzo, 2017, p. 532); and give users access to digital collections (Izzo, 2017). In conclusion, making use of innovation may have the hurdle of limited funds, but certainly has benefits to both the museum and their target audience.

2.1.3 A recap of the museum’s mission

To sum up this first theme, it is important to keep in mind that museums are both passive and active agents whose actions connect the past, the present and the future. Their core mission and purpose lays therefore in educating the public. By using technology in order to overcome organizational disparities, reinforce their social value and satisfy user needs, museums might be able to deal with urgent issues in an increasingly digitized social environment. However, financial issues constrain this. Most of the literature focuses on the improvement of the museum’s physical experience whereas only few papers focus on the development of a digital museum proposition (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017; Sylaiou et al., 2017). The advancement of the digitization weakens the prevailing notion that visitors have to come to the museum, whereas more and more potential visitors would rather have it the other way around. There are individual museums that recognize that the sole focus on the physical experience is increasingly becoming a liability. As reaction, museums like the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Tate Modern in London occupy the role as pioneer and try to advance in the digital dimension through a democratization of their collection or

prioritizing digital. During its renovations, the Rijksmuseum ventured the step into the digital sphere and made almost their whole collection publicly available for free in the digital domain (Pekel, 2014). One year earlier, John Stack (2013), then Head of Digital Transformation at the Tate, developed a strategy that prioritized digital above everything else: “Through the development of a holistic digital proposition there is an opportunity to use the digital to deliver Tate’s mission to promote public understanding and enjoyment of British, modern and contemporary art” (Stack, 2013, Paragraph 1). To develop such digital propositions and grasp the opportunity, customer decision journeys should be considered as means of orchestration of these propositions.

2.2 From a singular experience to a myriad of possibilities

When it comes to CDJs in the museum sector, the conceptualization of the CDJ has not been undertaken only until as recently as 2016. Samir Bitar, Chief Customer Officer at The Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., developed the apparently first journey map for a museum (Bliss, 2016). Due to the fact that the CDJ is almost unexplored in the museum context, a thorough explanation of the conventional digital CDJ is needed to lay the foundation for museum CDJ.

2.2.1 The customer decision journey

According to Doyle (2016), a CDJ is a “process that a prospect goes through to become a buying customer [, visitor or user], from initial awareness to interest, to consideration, to purchase, to preference, then loyalty to a given brand” (Paragraph 1). In the case of physical museums, CDJs should attract visitors. The CDJ is also quite similar to the customer experience as it is sometimes used interchangeably. Especially online, the customer does not only follow a specific journey any more but is able to join at any of the phases during the journey, which means that the customer creates an experience for herself or himself (Maechler, Neher & Park, 2016). Before the CDJ starts, organizations have to consider certain things that can help them finetune the journey. The essential foundation is the recognition of the problems within the CDJ and where the opportunities for improvement lie, which is simply a matter of research (Frow & Payne, 2007). Based on this research, a framework can be set up that eradicates the detected problems and improves the journey (Frow & Payne, 2007). An example for such a framework is the framework Google set up that serves four essential steps that can lead to a perfect customer experience, and thus customer loyalty: the *See-Think-Do-Care framework*. This framework will be adapted to serve as a component of the conceptual framework in this thesis.

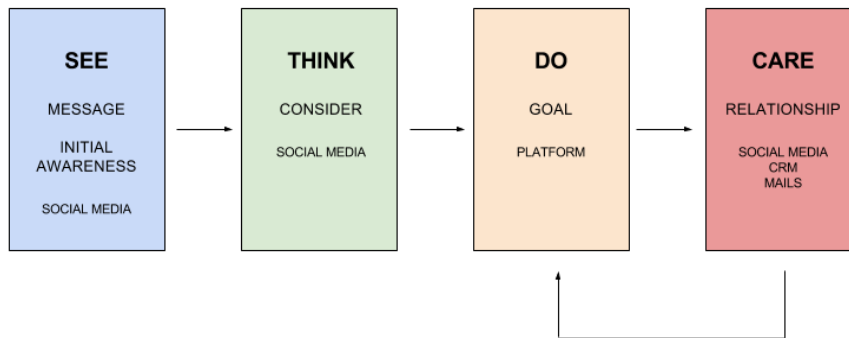


Figure 1: Self-designed visualization of Google’s See-Think-Do-Care framework (Eriksson, 2015) and the definition of Doyle (2016)

The first step in the journey, the *See* phase, refers to the message of the brand, which creates the initial awareness, which Doyle (2016) and Eriksson (2015) mention. It includes nearly everyone in the audience who can be exposed to the organization’s message (Eriksson, 2015). The second step, the *Think* phase, is about the consideration of the customer, and includes everyone in the audience who might have the intent to eventually follow through with the purchase (Eriksson, 2015; Doyle, 2016). The third step *Do* is the goal: the purchase, the interaction. In the museum context, a purchase would correlate to consuming its educational content. Obviously, it includes the customers that certainly follow through with the purchase resulting from a need or a commercial intent, which derived from the *Think* phase (Eriksson, 2015). At the *Care* phase, customers develop a liking to the purchased brand and start purchasing it habitually, which results in loyalty (Doyle, 2016). This includes already existing customers (Eriksson, 2015). The factor of loyalty also promotes an active cycle between the stages *Do* and *Care*, as customers return. The steps *See*, *Think* and *Care* help to drive and maximize the mental ability to promote awareness and interest, whereas the *Do* step should “maximize ease-of-purchase” (Eriksson, 2015, Paragraph 3) (Eriksson, 2015). Most important at each step are the conceptualization of touchpoints between the organization and the customer, which should be carefully managed at all times (Frow & Payne, 2007).

Designing CDJs, or customer experiences, is mainly about creating value for customers, as well as for the companies and organizations themselves (Edelman & Singer, 2015). The created value expresses itself as managerial strategies on how to coordinate the various efforts to reach an organization’s audience but also how to manipulate what the audience wants. From this emerged the idea of customer touchpoints that are important points of contact within the CDJ (Verhoef et al., 2009). This point of contact can be either

direct (posters, flyer, store, purchase, use etc.) or indirect (news reports, word-of-mouth, recommendations, etc.) (Gries, 2016; Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015; Verhoef et al., 2009; Meyer & Schwager, 2007). Both direct and indirect touchpoints can be regarded as different channels through which organizations and customers interact (Neslin, Grewal, Leghorn, Shankar, Teerlin, Thomas & Verhoef, 2006).

Later on, these direct and indirect touchpoints migrated into the digital sphere in form of websites or social media (direct), non-proprietary blogs or posts on social media (indirect) (Gries, 2016). At each step of the CDJ, touchpoints have the task to address, satisfy and manipulate the customer's needs, whatever this need might be. Most importantly, by carefully managing each touchpoint, the customer experience can be significantly enhanced (Frow & Payne, 2007). Subsequently, an effective use of touchpoints aims to eventually lead to a brand-customer loyalty, which creates value for both the customer and the organization as the customer keeps coming back. Such customer loyalty definitely leads to an increase in profitability, which is of course an extremely desirable result for the organization (Frow & Payne, 2007). Essential for this desired outcome is the orchestration of every single touchpoint, the customers might come across in the decision process (Frow & Payne, 2007; Verhoef et al., 2009).

2.2.2 The obstacles of the digital customer decision journey

Such an orchestration was already difficult, but has become more so with digitization, which created a myriad of different channels, using different sorts of media, audiences and different kinds of social intercourse. Thus, the advent of social media certainly has changed how people communicate and still continues to change it. This becomes apparent when considering the myriad of digital channels (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) that have emerged within only the last decade and connect people from all over the world in shared web-based environments (Fournier & Avery, 2011). This means that not only human communication has changed, but also the communication between brands, organizations and their customers. Communication and also content is not any more only controlled by the organization itself, but the user, too. Thus, the user has increasingly more control in what is being said about organizations (Fournier & Avery, 2011). This becomes most apparent when considering the mechanisms of online reviews and how the advent of social media seemed to have disrupted various business models (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Fensel, Toma, García, Stavrakantonakis & Fensel, 2014). Social media ignited a shift in the paradigm of customer-organization relations that is still evolving. Brands and organizations wanted to make use of this paradigm shift and use social media to connect to the users in the social web. At first, companies chose to be active on a narrow choice of digital touchpoints (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015), which only seemed to be "crashing the party" (Fournier & Avery, 2011, p.

193) of users. By now however, brands and organizations have become part of the digital environment and learned to use broader digital channels in order to create routes of communication to its customers and users, which created new forms of interaction (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015). As the following chapters deal with digital communication, customers will be called users from now on.

Within the digital world, the steps of the conventional CDJ are still the same. However, with the myriad of digital channels, the CDJ has changed from a rather linear, one-channel process to a dynamic, multi-channel process (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015). This creates high inconsistency across channels because users can enter the CDJ at any of the four steps. If the user's needs are not met with the right touchpoint this could lead to negative consequences, which should be avoided at all times (Maechler, Neher & Park, 2016). In order for companies to be able to orchestrate all touchpoints within the journey, they have to ensure a cross-channel or omni-channel brand consistency that establishes a steady experience (Payne, Peltier & Barger, 2017; Frow & Payne, 2007). Furthermore, it is important to use the appropriate channel for each specific touchpoint to take the different needs of the customer at each step into account (Frow & Payne, 2007). However, this poses a rather difficult obstacle for companies and thus, for museums as well.

2.2.3 Channels and affordances

The most difficult factors for the channel selection are the social environment, situational factors, the channel's design and attributes as well as the marketing efforts that are invested into the channel (Neslin et al., 2006). This is all dependent on the affordances each channel has. The term of affordances was coined by James J. Gibson (1979), who defined affordances as the intrinsic functional characteristics of an object that enables or limits action possibilities that are available in the given environment. Later, this idea was expanded and applied to technologies, where affordances appear when interacting with technologies (Evans, Pearce, Vitak & Treem, 2017; Fox & McEwan, 2017). Users experiment with and adapt to the technology, which limits the actions taken with the technology (Gaver, 1991; Fox & McEwan, 2017). Technologies therefore influence the possibilities for users and thus enable or limit users to specific actions within the technological boundaries of the used channel (Gaver, 1991). Based on the affordances of a channel, organizations can decide on the channel as a specific touchpoint. Usability and utility are essential here, as affordances always have to be paired to the users' abilities (Antonenko, Dawson & Sahay, 2017). As Antonenko, Dawson and Sahay write, utility is designing the affordance itself, whereas usability is about "designing metaphoric representations to increase the perception of such an affordance" (p. 919). How exactly affordances have to be taken into account when developing educational products, will be explained more thoroughly in a later chapter with the

help of the educational technology affordance-ability taxonomy created by Antonenko, Dawson and Sahay (2017).

Coming back to the different channels, it is important to point out that the accumulation of channels form a multi-channel ecosystem through which the CDJ is running through. This creates a continuous flow of touchpoints, like Lanir, Bak and Kuflik (2014) argue. The advantage of a continuous flow is that it contributes to a CDJ without any distractions in between the touchpoints (Devine, 2015; McColl-Kennedy, Gustafsson, Jaakkola, Klaus, Radnor, Perks & Friman, 2015; Verhoef et al., 2009; Meyer & Schwager, 2007). To create an effective journey, which aims to have a bigger impact on the user, the specific touchpoints and the sequence they appear in has to be examined more thoroughly (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010).

This is due to the fact that experiences in one channel can have an impact on the experiences in other channels, which complicating things further (Verhoef et al., 2009). It is important to think about individual touchpoints in terms of what user need it might satisfy and what the best possible experience is that a user could have at this particular step (Asif, Hiraoka, Jones & Vohra, 2017). Thus, the main challenge is to understand the user and moreover what preferences at which touchpoint the user has, in order to specify the marketing efforts for this channel (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is also essential to address possible patterns of sequential interactions that aim to characterize and even personalize the CDJ and thus, the experience (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). These are factors that have to be considered for the problem of optimizing the orchestration of touchpoints within the customer journey to create a unified user experience, which users seem to demand. To sum up, a multichannel environment certainly constitutes great opportunities for organizations to broaden their reach to a bigger audience and engage their target audience, but also comes with certain challenges for those designing it (Fensel et al., 2014).

2.2.4 Paving the way for a museum decision journey

This research intends to use the CDJ as framework to orchestrate the overall strategy of museums. It seems that digitization and more active users seem to provoke a shift of the focus from the journey to the recognition of a rather more dynamic user experience that is based on an effective use of evenly dynamic and personalized touchpoints that are bound to the fast changing adoption of channels and their affordances (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015; Gaver, 2011). The user seems to be shifting into the focus of the CDJ and seems increasingly able to actively decide which of the channels is appropriate at a specific moment (Antonenko, Dawson & Sahay, 2017; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). Brands and organizations are slowly adapting but struggle as they approach the multi-channel

environment from a singular perspective (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015). However, with all the digital possibilities nowadays, users expect to have one consistent cross-channel experience and expect all the channels in one coordinated and easily accessible entity (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017; Frow & Payne, 2007). This issue certainly has to be improved - in museums as well.

2.3 Digital customer decision journeys in museums

In comparison to brands and companies, where marketing and consumer research has always been treated as one of the paramount components of their businesses, marketing and consumer research has only recently started to grow in the cultural sector. Therefore, the knowledge on the creation of CDJs in the cultural sector is yet limited (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017; Jafari, Taheri & vom Lehn, 2013). This does not mean that organizations like museums have not focused on customer journeys at all. Samir Bitar developed a museum visitor journey map for the Smithsonian that focuses on the facilitation of planning the museum visit for the visitor (Bliss, 2016). However, the visitor should eventually visit the physical museum, which is not the priority here. Nevertheless, Bitar's journey map can still serve as example. Stack's (2013) digital strategy for the Tate in London is closer to the objective of this thesis. Stack (2013) certainly recognizes the difficulties of museums when it comes to digitization like identifying the user needs and selecting the right channels to satisfy these needs (Stack, 2013; Janes, 2010). With the role of customers increasingly becoming more active in the decision process, marketing and consumer research has increasingly become the focus of attention in museums, which are in a transition phase of becoming increasingly visitor-centric (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017; MacLeod, Dodd & Duncan, 2015).

2.3.1 Translating the museum's educational mission into the digital sphere

As new approaches promote establishing the visitor experience in the focus of the museum, the journey design should have the aim to enable visitors "to personalize their experience" (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017, p. 776). Personalization is certainly one of the affordances of digitization that can be utilized in the museum context. Both in the physical and the digital museum, personalization might help the CDJ because it enables every user to have an individual museum experience (Devine, 2015). Personalization is among others one of the affordances in the educational technology affordance-ability taxonomy of Antonenko, Dawson and Sahay (2017). For them, personalization affordances imply "the ability to personalize the learning environment with avatars, [...] and customize the look and feel of the environment" (Antonenko, Dawson & Sahay, 2017, p. 920). To achieve said personalization, museums need to find a balance between both cognitive and physical engagement to aim for the best experience possible and achieve their mission: impart knowledge to their users (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017).

As this is much focused within the museums, museums need to find a way how to translate their mission into the digital space. One way to achieve that can be by implementing Schweibenz' (2004) idea of the "learning museum" (p. 3) or precisely the virtual museum. In Schweibenz' (2004) context, the learning museum is a website "which offers

different points of access to its virtual visitors, according to their age, background and knowledge” (p. 3). The objective is to enable users to immerse in a topic that interests them. This provokes them to engage with the content and eventually creates user loyalty (Schweibenz, 2004). The virtual museum is the next step of the learning museum, as it does not only provide information but also links to digital collections of other museums (Schweibenz, 2004). Considering the technological progress since 2004, it is certain that the learning museum or the virtual museum can be implemented not only as a website but also with other types of media and technologies, e.g. virtual reality. Even though it is not exactly what Schweibenz had in mind, the successful democratisation project of the Rijksmuseum, which made an enormous amount of its artworks publicly accessible on the Internet during its reparations, shows what potential such a learning museum can have (Pekel, 2014; Schweibenz 2004).

Important here is that the experience is seamless, consistent and that each channel within the ecosystem exhibits the same organizational identity (Devine, 2015, Frow & Payne, 2007). Cross-channel design and consistent content are of equal relevance, as the museum’s story needs to be the persistent across all channels (Devine, 2015; Frow & Payne, 2007). Users move between the different channels on different devices, meaning that although the museum is present on multiple channels, the museum also still has to find ways to orchestrate these to create one appealing and unified experience that customers demand (Devine, 2015). What might help in this case is looking at the museum as a network within the frame of the actor-network theory (Law, 1992). In that theory, a network consists of multiple heterogeneous actors that interact with each other in order to assemble the network as an entity (Law, 1992; Lury, 2009). This is an ideal analogy for the museum experience, which might also help to make more sense of how the different heterogeneous actors (e.g. users, channels, touchpoints) within the multi-channel ecosystem interact and in the end generate a museum experience in the digital sphere (Law, 1992; Lury, 2009).

2.3.2 Developing the customer decision journey for museums

The touchpoints of the CDJ framework have three main objectives: building value propositions, the selection of channels through affordances and the user-centric approach. These are taken from the first three building blocks of Osterwalder and Pigneur’s (2010) *Business Canvas*: value proposition, channels, and customer segment. By building value propositions, museums create products and thus touchpoints through which they satisfy customer needs. These products will be delivered to the users through the channels and thus, through the touchpoints. Restricted by the affordances, different channels will help to adapt and personalize the product to address the users’ needs through a user-centric approach.

This is where the See-Think-Do-Care framework from Eriksson (2015) comes in again. The framework can help structure and visualize the specific objectives of the museum, the user needs, the channels, and most importantly the experience at each step of the framework (see Figure 2). The overall strategic objective is always education. The components in this visualization need to be orchestrated in order to achieve the overall strategic objective and should always ask what the best possible user experience could be at each specific step to satisfy and manipulate the users' needs (Asif, et al., 2017). Additionally, the framework also helps to organize what to do before and after the user experience.

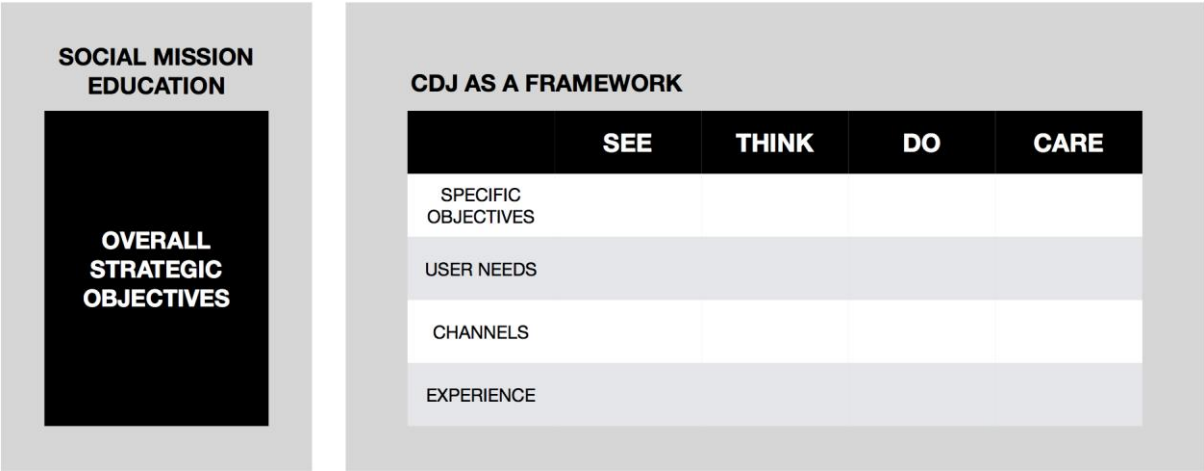


Figure 2: The See-Think-Do-Care framework adapted to the museum

The CDJ may help to advance the museum-user interaction to orchestrate the touchpoints and their value propositions for the users and for the museums (Edelman & Singer, 2015). However, the design of the touchpoints and subsequently the CDJ has yet to be found out.

2.3.3 On the touchpoints of the museum

To get back to the theory of the user experience itself, it is important to mention the touchpoints for the museum. Touchpoints and their affordances can enable museums to provide their users specific and personalized user experiences. These should have as much activity variety as possible to achieve the personalization of their experience. In the physical museum, touchpoints are designed within two different areas. In the participative area, museums offer their visitors participation in activities, which promotes an entertaining learning by playing approach to stimulate the users' senses (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017). Therefore, there is certainly the potential for the user to co-create her or his own experience, which Frow and Payne (2007) consider being one of the essential steps towards the perfect user experience. The second area, the immersive area, targets the users' cognitive processes by simultaneously educating and entertaining them with the

intention to encourage relaxation, contemplation and reflection (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017). The participative area certainly has the ability to appeal to the users on an emotional level, which is extremely important in the first stages of the CDJ (Harms, Bijmolt & Hoekstra, 2017). The immersive area represents the informational character that is essential in a later stage of the CDJ (Harms, Bijmolt & Hoekstra, 2017). The vividness and level of interaction of the museum experience can play a role in this area (van Kerrebroeck, Brengman & Willems, 2017; Gofman, Moskowitz & Mets, 2011). The question is, how these physical touchpoints and visitor experiences can be translated into the digital sphere. Multiple digital channels and museum-owned platforms, apps or even technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are certainly capable of creating both participative and immersive areas and might be an opportunity to broaden the museum's reach to an audience that is not able to physically visit the museum (van Kerrebroeck, Brengman & Willems, 2017; Pallud, 2017; Sylaiou, et al., 2017; Jung, et al., 2016; Roussou, 2000).

By using a descriptive approach, this thesis aims to research how museums can design effective digital user journeys in order to further their educational mission online. Digital platforms, augmented reality and virtual reality seem worthy for further analysis that supports this research as they bring along both the participative and especially the immersive attributes. In general, as cultural institutions, museums have to synergize the ecosystem of its multiple channels to create a user experience that includes the museum's educational objectives and the different affordances of channels. Visitors and users alike expect the museum to be an "elite experience for everyone" (Zolberg, 1994, p. 49; Gilbert, 2016), which is why museums should consider using the See-Think-Do-Care CDJ framework to orchestrate touchpoints to deliver such an experience. The adaption of the CDJ to a user-centric approach, which is similar to the visitor-centric shift that already happens in the cultural sector, might be the solution.

2.4 Experimenting with a digital customer decision journey for museums

To give an idea what is included in the CDJ for museums, this chapter aims to combine the social mission and the See-Think-Do-Care framework to put the essential components into context. As the social mission is the theme permeating through the framework and the conceptualization, this chapter will shortly recapitulate the essential aspects of the social mission of museums. Then, the important components of each phase of the See-Think-Do-Care framework, that will play a role in developing the CDJ in this research, will be discussed. The framework will also orientate itself slightly towards Bitar’s visitor journey (see Figure 3 below) for The Smithsonian and uses some of Bitar’s touchpoints translated to the digital environment (Bliss, 2016). Besides translating it into the digital environment or prioritizing “digital as a dimension of everything” (Stack, 2013, Paragraph 1), museums could take the initiative and use digital channels to further their educational mission and reach users that eventually are not able to visit the museum physically. This assessment of all components serves as cornerstone for the development of the phases of both the framework and the questionnaire later on.

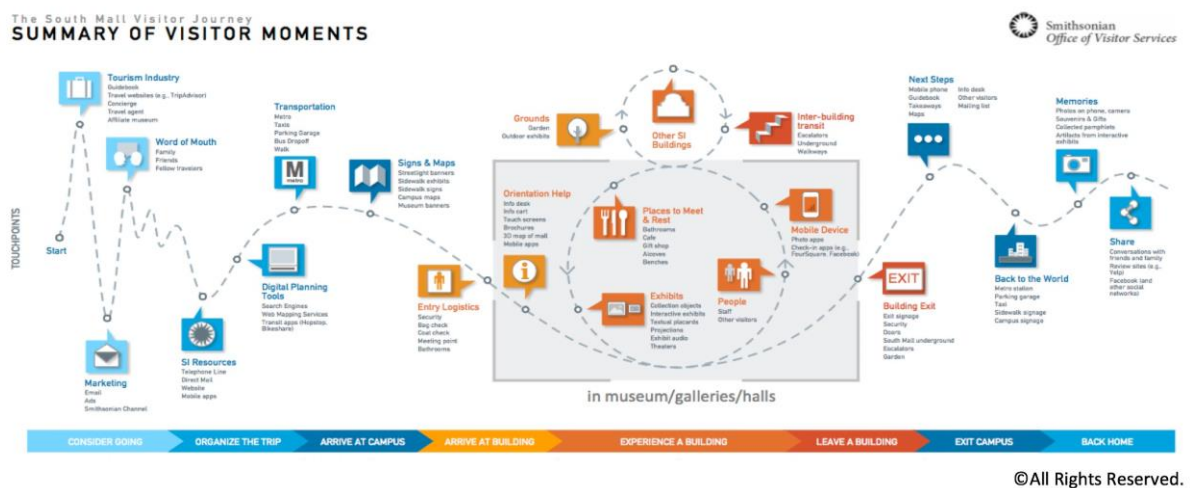


Figure 3: Samir Bitar’s journey map for The Smithsonian (Bliss, 2017)

2.4.1 The importance of a user-centric approach

What is most important for the framework in the end is the user. In a CDJ, every component is eventually designed to create value for the user, especially since the user has become an active agent in the brand-user-relationship. That is the reason why the CDJ was selected as framework. The focus on the user becomes even more relevant when it comes to educative leisure experiences, as users seek for novelty and variety in order to find the best museum experience possible (Antón, Camarero & Garrido, 2017; Hanquinet & Savage, 2012). To provide the user with a stimulating museum experience, it is important to consider the

provision of an interactive product, which encourages the user to explore both the participative and immersive areas that are so important for the museum (Antón, Camarero & Garrido, 2017; Sylaiou et al., 2017; Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017). This encourages users to co-create their experience and furthermore “translate their experience into activities after the visit” (Antón, Camarero & Garrido, 2017, p. 15), which subsequently can lead to user loyalty.

In order to reach this, designing a digital CDJ might be able to orchestrate the museum’s digital channels to provide the best possible experience at every touchpoint to satisfy the particular user need and manipulate it in a way that keeps the user engaged and interested (Asif et al., 2017; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). Personalization and interactivity of the journey also put the user at the core of every experience in order to reach the main educational objective (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). Certainly, there are numerous ways to focus on the user in order to develop strategies how to satisfy the user’s needs, engage the user and reach the educational objective. However, as important as the user at the core is, it is still a part in the puzzle of how museums can orchestrate their digital channels and strategies for educational purposes.

2.4.2 The social mission as permeating theme of the museum customer journey

Before this chapter specifies the components in more detail, the themes that are permeating the CDJ have to be recapitulated. First of all, there is the mission of the museum, which differs from museum to museum as their focus is never the same when it comes to their collections and audiences they want to attract (AMES, 1989). However, in general, museums occupy the roles of preservers of art and history, mediators between the artefacts and their audience, educators of society and drivers of culture (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015; Tsai & Lin, 2016). This mission, which can also be regarded as a purpose due to its manifestation within the institution’s image, certainly generates a value for their physical visitors and digital users alike. In the end, this value is aligned with the museum’s mission and can be an educational value of any kind, fit to the museum’s individual focus. Within the physical confines, this educational value is about sparking curiosity and creating knowledge for the visitor. However, with digitization, the museum faces multiple challenges, which raises the question, whether the value of the museum in the digital sphere can match the value of the physical museum.

As Sylaiou et al. (2017) write, the museum’s educational objective is dependent on the “ability to convey information about the objects and their context in an engaging, meaningful, diversified and self-controlled way” (p. 63). This is the case for the physical

museum, but should also be the case for the museum's digital educational product. To successfully convey that information and reach the educational objectives, the museum needs to accurately translate its educational mission offline into the digital sphere online. Accuracy is of utter importance, as a consistency between the museum's offline and online experience needs to be ensured (Sylaiou et al., 2017; Pallud, 2017). The development of digital strategies to establish a stronger digital presence that serves as a foundation for their digital educational products could simultaneously ensure consistency of both offline and online presences (Sylaiou et al., 2017; Pallud, 2017). The several phases of the CDJ could serve as orchestrating means to help museums overcome their offline-online-challenges and create a structure within their approaches to digital strategies for their digital educational products that include varying user needs, channels and user experiences.

2.4.3 Creating awareness: the See phase

The setup of the CDJ for museums will not differ from the conventional CDJ proposed by Eriksson (2015). The following chapters will give more detailed insights in what the most essential components of the phases are in the context of this thesis. The first phase of a possible museum CDJ is, just like with the conventional CDJ, the See phase. Creating awareness of the existence of the museum itself and its digital educational product is of utter priority in this first stage of the CDJ (Eriksson, 2015; Doyle, 2016). Drawing on Bitar's CDJ, the museum touchpoints consist of different forms of marketing and communication like ads, mail, social media, apps, the museum's website, and word-of-mouth (Bliss, 2016). However, in contrast to Bitar's CDJ, this thesis tries to find out how this could manifest itself in the digital sphere. Therefore, it is interesting to discover how museums can make use of multiple channels to create awareness and satisfy the user's needs at this stage. Certainly, these channels have to have the right affordances to bring across additional and educational information that the user needs (Izzo, 2017; Vinent, Martín & Gustems, 2015).

Selecting the right channels is a challenge that is encountered at each phase of the CDJ. The selection of channels pervades the whole framework, as the appropriate use of channels satisfies and manipulates user needs and eventually shapes the user's experience. Especially since users have the ability to select, search, change, modify and interact with the museum's channels on their own, the selection of channels has become an even more meticulous job (Camarero, Garrido, San Jose, 2018; Payne, Peltier & Barger, 2017). Selecting the museum channels is therefore dependent on the user needs, user preferences and channel affordances (Payne, Peltier & Barger, 2017; Antonenko, Dawson & Sahay, 2017).

Sylaiou et al. (2017) propose some qualities that might be able to ensure that the channel factors are complied: imageability, interactivity, navigability, virtual spatiality and

narration (p. 66). Additionally, an intuitive use of the museum channel has to be considered as well, since it guarantees usability (Pallud, 2017). Especially, interactivity and intuition seem to be essential traits that facilitate the learning process and cognitive engagement in users and provide an authentic museum learning experience (Sylaiou et al., 2017; Pallud, 2017). Yet, even though there is a lot of research on how it could work, there is only little research on how it could be implemented in practice. This is among others due to the fact that it is challenging to create a synergy that ensures a cross-channel consistency of the traits Sylaiou et al. (2017) and Pallud (2017) mention in the museum context. As there seems to be a scarcity on this field, more research is needed on how to create such a synergy within these factors of user needs, user preferences and channel affordances for museums in the digital sphere (Payne, Peltier & Barger, 2017).

2.4.4 The stage of consideration: the *Think* phase

In the second step, museums need to ensure that the user thinks that the museum and the digital educational product it offers are indeed interesting for them and worth of further engagement (Eriksson, 2015; Doyle, 2016). The museum therefore needs to reinforce the initial message and the value of its proposition to really grasp the user at this stage and push the user's consideration process. User engagement could be an effective tool here. Harms, Bijmolt and Hoekstra (2017) emphasize that appealing to the users on an emotional level is extremely important in the first stages. An example for such an appeal to the user's emotions could be the use of storytelling and the provision of the right content at the right channel to give the user the essential nudge during consideration.

2.4.5 Interacting with the museum: the *Do* phase

The *Do* phase itself focuses mainly on the interaction between user and the digital educational product itself, which in Bitar's journey is simply the museum visit itself. Since this research focuses solely on the interaction with a digital educational product, the factors in this phase are different. Most important for the digital product is to have a value proposition in form of a platform like the Rijksstudio, a branded YouTube channel or something similar to a digital destination that allows interaction between user and museum. The most important components here are personalization, interactivity, participation and immersion (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017; Sylaiou et al., 2017; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). By designing platforms that include these features, the user is at the core at all times as she or he is the one in charge. This is important in order to reach the main educational objective of the individual museum. Important again is of course the choice of channels because every channel has its affordances that enable museums to design different value propositions.

2.4.6 Creating relationships: the *Care* phase

The *Care* phase focuses on creating a user relationship after the interaction with the digital educational product. At this phase, Bitar's journey displays, among others, the touchpoints in form of takeaways from the museum, newsletters, souvenirs, pamphlets, conversations with friends and family, review sites and social media (Bliss, 2016). As John Stack (2013) writes, customer relationship management has been inefficient and a rather missed opportunity so far. Since this is already the case in the physical museum, the question is how this might look like in the digital sphere. The data is certainly there, but the user certainly has to agree and be engaged in this relationship just as well as the museum. Therefore, it is interesting to find out how the use of multiple digital channels within the *Care* phase of the CDJ can be used to build a solid user relationship between the museum and the user digitally.

The theory on this field is still vague and unexplored and therefore only theoretical. Whether this framework is feasible, how such channels and strategies can be translated into the digital space, and what the content of these touchpoints should be is still mostly unexplored. However, most certainly, digital technologies that are available today will shape the connection to the user, and therefore reshape the citizens' relationship with the institution of the museum (Grefe, Krebs & Pflieger, 2017).

2.5 Conceptual framework

Derived from the theory, Figure 4 gives an overview of the conceptual framework of this research project. As the digital sphere is continuously advancing, museums need to innovate their strategies and find new ways to bring across their social mission and justify their value. As Stack (2013) said, there has to be a prioritization of everything digital that promotes education and enjoyment that touches the user's participative and immersive instincts. Due to the myriad of channels, there is a need for an orchestration of the museum's overall strategy that helps museums to further their educational mission online. Through an adaptation of the CDJ, the museum could embrace the new digital opportunities and face the need for seamless touchpoints. Through these seamless touchpoints, museums could increase their values by tackling the user's needs at every channel and gain an online presence that is much needed.

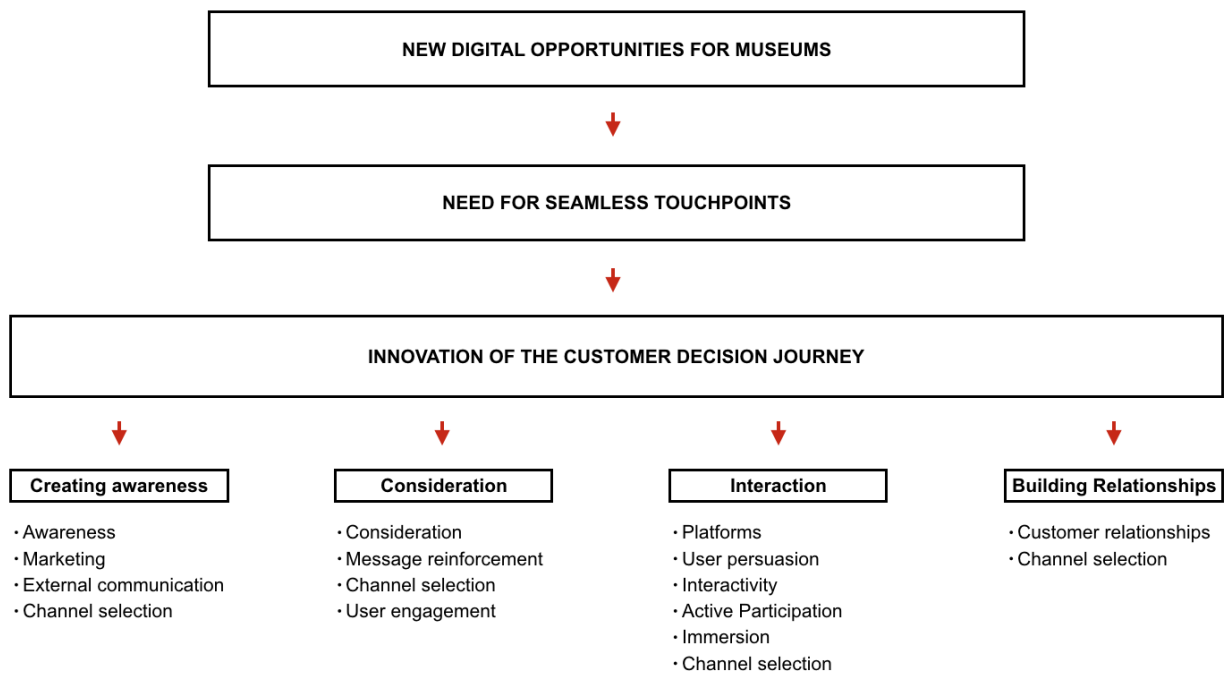


Figure 4: Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

In the following chapter, the chosen method will be discussed. First, the research design and the rationale will be outlined. This will be followed by the sampling method, a sample description, and the operationalization.

3.1 Research design and rationale

The thesis will use the qualitative method, since the main research question is how museums can use customer decision journeys to further their social mission into the digital sphere. As the thesis considers the question for the museums' perspective, qualitative research was needed to get the essential input of experts and source the relevant knowledge to answer the research question. Due to the complexity of the topic, relevant answers require strategic approach, follow-up questions, and thorough discussions. Therefore, interviews of professionals who are recognized as experts in their fields within the cultural is the method of choice as mass surveys would not have been appropriate. Qualitative expert interviews help to find descriptions and best practice examples for the researched phenomena. The subjectivity of qualitative expert interviews was therefore chosen above objective quantitative research because it was not representation but saturation and deep insights, which this research was seeking. Furthermore, with the help of expert interviews, the outcomes are co-created with supplementary and unforeseen knowledge that could not have been retrieved from the analysis of previous research (Guba & Lincoln, 1997).

The interviews are based on the important CDJ elements that constitute every phase of the CDJ. The answers of the experts will then be listed and linked to one another in order to detect patterns, school of thoughts as well as discrepancies. In total, this research conducted 19 expert interviews in English and German. Complete transcriptions are attached in the appendix.

3.2 Sampling technique and sampling criteria

To answer the research question, one had to find a mix of museum educators and experts who work in the marketing and communications department in museums and CDJ experts. Experts with experience in digital strategies who work in agencies or foundations were included in order to maintain a broad and open perspective. This group of experts had to be qualified to provide useful and diverse insights to answer the questions asked. Such insights could be illustrations of expertise in museum CDJs and the way in which they are designed, the digital value and aims offered by qualified organisations. Since this thesis focuses on an international approach, it was important that the interviewees were not only employed by Dutch organizations, but came from various countries from across Europe and the world.

On one hand, the predominant selection criteria for the sample was that interviewees should be successful and experienced professionals. It was preferable that interviewees held senior positions within their respective organizations. Competence and experience were essential because the thesis was to be based on specific insights into the design of CDJs in the digital sphere. Experts in museum education and museum communications helped to create a better understanding of how CDJs could be particularly in designing a museum CDJ. Certainly, there could be unexpected details, which have to be taken into account for designing a digital CDJ for the museum that only experts from the field were aware of. On the other hand, the selection criteria were not only limited to the museum field. To include knowledge from different perspectives, it was relevant to include experts from other fields. Digital experience creators and digital strategists from agencies who are experienced in working on CDJs and digital products were included in the research. The experts had to have had at least five year's experience on the job, which was considered as sufficient time to gain competency and in-depth knowledge of the topic.

To obtain an ideal expert sample, this research used nonprobability-sampling techniques (Babbie, 2014). The sampling technique of choice was purposive sampling, also called judgmental sampling, due to the fact that it is important to choose reliable and knowledgeable interviewees for this topic. The interviewees were selected on the basis of the selection criteria of this research, and on the extent to which experts were deemed useful (Babbie, 2014). Due to the collaboration with the Rijksmuseum, it was possible to receive contacts to experts through the network of the Rijksmuseum representatives. The search for experts was also facilitated through networking on the professional social media platform LinkedIn. By searching terms on related to the professional fields of interest LinkedIn or Google (e.g. Head of Digital at the SMK), experts were found and directly approached on the professional platform. Museum websites were also consulted for the contact information of possible interviewees. The museums were mostly chosen based on their importance and prominence or based on the appraisal of their digital strategies. In light of the diversity of

museums, it was increasingly important to involve a broad variety in the sample. The research therefore included experts from science museums, art museums, contemporary art museums, fine arts museums and different types of agencies like cultural branding agencies and communication consultancies. This secured a sample, which provided highly diverse insights.

3.3 Data collection

Essential to the interviews and the data collection was the standardization of the interviews. Although each interview would be unique and personalized, the topics raised and questions asked had to be alike in order to ensure the consistency and validity of the data (Opdenakker, 2006). Therefore, the interviews had to be conducted in an environment in which the interviewee felt at ease (e.g. the interviewee's private office, home, apartment) to express her or his point of view and sentiments when responding to the questions. This was crucial to the preservation of the authenticity of the interviewee's response.

In expert interviews, it is the interviewer's role to prevent reliability issues and conduct follow-up questions (Babbie, 2014). The interviewer facilitates the conversation, the equivocal responses and encourages the interviewee to elaborate on specific aspects of his/her response (Babbie, 2014). Babbie (2014) describes this exercise as special observations, which are the result of the informality and flexibility of the qualitative interviews. To secure the necessary level of flexibility and the freedom to explore the themes of the topic with the interviewees, a semi-structured interview approach was the best method for this research. Semi-structured interviews may follow a topic list, yet their flexibility and openness gives the interviewer the opportunity to instantly react to and explore unexpected emerging topics during the interview (Miles & Gilbert, 2005). Nevertheless, the interviewer has to preside over the themes of the topic list and the questions to uphold the level of standardization over the whole research process (Hermanowicz, 2002). Therefore, a blend of the standardizing the interview situation and a certain freedom of exploration facilitated the research process.

One had to anticipate unexpected reactions and events during this research. The data might have led to unexpected results, which in turn added interesting characteristics and insights to the framework. One can also consider that power could be a limitation (Richards & Emslie, 2000). The experts might consider themselves to be higher in the hierarchy and therefore answer differently to questions, as they would respond to questions of their peers. Therefore, they could use simplified terms, instead of terms they assume I might not be familiar with, and hence withhold specific expert terms that might be important for this research.

During the interviews, I will make use both recordings to secure the accuracy of the conversations and note taking. Notes will help to prevent double attention and create interesting assertions to further press on the interviewee for explanation of specific aspects and opinions (Wengraf, 2001; Opdenakker, 2006). Due to the international approach of this thesis, face-to-face interviews were not always an option and therefore some interviews were conducted via Facetime, Skype or a phone call. The small number of respondents enabled a

continuous process of the research, as the goal was saturation, knowledge, and quality instead of representation and quantity (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

3.4 Data analysis

Due to its numerous functions of forwarding and replaying the audio file, the online program *transcribe* supported the verbatim transcription process. The data was stored digitally in individual files. For the analysis, the data was examined thoroughly and the most important and useful data was extracted to include in the analysis and the discussion. This extraction was conducted by the thematic analysis. A mix between Boeije's (2010), Braun and Clarke's (2006), and Clarke and Braun's (2013) steps of thematic analysis was used as a guideline for the method itself. For Boeije (2010), the thematic analysis "consists of segmenting the data and reassembling them with the aim of transforming the data into findings" (p. 94). These findings are based on certain patterns within the dataset (Clarke & Braun, 2013). To be able to examine these patterns, Braun and Clarke (2006) determined several phases in the thematic analysis, which they describe as a recursive process (Clarke & Braun, 2013). In this research, the patterns and categories derived from the literature and the conceptual framework. The selective categories of the thematic analysis are the value of museums in the digital age and the different stages of the digital customer journey in the museums. In short, the thematic analysis helps to assign the data to the themes and helps to determine which themes recur most often and which themes are considered to be the most valuable (Boeije, 2010). Since the themes or patterns already existed, an Excel sheet was used to structure the experts' answers and allocate them to the correct them. Then, the core propositions of the responses of the various interviewees were compared to find common patterns and summarized.

3.5 Expert selection

Expert name Date of interview	Experience
<u>Frédérique van Reijl</u> 23/04/2018	<p><u>Frédérique</u> is an educator at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. With a focus on adult education, Frederique is a practical-minded art historian. She is specialized in 20th century art, fashion, the history of the museum and exhibitions.</p>
<u>Wouter van der Horst</u> 23/04/2018	<p><u>Wouter</u> van der Horst works as educator at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Due to his extensive work experience and an MA in Media Innovation, <u>Wouter</u> van der Horst is an experienced museum professional. He focuses on digital communication and partnerships with schools all over the Netherlands.</p>
<u>Gaby Laudy</u> 23/04/2018	<p>Gaby <u>Laudy</u> is Head of Events and member of the Customer Journey Task Force at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Due to her versatile and extensive work experience, she was recommended by <u>Wouter</u> van der Horst.</p>
<u>Pascal Beucler</u> 24/04/2018	<p>Pascal <u>Beucler</u> is Senior Vice President and Chief Strategic Officer at the MSLGROUP in Paris, which is part of <u>Publicis</u>. His work focuses on helping to define, share and implement global strategy in all regions by developing tools and business approaches. Besides an avid interest in the implementation of digital experiences in museums, he is also a supporter of digital stand-alone museum experiences.</p>
<u>Joy Melki</u> 24/04/2018	<p>Joy <u>Melki</u> is a freelance communication consultant in the cultural sector. With more than 10 years of working in the art world in galleries, auction houses and cultural journalism all over the world, Joy <u>Melki</u> is trying to melt cultural inspiration into brand and business developments.</p>
<u>Peter Gorgels</u> 25/04/2018	<p>In his 15 years as Digital Manager at the Rijksmuseum, Peter <u>Gorgels</u> has collected lot of experience in developing successful digital strategies and concepts, and in implementing and managing them. He also worked on the Rijksstudio project.</p>

<p>John Stack 03/05/2018</p>	<p>John Stack is currently Digital Director at the Science Museum Group in London. As digital strategist with numerous years of experience, John Stack developed digital strategies for the Tate and the Science Museum Group. He is an avid supporter of promoting digital literacy in the museum sector.</p>
<p>Cecilia Martín 04/05/2018</p>	<p>Cecilia Martín is an independent arts and culture brand strategist based in London. She is also the co-founder of the LAVA Design LAB, a design and technology lab focusing on innovation and engagement in the cultural sector.</p>
<p>Ed Rodley 04/05/2018</p>	<p>Ed Rodley is currently Associate Director of Integrated Media at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. He develops and manages a wide range of media projects, with an emphasis on temporary exhibitions and the reinterpretation and reinstallation of PEM collections. He is also responsible for ensuring that all assigned projects - web, audio, and video - effectively convey an appropriate and consistent image of the Museum.</p>
<p>Kristina Leipold 05/05/2018</p>	<p>Kristina Leipold is currently Head of Finance and Development at the Martin-Gropius Bau in Berlin. She worked formerly as Project Manager at the Google Cultural Institute and is a senior program manager with a multidisciplinary and international background. She has a special interest in arts and culture and how technology will change the way we live, work and learn.</p>
<p>Sebastian Chan 07/05/2018</p>	<p>Seb Chan is currently Chief Experience Officer at the Australian Center for the Moving Image in Melbourne. He is an executive change agent with deep experience working with museums, libraries and cultural organizations since over 20 years. Currently, he is interested in the intersection between digital and physical spaces, cultivating innovation and experimentation in teams, and helping organisations deal with changing technologies.</p>

<p><u>Clémence Ferry</u> 08/05/2018</p>	<p><u>Clémence Ferry</u> is Head of Digital and Project Manager at the Agenda agency in Paris. She specialises in digital communication, media planning strategies and positioning strategies. She has run communication and positioning campaigns for exhibitions at <u>Eléphant Paname</u> (Paris), at <u>Fondation Mapfre</u> (Madrid) and The Olympic Museum (Lausanne) and has been in charge of digital strategy, branding, media and cultural partnerships. Furthermore, she is project lead of the Communicating the Museum conference.</p>
<p><u>Michal Čudrnák</u> 13/05/2018</p>	<p>Michal <u>Čudrnák</u> is Head of Digital Collections and Services at the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava. His work is focused on cataloguing, digitization and access to openly licensed online collections. He initiated several digital engagement projects for the Slovak National Gallery.</p>
<p><u>Olivia Fletcher-Vane</u> 14/05/2018</p>	<p>Olivia Fletcher-Vane is a PhD candidate in Innovation Design Engineering at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. Her work explores interactive data visualization, cultural data and representations of time. She is currently working with partners at British Library Labs, the Science Museum and the <u>Wellcome Library</u>.</p>
<p><u>Nils Pokel</u> 24/05/2018</p>	<p>Nils Pokel is currently Experience Leader at the Nelson Provincial Museum in Nelson, New Zealand. He describes himself as a multi-disciplinary digital enabler and innovator with an interest in exploring technology with a human-centred design approach.</p>
<p><u>Joanna Doe</u> (Name has been altered) 25/05/2018</p>	<p>This <u>Europeana</u> official, who would like to stay anonymous, is responsible for the promotion of <u>Europeana</u> re-use services to the creative industries, and the development of content distribution partnerships for innovative re-use of cultural heritage content.</p>

<p>Ryan Dodge 30/05/2018</p>	<p>Ryan Dodge is Digital Engagement Coordinator at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. He is focused on digital content creation, campaign and community management as well as building digital capacity within the institution. Ryan is particularly interested in how museums best connect the physical and digital visit and provide our visitors onsite and online with the best possible experience.</p>
<p>Lauren Hesse 31/05/2018</p>	<p>Lauren is Social Media Producer at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. She also mentors with Girls Write Now where she works one-on-one with high school girls to explore creative writing. Prior to joining the Met, she worked in social media and digital marketing within book publishing.</p>
<p>Merete Sanderhoff 18/06/2018</p>	<p>Merete Sanderhoff is curator and Senior Advisor of Digital Museum Practice at the <u>Statens Museum for Kunst</u> in Copenhagen. Her work centres around opening up the digitised collections and inviting the public to build on our common heritage for learning, creativity and innovation. She also initiated the Sharing is Caring conferences to foster cross-sector dialogue on the potentials and challenges in a digital age shaped by sharing economy and remix culture.</p>

3.6 Operationalization

The topic list of the questionnaire is based on the conceptual framework that has been designed in the theoretical section. The essential themes are the value of museums in the digital age and the four phases of the customer decision journey. This section will address the operationalization of these elements and the questions by which they were measured in the data collection. The operationalization can be found in Appendix A.

4. Analysis

Before going into the in-depth analysis of the expert's answers on how the different phases of the CDJ and its touchpoints should be designed, it will be analysed how the various experts view the social mission and the educational value of museums in the digital sphere. Due to the extremely broad pool of experts, it is interesting to analyse how these different cultural sector personalities see the museum's value, challenges and strategies in this day and age. After that, the analysis will focus on each of the themes within the four different phases, which are derived from the framework.

4.1 The social mission and value of museums in the digital sphere

4.1.1 Mission and purpose of the museum

When it comes to the mission and the purpose of museums, most experts agreed that museums serve as a collector, a repository of art and history and as a mediator between culture and the society. By curating collections, museums are connecting the public with art, according to Peter Gorgels, Digital Manager at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The definition of public is not only confined to locals but also includes people from the whole world, says Michal Čudrnák, Head of Digital Collections and Services at the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava. This reinforces the role of the museum as a mediator that was described by Yi (2013). For example, John Stack, Head of Digital of the Science Museum Group in London, sees the educational mission of museums even as a way of engaging the public with science, arts and history. This can be done through “*interactive, multi-sensory, and playful educational experiences beyond the classroom that speaks to the needs of 21st century learners of all ages,*” thinks Nils Pokel, Digital Experience Leader at the Nelson Provincial Museum in New Zealand. Therefore, museums are not traditional places of learning in comparison to schools or universities, but informal educational spaces. This makes a broader engagement of multiple target groups, like school groups, tourists, academics or even events like seminars for higher education possible. What kind of education that is, is completely dependent on the type of the museum, says Sebastian Chan, Chief Experience Officer at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image. “*Different types of museums will follow different purposes*” and opportunities. This certainly makes sense due to different focuses of individual museums, which thus have different audiences and ways to engage these audiences. For Chan, it is important to split up the mission and purpose of the museum. There is not one mission for all, but several missions that differ from one another according to whether the museum is an art museum, a contemporary art museum, a historical museum or a science museum. Olivia Vane, PhD candidate at the Royal Academy of Art in London, agrees that “*a museum has a number of missions and is serving a number of audiences.*” For her, similar to Chan, it also depends on what topic the museum offers.

Museums having more than one mission seemed to be an emerging theme since Pascal Beucler, Chief Strategic Officer and Senior Vice President of the MSLGROUP, a global public relations and integrated communications agency, also agrees with the idea that museums do not have only one mission in place. Museums have “*a series of variations*” of missions. Furthermore, he thinks that the mission is rather how you execute the purpose. This purpose of museums itself has changed over time, which was not discussed in the theory. At first, it constituted of being a repository for art works, a protected place for art where cultural treasures are safely stored. Examples are places like today’s Uffizi Gallery in Florence or the Vatican Museum, which back then were “*private museums belonging to rich merchants or aristocrats,*” who stored art for political influence and social reputation. Interestingly, political influence plays a minor role in today’s museums, if any role at all. Nowadays, the role of being a repository still pertains, but the role of the educator became increasingly important over time, meaning that the museum’s purpose has undergone an interesting change. It seems as if the purpose of the institution has sort of shifted from the private demeanour, which besides being a repository intended to illustrate the wealth of a private person, to a public presence, which represents the wealth of everybody. Thus, it seems like the role as a mediator and educator has evolved from an institutional change, which has not been touched upon in the literature.

Cecilia Martín, cultural strategist and co-founder of the design and technology lab and agency LAVA Design LAB, also sees museums in the role of mediators and guardians of knowledge, but sees the need for further developing into social spaces for creativity to establish a connection with people. Merete Sanderhoff, Senior Advisor of Digital Museum Practice at the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen agrees, as she thinks museums should be a catalyst of creativity. Museums are therefore not only immobile institutions but they create culture and are drivers of culture, which is in line with Tsai and Lin’s (2016) and Ernst, Esche and Erbslöh’s (2015) view of museums as drivers of social change, political change and culture. For Sanderhoff, it is about fostering “*a creative and reflected society that appreciates its history and recognizes diversity.*” Sanderhoff wants the museum to be a visible actor in society. For Martín, “*museums have the potential to change everyone’s lives*” to the better, with which Ed Rodley, Associate Director of Integrated Media at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, completely agrees. He even goes further and assigns museums an essential role in society:

Given the way the 21st century is unfolding, where we seem to be entering a new gilded age of incredible inequality, and sort of unprecedented assaults on open civil society and democracy in general, my dream would be to see museums step into the

role of... being essentially model citizens for... the way we can and should interact with each other in the digital realms, wherever we happen to be.

Therefore, it does not seem exaggerated to think that the museum can certainly occupy that role. Museums have the means to educate society, create culture, knowledge, and even drive culture and inspire their visitors, “[...] *not only the people who are able to come and visit the museum but also the people who will probably never come or are not able to visit the museum,*” thinks Wouter van der Horst, educator at the Rijksmuseum. This shows that the experts agree with previous literature (Eid, 2016; Ernst, Esche, Erbslöh, 2015).

4.1.2 The museum’s digital mission

The people who are not able to visit the museum will probably resort to the digital presences of their museum of choice. The question however is, how museums can translate their educational mission from the physical museum into the digital sphere. This endeavour entails the question whether the original museum purpose might be restricted by digital or whether it gains something from digital.

When it comes to the digital mission of museums in general, the main objective is reaching more people through the digital sphere by bringing the museum to the people (Fensel et al., 2014). To achieve this, thinks van der Horst, the knowledge of curators, restorers and scientists has to be translated for the broader audience that might not be able to come to the museum. It is of utter importance hereby to know what the user seeks for. Olivia Vane and Nils Pokel agree as well that it always depends on the user. According to Chan, museums first need to be sure to have a “*really strong value proposition... for the people who do come into the building.*” Only after that, museums can “*expand that [value proposition] out to the people who do not come into the building.*” This corresponds to the user-centric approach mentioned in the theory by Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017) and MacLeod, Dodd and Duncan (2015).

The digital presence itself, say Gorgels and Rodley, does not have to be any different than the physical one. For Gorgels, everything in the museum follows the principle of “*letting the art shine,*” which the Rijksmuseum also tried to do with their digital platform, the Rijksstudio. This principle lies “*above digital and the museum*” according to Gorgels. Nils Pokel adds that for him, there may be more layers to digital, but in the end it is the same discipline, only in a different medium. This relates to Gorgels’ thought that it is just a matter of translating this principle in the right channels. Rodley agrees and thinks that there is no translation issue and that it “*is no different when you are making a website versus when you are making a print catalogue versus when you are making an exhibition [...].*” The reason is the fact that everything a museum does, should be “*an embodiment of their educational*

mission.” For museums, this means that they should first and foremost focus on having a user-centric approach and strong value propositions in the physical space. Based on this, the value proposition is then translated into a digital value proposition that is adjusted to the museum’s individual principles of their educational mission. The value proposition and mission are intertwined. Ryan Dodge, Digital Engagement Coordinator of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto agrees that the digital mission still has to be kept in line with the museum’s mission, the values and the brand attitudes. Moreover, he is surprised that “*for some reason everyone thinks there is this massive disconnect between your physical self [and] your digital self, like digital engagement is some mystery. No. And no one thinks about that behind these devices, there are real people [...].*” Therefore, the museums digital mission can be the same as their offline mission.

Additionally, with the digital sphere, museums have the opportunity to add more information and content that cannot be offered in physical museums. Kristina Leipold, now Head of Development and Finance of the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin and formerly at Google Arts and Culture, thinks that through digital, museums are able to go beyond their limitations of the physical museum. For Pokel, especially when thinking about his museum in Nelson, digital helps to satisfy the need of local people to see beyond their horizon. Users can be given the opportunity to browse the museum’s database for unconventional content that they would otherwise not come across. The digital mission could therefore be looked at as an extension to the physical mission of a museum. Digital creates opportunities to provide users with the same content, but in a different way since museums can make use of much more communication tools. An example for this could be partnerships with not-museum-owned platforms like *Artsy*, says Cecilia Martín. Different organizations share their presence with other museums on such platforms and give museums the chance to make their online educational content more digestible for the users. Martín thinks that such platforms can be great opportunities for museums to join forces with other museums and external players to create hubs, instead of being sole institutions. The only danger, according to Chan, is that the museum should make sure that its unique brand is not be absorbed by third party platforms like *Artsy* or Google Arts and Culture.

All experts unanimously agreed to that although the digital sphere offers seemingly endless opportunities for museums, it would never be able to replace the physical museum experience. This shows first hints that the digital environment is certainly able to further the educational mission of museums, but not in the same form as Schweibenz (1998, 2004) has pictured it. The questions arise, how exactly the digital experience of museums should be designed like, and also, what the actual educational value of a museum in the digital sphere is.

4.1.3 Value of the museum in the digital sphere

4.1.2.1 Digital challenges for museums

In order to have a value in the digital sphere, museums have to overcome several challenges when translating the mission into the digital sphere. First of all, there is a lot of uncertainty that leads to insecurity and also to a denial of digital to avoid risks, thinks Kristina Leipold. Museums have to overcome this uncertainty and take digital seriously. It is therefore important, claims Leipold, if the initiative and the determinations of objectives come from the directors and spread through the whole organization. For Leipold, the whole museum has to be “*covered by a coat of digitalization.*” This relates to the organizational innovation Camarero and Garrido (2012) discuss. Rodley agrees that everything “*that has to do with the digital realm is sort of tainted by that association like [...] [is] this a threat to the physical museum?*” Museum professionals are seemingly stuck in their physical presence if they are not ready to “*innovate, reinvent themselves and think entrepreneurial,*” thinks Cecilia Martín. Museums have to be aware that instead of creating value online and offline separately, they have to create value for an “*on-off-line*” user, according to Martín. This notion aligns with the always-on-customer that was mentioned in the theory (Straker, Wrigley & Roseman, 2015; Stone & Woodcock, 2014). Museums have to merge online and offline, which can be challenging for institutions like museums, thinks Martín. Yet, their users

[...] are constantly interacting with multiple devices and screens [...], it is seamless. We do not see the differentiation, and as much as we like to be in a space where we can contemplate and where we are away from the world, we also want to use our phones. You know, this is creating a very complex reality.

It is especially a complex reality in which museums try to find a way to create value. John Stack adds to that that the audience’s expectation is “*moving faster and developing further than the museum itself is developing its skills.*” Ryan Dodge agrees and thinks that the museum’s “*audiences have already passed us by a long time ago [...]*”. Museums have to start to decrease the gap.

The other challenge is to prioritize the opportunities that the digital sphere offers museums, especially when it comes to scale. Besides an increased reach, scale is one of the biggest opportunities for museums. However, it can also be a pitfall, thinks Seb Chan. Digital has to be resourced well as it could otherwise become a superficial aspect. Chan experienced that himself when the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney started to digitize its collections:

[...] we have opened up this very large collection... and put it all online. [...] we had a very large collection of coins, [... and] stamps [...] but we did not have a curator of coins or a curator of stamps. So, all these [online] inquiries we would get about stamps or coins, we could not answer... we had the things but having the things did not mean that we could answer the people's questions in detail about these things.

Public institutions like museums do not have enough resources to ensure that there is enough staff to deal with an increased amount of inquiries coming from all over the world. Seb Chan compares museums to “*a company that sells a million different products and [they] are trying to figure out customer support for them all,*” which with limited manpower is simply impossible. Therefore, it is a fortiori important to focus on segmentation and user research before planning on what value museums create for the digital sphere. This is paramount because “*every museum has a certain uniqueness to itself and has its own audience of which a majority will never go to the museum itself,*” thinks Ed Rodley. Museums need to figure out how to create a value for that majority and how to connect this majority with their assets. Furthermore, and this is one of the great challenges for Merete Sanderhoff, it is also important to not only be of value for the majority but “*to become relevant to the parts of society who do not use the museum already.*” The question of scale is an emerging theme because it is a counter-perspective to the theory. In the literature, technology was almost glorified since Lemon and Verhoef (2016) or McColl-Kennedy et al. (2015) only mentioned the positives of digital.

4.1.2.2 The museum's educational value in the digital sphere

Online, think Clémence Ferry, Head of Digital and Projects at Agenda, and Kristina Leipold, museums have to detach themselves from being this temple of knowledge and move to a more participatory platform that creates dialogue, participation and sharing. Merete Sanderhoff agrees with this and sees digital as a much more “*democratic multi-faceted entrance to read and interpret a whole body of [the] collection and of art history that is represented by them.*” This undeniably creates an added value for the visitor, as users can extend their curiosity through the web. For Seb Chan, the role of the museum in the digital space “*is one of acting as a guide or perhaps as a concierge for [...] the post visit or perhaps before the visit.*” This means that the value for the user itself still lays in the museum visit and not so much in the digital sphere, as Schweibenz (1998) thought.

Wouter van der Horst and Frédérique van Reij think that the value of the museum in the digital sphere and the physical museum do not differ much from each other. What is offered offline, should also be offered online in order to create consistency. Van der Horst thinks that the value of museums is education and spreading culture, no matter the platform. Lauren Hesse, Social Media Producer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, thinks that digital

experiences can be used offer the same things online, but add something that users could not get in the museum. Therefore, digital can certainly be seen as an extension to the physical museum to reach a broader public, which is in line with Sylaiou, et al. (2017) and Fensel, et al. (2014). For Joy Melki, reaching a broader public, opening up the collections to everyone and enabling immersive experiences is the most interesting aspect of digitalization.

The value of museums online is certainly shaped by the museum's challenges, which are about finding the right approach to digital, overcoming the uncertainty towards it and being able to scale their efforts according to their audience. Based on this, the value online is the same as the value offline. However, there is a greater focus on the creation of dialogue, participation and sharing. This creation of dialogue, participation and sharing confirms the hypothesis of Straker, Wrigley and Roseman (2015) who claim that online communication possibilities create new forms of interaction. The expert interviews show that the developments in museum practice are several steps ahead of the most recent research like Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva's (2017) research in terms of creating digital value propositions, which increases the relevance of this research immensely.

4.1.4 The digital sphere - strategies and digital experiences

All experts agree that it is critical for museums to strive to show presence online and give the development of digital strategies more attention. For John Stack, who developed the digital strategy for the Tate in London, museums are already on a good way to do so since the digital in-house teams of museums continue to grow. Logically, he is still in line with his 2013 paper. However, there still seems to be a certain animosity within the museum sector towards digital trends because it seems to be that *"anything digital tends to get tarred with [...] this notion that digital is an expensive, oversold, overhyped solution that does not even really have a problem yet,"* says Ed Rodley. Furthermore, Rodley thinks that digital trends tend *"to be pushed by people who are zealots and do not necessarily have, what they would consider to be an appropriately large frame of reference."* Cecilia Martín explains such animosity also as a result of a generational divide since there is a difference of almost two generations between the museum directors and the digital.

Pascal Beucler agrees that most museum professionals are not comfortable with the idea that it is digital is possibly the future for museums. Beucler distinguishes two different strategies to use digital in the museum context. The first one being the *"increase of the kind of experience you are providing people"* through increasing the use of digital tools within the museum, which is similar to Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017). Beucler thinks that physical museum experience itself has to be improved at first, which includes *"education, knowledge, understanding and also, of course, pleasure."* Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017) also mention these factors when they talk about the

immersive and participative areas. The second one, according to Beucler, is the increase of digital outside of the museum. Online exhibitions that are purely digitized and provide users with a digital tour through the museum, for which they have to pay for, seems to be a newer model for museums, according to Clémence Ferry. Going back to Beucler, for him such a virtual museum visit means that

[...] the future of museums is not in the museum itself and does not consist of bringing more people into the [museum] space... but having more people visiting virtual art in the museum from somewhere in the world. And that is very different of course.

In that way, says Beucler, museums are able “to address audiences, like millennials, that are not knowing what it means being in the museum, like [...] what you should do.” Kristina Leipold agrees because museums can reach a broader audience via digital: “You reach people through technology and not through culture... and with the help of technology, you lead the people to culture.” This aligns with Schweibenz’ (1998) vision and other research like Sylaiou, et al. (2017). However, deriving from this, it is again stressed by multiple interviewees that the “*aura of the physical place cannot be replaced,*” as Leipold puts it. The main goal still is conversion, meaning bringing people to the museum. This contradicts with Schweibenz’ (1998) vision and reinforces Chan’s point that the museum’s role in the digital sphere is the one of a concierge for before the physical visit or after. Therefore, it makes sense when Clémence Ferry says that digital should not only be used to reach possible future visitors, but also “as a strategy for extending visits of the existing visitors and providing more content [...].”

Relating such statements to the research question, one could imply that current developments are still focused on using digital for conversion rather than having stand-alone digital experiences. This would disagree with a larger part of the theoretical framework. However, considering the expensive acquisition cost, the lack of resources, capacity and the shortage of knowledgeable staff to provide such digital experiences, it does not come as a surprise that the developments in the field are rather slow. Museums are on the way to stand-alone experiences and educational platforms when considering the Rijksstudio and collaboration with the Danish SchoolTube, which Sanderhoff mentioned. Therefore, seamless digital experiences for now only seem to bridge the gap of the online and offline divide, think Martín and Chan.

Experiences online do not necessarily have to be connected to exhibitions in the physical museum but could be an extension to the visit as an added value, as Leipold says. Lauren Hesse thinks that online experiences could provide the users with behind-the-scenes shots, which would relate to Leipold. This added value should be created by offering

something else than the authentic experience online and enabling the user to go deeper in the stories. Lauren Hesse and Nils Pokel agree here. Connecting the users with each other can additionally lead to an even better experience and learning effect due to the possibility to share opinions about art with others. The Rijksstudio is a great example for that with its possibility to interact with the art itself and make connections: “[The Rijksmuseum] *tried to look what people are doing already with images and art,*” says Peter Gorgels. Hereby, the Rijksstudio drew on user principles that have been proven successful in the day-to-day life, like Pinterest and Instagram.

Digital experiences through videos on YouTube as a stand-alone tool that focus not on temporary exhibitions but on core exhibitions could also be a way to bring educational aspects closer to the user, thinks Frédérique van Reij. Although the expert responses imply that the term *digital experience* can entail many different components, the goal is still always education. On the one side, it could be the provision of a visual experience like van Reij mentions. For Martín it can also be in form of podcasts or even opening a platform that stimulates creativity for users, and helps develop the museum’s purpose and vision and also a community online. Because after all, the role as a museum is to connect people with not only art but also with each other, thinks Gaby Laudy, Head of Events and part of the customer journey task force at the Rijksmuseum. According to Laudy, connecting users can also count as a user experience.

Again, to develop these kind of experiences and strategies, museums should first focus on the physical museum and do user research with physical visitors to detect the digital user’s needs as these are regarded as equivalent despite the different experience environment. For Chan, this is the right approach because “*it is easier to start with the users you do have, rather than the users you wish you had.*” Creating a sort of “*virtuous circle... a feedback loop... using the physical visitors to trigger the content of the website*” is important for Chan. In such a way, museums can build value propositions for their digital experience and develop strategies that provide educational value to the user, whether it is pre-visit, during the visit or post-visit. In the end, a digital presence is key for the survival of museums, thinks Peter Gorgels: “*If you are not available [or] present in the digital world, you are dead.*” The focus on the improvement and development of in-house strategies was already mentioned by Sylaiou, et al. (2017) and Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017). However, the used literature did not depict the specifics of what the foundation of a digital museum proposition should consist of and also the utter importance of showing a digital presence as a principle was not discussed as much. Another aspect that was mentioned in the literature was the consistency between channels that has to be ensured at all times (Payne, Peltier & Barger, 2017; Frow & Payne, 2007). However, that digital museum product has to be somehow brought to the user, which is where the CDJ comes in.

4.2. Creating awareness and the first touchpoints

4.2.1 Awareness – the can-opener

Throughout the dataset, there were three themes that came up several times for the first phase of the CDJ. Firstly, you have to make art relatable and provide the audience online an entrance point through content that they consider to be personally relevant for them. Secondly, building online communities right from the first touchpoint could be an efficient tool to create awareness. Thirdly, museums could consider making use of partnerships, which gives them the opportunity to reach an even broader audience than they would on their own merits. Before these themes will be discussed more thoroughly, it is important to point out that digital awareness should start with a transformation of the physical museum at first. For Pascal Beucler, a way to transformation that helps museums make more people aware of their existence in the first place, is to “[...] *move them from being a temple of knowledge, a temple of art, a temple of savoir, which is really going to refrigerate people* [without pre-existing knowledge, to become] *the place to be, the place to go, the place to live* [...].” In that way, museums create a lot of curiosity about the institution itself and let users come out of their own interest. Beucler is therefore in line with Eid (2016) and Izzo (2017) who both say that museums have to embrace change and innovation to go further.

Sparking curiosity when creating awareness is also important for John Stack. In his context, curiosity is sparked by museums, which creates a “*kind of curiosity-led need*” in the user. The counterpart to the curiosity-led need is the inquiry-led need. An inquiry-led need is a need that will be expressed through a non-brand-led query in a search engine.

[Users] will not type the name of the museum but they will type some other topic. So, it could be, you know, fossils in the Triassic period, and they want to know about that. And the Museum of Natural History can create content that answers those needs and people will come to the museum.

The most essential requirement for the inquiry-led need is the ability to create and produce attractive digital content that ranks well on for example Google, and is able to compete with other museums offering the same topic. Educators and curators in collaboration with digital teams can create such content. Ryan Dodge and Lauren Hesse confirm that it is important to constantly work with the educators and curators, so that the content is correct. Ryan thinks that it does not make sense to not trust the curators with creation of content. It should especially come from educators and curators because they are knowledgeable and “*trusted to handle priceless objects.*” Therefore, educators and curators should be trained to know how to write for social media, Dodge thinks. With the creation of such content, the museum

can tell incredible stories about a certain subject through several media that triggers curiosity in the user. In this approach, according to Stack, museums would have to push the content out, which “*is much more difficult because every other brand is trying to do that kind of content.*” What is most important here and can be the “*can-opener,*” says Sanderhoff, is that the online collection has to be free for everyone without restrictions.

Awareness strategies like omni-channel strategies, making content more relatable to the user, build community or partnerships could help to satisfy both inquiry-led and curiosity-led needs of the user. Most importantly, thinks Gaby Laudy, is that the CDJ is always approached from the perspective of a user-centric approach (MacLeod, Dodd and Duncan, 2015). To be more specific, you need to know “*what does the user need, where is the user, align that and then spend money on promotion to make people aware that you have something that meets their needs,*” says Seb Chan (Ernst, Esche & Erbslöh, 2015).

4.2.1.1 The KimYe phenomenon and a T-Rex on Tinder - making art relatable

National museums like the Rijksmuseum are often already on top of mind, as Peter Gorgels mentions, especially for their collections of the grand masters like Rembrandt or Vermeer. This prominence factor facilitates creating awareness of the museum’s digital presence and pulling people to the museum’s digital platform, the Rijksstudio. Therefore, thinks Wouter van der Horst, museums are kind of used to visitors coming to them. For more specific target groups (e.g. Rembrandt lovers), this will be even more the case because they are already aware of the Rijksmuseum’s existence and collection. However, such specific target groups are only “*a very small target audience if you look at the whole of the digital sphere*” and online museums have to create awareness in a broader audience, thinks van der Horst (Fensel et al., 2014). Thus, van der Horst suggests that the first touchpoint has to be designed in a way that the museum content relates to them on a personal level and focuses on what is interesting in their lives, which can be a form of personalization (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017). Explaining today’s popular culture phenomena through art can create such an entrance to the museum. Ryan Dodge for example created a Tinder profile of their T-Rex skeleton. Another example could be the audience’s search for a picture of Kim Kardashian and Kanye West:

[...] and why [that picture is being] liked 20 million times. [You can] turn that around and say, ‘Well, visually we can explain why this is a successful picture through art history, for example.’ Then, you can make museum content relevant for people who do not necessarily find museums interesting.

Making use of the already existing museum content, linking it to pop culture and create educational content that is relevant to the user’s life is a great way to make use of a user-

centric approach to education (Stack, 2013; Janes, 2010). Such touchpoints might also be useful to satisfy the user's curiosity-led needs. Additionally to that, it also demonstrates "*the power of digitalization [to create] a new life around art,*" which is extremely important for not only awareness but for the whole journey itself, thinks Joy Melki, a communication consultant.

4.2.1.2 Awareness through community-building

This benefit of digitalization expresses itself also in other ways in the awareness phase, according to Cecilia Martín and Peter Gorgels. Multiple experts like Ryan Dodge, Michal Čudrnák or Gorgels praised the use user-generated content on their social media. The next step would be the Rijksstudio. On the platform Rijksstudio, users can download high-res images of the museum's art and create their own designs. These are shared on the museum's social media, which makes other online users aware of the Rijksstudio.

Additionally to that, the museum hands out a Rijksstudio award to the best designs. This is a form of building a creative community on the platform that simultaneously "[stimulates] *the use of Rijksstudio,*" says Gorgels, and has also the potential to stimulate the user's curiosity-led need. This notion of co-creation corresponds to Frow and Payne's (2007) and Antón, Camarero and Garrido's (2017) research, which consider co-creation to be a part of a successful user experience that creates communities. Examples for co-creation could also be so-called remix challenges, say Merte Sanderhoff and Michal Čudrnák.

Letting users be part of such a community is extremely important to create awareness, thinks Cecilia Martín. According to her, the museum needs to be aware of three key elements in order to foster such communities. The first one is to inspire people and provide users a platform for inspiration about creative thinking. That does not necessarily have to be a platform like the Rijksstudio, but could also be TED talks or podcasts.

Sanderhoff agrees as she vouches for the facilitation of creativity within the audience.

Martín's second key element is enabling users to share their creativity and their experiences online. This comes from the idea that people are social animals that love to show and share what they have created. In order for users to share, museums have to fulfil the third key element: connect. The platform should be used to connect people with each other to build communities (on e.g. social media) that spark interest and awareness "*in a cultural context.*"

Besides Schweibenz (2004) mentioning inspiration, the three key elements were not discussed in the literature but correspond with Izzo's (2017) and Camarero and Garrido's (2012) notions of using technological innovation to advance products and services. Martín's three key elements can be used as examples for affordances in the awareness phase.

4.2.1.3 Partnerships

Partnerships are an emerging theme that was only mentioned by Drew, Moreau and Stiasny (2017) in the context of research collaboration. A broader sense of collaborations like partnerships could also help to create awareness. These partnerships could be with governments, commercial partners, foundations or also schools, as Joanna Doe, a Europeana representative says. Nils Pokel, Seb Chan and Merete Sanderhoff agree to the collaborations with schools. These are potentially long-lasting partnerships that gives museums a sort of permanent audience, as there are new classes every year. Especially in the Danish case SchoolTube, the SMK provides *“tailor-made digital teaching resources, educational resources that foster the sort of active engagement remix interaction with an open mindset,”* says Sanderhoff. The main goal behind partnerships is to broaden the reach and awareness further since these partners have a far bigger outreach than museums themselves (Fensel, et al., 2014). Europeana for example has an enormous digital database and a huge network that facilitates museums to broaden their reach in the digital sphere. *“One of the main benefits from a cultural institution point of view is that we provide the digital experience and we help them really with the outreach to much bigger audience,”* says Joanna Doe.

Another kind of partnership that Clémence Ferry mentioned is the use of influencers *“to spread the word.”* By sharing their experience, influencers can reach a younger audience as well, which is a tougher crowd to reach for museums, according to Beuclet. Again, the kind of partnership museums decide upon always depends on the user’s needs. For the inquiry-led need, thinks John Stack, *“things like search engines and partnerships with perhaps Wikimedia, which might always rank more highly than the museum, are really important.”* Through these partnerships, museums will be connected with topic-only search queries from users and create awareness. When it comes to the curiosity-led need, *“things like media publications, newspapers or their digital equivalents, broadcasters, suddenly become much more important because they have an existing audience with reach,”* says John Stack. Influencers, platforms like *Google Arts and Culture* or the *Europeana* association also belong to the side of the curiosity-led need, which is mainly about *“incredible content and well-researched [...] compelling stories.”* Influencers, platforms and foundations are able to reach a much higher number of people than museums alone with content-rich stories because their audiences are already in the mindset to consume such stories.

4.2.2 Digital marketing

Stories and digital educational products have to be marketed and brought to the user. In that case, how should this be approached in the CDJ? According to the experts, the digital marketing strategy depends on three things. Most importantly as always, it depends on the

user. Secondly, it depends on the museum's mission, and thirdly, on the museum's topic. Marketing and promotion efforts should be in line with the mission of the museum, as all strategies start with the physical institution itself and offline and online approaches do not "[...] necessarily have to be two different things," says van der Horst. In order to communicate digital museum experiences, thinks Pascal Beucler and Ryan Dodge, there has to be a change within the organization itself. Museums should always be open for innovation and start having approaches that are "*run by the idea of joy and feast and partying*" instead of being century-old places. Such a lively approach to informal education "[...] will insinuate, communicate, share knowledge and passion about art." Museums should therefore communicate direct experiences "*with art, through art, by art in the museums or outside,*" thinks Beucler. This could help museums to enter "*into the stream of the user's need [...] or go to the places they are,*" according to John Stack. The strategy, so Stack, should be constantly evolving and flexible because "*it is about always learning and not being rigid [...]*" and should be adaptable to the users and their interactions with the museum. A rigid strategy hinders museums from embracing innovation and experimenting with new ideas. For van der Horst, innovation is "*really a sort of openness and willingness to try new stuff and to fail,*" which is of utter importance for an ever-evolving strategy to promote and communicate digital experiences. Merete Sanderhoff can agree to this as she and her team always had to really find out what worked or what is sustainable.

Also important at this stage is the user-centric approach, which expressed itself in two themes during the interviews, the first one being segmentation and the second theme is the notion of the user as the decision maker (Fensel, et al., 2014). Segmentation is essential for not only creating awareness or the strategy, it is important for the whole journey and the experience, as Gaby Laudy says. Before designing a product, museums need to find out who the user is. Then, "*you design products for a user and you market it to these users because you know who those users are because the heart of the problem with educational resources for museums is, what is the user need and who is the actual user,*" says Seb Chan. Most museums have different target groups ranging from tourist, to day visitors, academics and art lovers. All of them need to be approached differently, meaning that the channels should be adapted to different kinds of target groups. Especially when considering the digital sphere, the second theme of the user as the decision maker comes in. For Gaby Laudy, the user is "*always the decision maker.*" Chan describes how this manifests itself: "*I do not think people troll around the web or browse Facebook or YouTube thinking, 'Oh, I want a digital museum experience!' They do not [laughs].*" Users want to find out more information about museums but most of the time they "*just do not want to do it right now*" but at an appropriate time for them, thinks Chan. Museums should not impose anything on the users but users have to be

pulled to the museum's digital product, where the curiosity-led need might be able to help out again.

4.2.3 Channel selection

In order to make aware of such an accessible and user-centric entrance to a digital educational product, museums should use, according to most of the experts, museum-owned social media channels like YouTube or Facebook to provide the user with content of interest (Izzo, 2017). Gaby Laudy and Joy Melki both think that museums need to use every channel of communication and be present on a lot of different platforms in order to create awareness. For Ed Rodley, it "*strategically makes sense to be on social media because a lot of people are there*" already and museums have to reach their audiences where they already are. Peter Gorgels agrees because "*in this phase the website is one thing, but [museums] also have to use Facebook, Instagram, mails, podcasts, too.*" The content has to fit the channels in his opinion, and the channels, in turn, "*have to pick the user up in their orientation phase.*" What museums however should keep in mind, is that although social media is useful "*everything in those spaces is kind of flattened,*" which involves the danger of social media absorbing the museum's brand, thinks Seb Chan. This is mainly because he thinks there is "*no differentiation between a museum-branded experience and another type of experience of content on those platforms.*" Before museums use such digital channels, Chan adds that museums also have to know "*who is looking for these resources now? And how can [museums] make sure those people are aware that [museums] have these available?*" Chan thinks that museums often have the wrong approach and start the other way around, namely by trying to manufacture a community, they think exists.

That community does exist... we just do not know how to reach them. So, [...] we can make the best resources but they will not be used if we do not know who they are being made for and how to reach those people.

Therefore, museums have to be aware of the audience's needs and move where their audiences or communities are, which is among other places, social media. The choice of the social media platform itself then depends on the target audience. This corresponds with the understanding of affordances of McColl-Kennedy et al. (2015) and Antonenko, Dawson and Sahay (2017). Due to these affordances, the content has to be created for the platform's context, claims also John Stack. For him, Twitter for example could be used to satisfy the curiosity-led need. On Twitter, there is the possibility to share links and pictures, but then due to the limited character length "*it is about crafting that short piece of copy and selecting that picture in a kind of way that entices people into wanting to delve deeper into the museum's*

content.” For Ryan Dodge, Instagram is a playful channel that engages the user easily due to its visuality, which is extremely important for Olivia Vane. Lauren Hesse prefers using Facebook Live as it is accessible and enables the focus on one specific topic the museum wants to create awareness about. Van der Horst suggests YouTube for a broader audience, which can satisfy both inquiry-led and curiosity-led needs. For Ed Rodley, search engine optimization (SEO) and Google search can also be channels especially for reaching younger people because “*if they cannot find you on Google, it is as if you would not exist.*”

For Pascal Beucler, these different affordances and characteristics of channels are more like channel-specific value propositions museums can make use of. The Stedelijk for example used SoundCloud for the *Stedelijk X* series to give users online the opportunity to participate in an audio tour. A museum in Metz, France, created a Facebook account in 2017 to commemorate the 100-year-anniversary of World War I and created awareness for an exhibition about letters written by soldiers on that account, says Beucler:

They have found letters from all these soldiers, who died by measles. And with these letters they created on Facebook a museum... a virtual museum about the war, which was built around all these letters they had found. It was like the soldier was [on] the war field giving testimony of what he is seeing. [...] it was like a Facebook account, but it was a museum.

It seems as if the terms channel and museum themselves can be broadened as well by decentralizing the museum. Offline experiences and the museum can be channels, too, in this context, as it is simply about bringing the museum to where the people are and make them aware of their existence. Examples Beucler mentions here are a pop-up museum, like for example the temporary Rijksmuseum at the Schiphol airport or a pop-up museum, which did not include art pieces but provided the visitors with olfactory, touchable, visual and auditory experiences based on different scents. In the future, experiences could even be provided through personal assistants.

This multitude of channels that can be used to create awareness all have several affordances like sound, music, moving images and graphics, which affect the senses of the user and are important in the first phase of the CDJ, thinks Cecilia Martín. Whichever channel and target audience is chosen in the end, another important factor is to make use of existing platforms to be more connected because “*creating a new platform every time museums want to do something is unnecessary.*” Museums should rather develop a transmedia mentality and link the channels that help to create the multi-channel environment. Museums should try to create awareness online, which aligns with Verhoef et al. (2009). Wouter van der Horst and Gaby Laudy agree that the channels should be linked. Hereby it is

important that the “*sender of the content is always visible for the user and always has quality content*” on these channels, thinks van der Horst. A perfect example for visibility, transmedia strategies and inter-channel-consistency for van der Horst is the pop culture phenomenon of the Marvel Universe. Before creating content for channels or choosing channels,

[...] you create the storyworld itself in which all of these different... channels or games or movies or whatever take place. And therefore you will almost never find an inconsistency or something because the storyworld is correct.

Van der Horst thinks that museums can learn from that by finding out their largest story, create a storyworld and then give the “*different target audiences who enter this storyworld through different channels*” their customized stories (Asif, et al., 2017). To put such a transmedia strategy into action and select the right channels, John Stack thinks it would be of enormous help to “*develop a matrix of different kinds of content museums have, the different kinds of needs audiences have, the places in which these encounters and experiences happen, and then the kind of content we need to produce for those things.*” Such a matrix could be the foundation for the CDJ.

4.3 The stage of consideration and reinforcing the message

During the expert interviews, it became evident that although the *Think* phase is an important phase in the conventional customer journey to give the customer a last nudge before the purchase, this is not so much the case in the cultural customer journey. There were only slight differences between creating awareness and consideration that were mostly content-related. An additional reason could be the user-centric approach with which museums that undertake decent user research have no problem at all to market their products and reinforce the messages. Therefore, this chapter will at first deal with *Consideration* itself, and continue with the themes *Message reinforcement*, *Channel selection*, and *User engagement*.

4.3.1 Consideration

For Frédérique van Reij, consideration is the extension of awareness, meaning that the tactics and content here are similar to the first phase. Seb Chan stresses again that museums need to clearly identify users and do user research, in order to market and promote their services. This enables the museums to nudge the user into their preferred direction. Besides user research, the museum's online presence has to accurately reflect what museum does. Emphasizing what the museum is about and why it is unique, is what is most often lacking in their online presence, thinks Ed Rodley. There seems to be a lack of appreciation of every museum's uniqueness, which is the most compelling part of the sector for Rodley:

[...] we have this label "Museum" which kind of implies some building with some sort of vaguely classical façade and inside is art in very minimal spaces. But when you scratch that façade, it is an incredibly heterogeneous grouping of institutions that all behave in very different ways even if they are collecting exactly the same things and you do not tend to see any appreciation for that... particularly in their online presence.

Their uniqueness is what museums should capitalize on in the digital sphere. A way to do it, thinks Kristina Leipold, would be to facilitate information finding for users. Users should be able to explore the uniqueness of that particular museum, inform themselves about the digital educational product, the platform it offers or the museum itself. This would relate to Frow and Payne's (2007) notion of the museum as easily accessible online entity. At this point, thinks Clémence Ferry, users should already be able to engage with the museum platform or at least kept informed about what it is and what the experience looks like. An example of how to provide such an insight is again Facebook Live according to Lauren Hesse. A Facebook Live on a specific story within the museum's storyworld gives users the feeling of a one-to-one

experience that can give them the last nudge towards the actual interaction. Providing these possibilities is important within this phase of the CDJ.

At any point before, during or after the interaction, museums should always consider that their audiences do not want to be targeted as customers. According to Wouter van der Horst, museums need to avoid most marketing content on their touchpoints and rather create content that shows a certain consistency with the brand, so that users immediately recognize the source. This slightly contradicts the literature about CDJs by Verhoef et al. (2009) or Meyer and Schwager (2007). Van der Horst thinks that by doing that, museums “*will be more top-of-mind and more trustworthy,*” which eventually will lead to conversion at the end. This conversion can be both analogue and digital. However, it does not seem to be the main goal of museums, according to van der Horst and van Reij. Van Reij thinks that museums are still at the stage where every online tool serves as an incentive for visitors to come to the physical museum. However, that seems to change as museums are striving to focus on finding out what the needs of online-only visitors are. Again, it becomes obvious how user-centricity permeates the phase of the whole CDJ (Fensel et al., 2014).

4.3.2 “Have you ever noticed?” - reinforcing the message

Similar to the creating awareness, the content of touchpoints that museums provide here should be designed in a way that is relevant to the user’s life. The focus here could be either on short-lasting custom-made content that is relevant to their interests, thinks Clémence Ferry, which can again be content related to popular culture. It could also be on long-lasting content, meaning that the focus is on the museum’s main exhibitions, thinks van Reij. To increase engagement, the content could include call-to-actions to activate the users. These call-to-actions should be mainly targeted sponsored posts, thinks Ryan Dodge. Following these call-to-actions, museums could easily create organic content (e.g. on YouTube) that uses popular culture phenomena linked with art and history and then go more in-depth into art and history by posing a “Have you ever noticed...?” question, think van Reij and Dodge. Dodge is confident that organic content should be informational, collections-based or research-based. This creates a link between user-relevant and museum-relevant content, which is important according to Asif et al. (2017).

Through this, Cecilia Martín thinks that museums should try to open up conversations in this phase as well, in order to make the user feel part of a community, which is a direct continuation of the touchpoints in the first phase. Sanderhoff agrees because the SMK puts a lot of weight and importance on dialogue. This creates a trustworthiness, which van der Horst already has found to be relevant. Based on this creation of trust, museums should then position themselves as a driving force with art as their vehicle that can help bring their users further. For Martín, this is an important value proposition of museums in terms of relevance

because it instills a certain mindset “*of exploration and always discovering and thinking [which helps users] evolving as a person [...]*.” As the individual drive of each user is different, it is important to emphasize what the museum is about by giving them all relevant information they need (Izzo, 2017; Vinent, Martín & Gustems, 2015). Kristina Leipold suggests the use of digital channels that are available on a single device for this provision of information, which corresponds to Sylaiou et al. (2017). It is all about making it easier for the customer and making him feel welcome, adds Peter Gorgels. Digital channels and technology in general come in handy because they can be constantly updated and more content can be added, which fits the flexible strategy museums need to follow.

According to John Stack, another way to reinforce the message at this point is to “*position the museum as having an interesting and unusual take on a subject that is kind of in the public eye*” by posing the question what the museum’s place is in the bigger picture. This led one of Stack’s staff meetings to an interesting point “*because one of the things we talked about is [that] maybe we should tell the kind of hidden story*” that is still part within the wider context of similar content other institutions are producing. Lauren Hesse agrees with telling the hidden stories and maybe also delivering behind-the-scene components for users. An example would be to not tell the story of a historic event, but tell the hidden stories of the impact that specific event had on the affected people. This would create a more personal and relevant experience for the users and would certainly grab the user’s attention after creating awareness in the first phase and lead to a product interaction later on.

4.3.3 Channel selection

To bring such hidden stories closer to the users, again museums have to be clear how they integrate themselves “*in the stream of the user’s need [...] or go to the places they are,*” claims Stack. Most experts talked again about social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram but also other channels like Google Art and Culture, MOOCs or even Google Maps.

An important question according to Leipold is, what channel would be best to pick up the user after creating awareness. So, whether the entrance point is Instagram, a MOOC, or YouTube, the museum channels have to be linked with each other to ensure a consistent experience throughout the journey, claims Wouter van der Horst. This enables the user to dive into the museum community, explore it further and feel part of the community. In order to do this, the touchpoints need to have the affordances to offer educational content in visual form as visual content has more impact on users. An example of a multi-channel approach for Stack would be to have a series of in-depth interviews on YouTube; key images of the videos could be shared on Instagram stories and so on. For Stack, content should be layered on different social media channels with key stories of the digital educational product, while a

deeper sort of content behind the key stories will be built up. In the end these channels should link to the actual product or platform (Verhoef et al., 2009).

On the other hand, Clémence Ferry does not “*think that the channels have to be very interactive because the platform is.*” However, she does think that the channels have to be personalized and only promote relevant content, which relates to McColl-Kennedy et al. (2015). Additionally, Ferry thinks that “*it would be a pity if in this phase, it would only be digital channels like YouTube to promote a digital product because there is so much to be done like flyers and QR-codes*” and other offline channels that can be used to engage users (Izzo, 2017).

4.3.4 User engagement

The experts agreed that user engagement is quite useful in this phase in order to engage the user to interact with the museum’s product. For Olivia Vane the essential question is “*Where would this knit into the existing customer journey that people are making?*” During the conversations, several types of user engagement came up that could knit into the CDJ at this point: co-creation, storytelling and gamification. In general, user engagement is one of the most important things, describes Wouter van der Horst, and adds that museums should focus on a highly engaging content. For Joy Melki and Cecilia Martín, user engagement is at the centre of everything and the ultimate goal because engagement helps to contribute to culture, which certainly is included in the museum’s educational mission. To reach the goal, thinks Martín, engagement “*has to be done through participation, through being able to respond, so being part of conversation, and being able to put your creativity out there*” because in the end, “*we are all creating culture... engagement should be the result.*” These statements align with Harms, Bijmolt and Hoekstra (2017) and Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017). Frédérique van Reij agrees that user engagement could be a means to activate the user to participate (see Azmat, et al., 2017). Furthermore, engagement can lead to a form of caring because, users “*care enough to connect with people who are interested in the same things [and] care enough to be inspired and do something according to that and put it out there,*” says Martín.

4.3.4.1 Co-creation

Co-created content is something that could be put out there. By using users and visitors alike as ambassadors, they entice other people in their network through word-of-mouth into interacting with the museum content. Especially from friends or family, word-of-mouth is more valuable for users, says Gaby Laudy. Therefore, museums should “*integrate more co-production,*” which corresponds to Frow and Payne (2007). Seb Chan stresses specifically the engagement with individuals like teachers that use educational products in classrooms. A promotion by teachers to their students, for example, would give museums an immense

audience by only contacting a few, which means minimum input, maximum output. These teachers can then also be used to collect feedback from students to improve the educational products. In general, users should be engaged to give feedback on the museum's products and exhibitions and should be able to design products to improve themselves. Coming back to the teacher example, Seb Chan recounts that their "*specialty and the things that teachers expected [them] to provide was a series of guides on how to teach better rather than providing them the exact tools to teach with.*" This was a result of user research and subsequently included the user in the creation of new exhibitions and products, which elevates user-centricity to the next level. John Stack agrees with including feedback into user research because the museum is constantly learning to adapt and see what worked and what did not. Such data will be then fed back into a cycle of the next piece of content, which the user has co-created.

Another form of co-creation that came up is using user-generated content for museum-owned channels like websites or promotional material. In Ryan Dodge's example, the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) has a bot that searches for hashtags on Instagram. As soon as the bot has found an image using the hashtag, it uses one of several pre-written messages to communicate to the user and ask for the rights of the image. If the user agrees to transfer the rights to (ROM) the bot downloads the image and keeps it in a database. The images there are constantly reused by the museum, which engages the users to post more images because they feel part of a community. By using user-generated content on their channels, the museum itself appears also more authentic according to Dodge. A similar example are Sanderhoff's and Čudrnák's remix challenges in which they challenge users to remix the museum's images and create new things out of them, which then will be shared on museum channels.

4.3.4.2 Storytelling

Storytelling around a product is not only important for museums for engaging the audience, but is important in most business areas. In the museum context, storytelling is useful because the trend is that people look for more context and customer content, meaning content that makes sense for all kinds of audiences no matter the cultural background, age, or sex. Clémence Ferry thinks that expectations towards content are rising, as people want stories to be told in a more understandable manner. Therefore, museums have to be inclusive in communications and with the content while respecting "*everybody's space or intuition.*" This includes members of the LGBTQ-community, people with disabilities and so on. Additionally, a great story that is told through teasers and exciting dramaturgy that engages users, should prevent them from getting bored easily. This also goes back to van der Horst's idea of a transmedial storyworld like the Marvel Universe. Through different stories on different channels that still belong to the same universe, the museum has the

ability to create a new life around art, which Joy Melki thinks is essential to engage users. This corresponds with Harms, Bijmolt and Hoekstra's (2017) idea of appealing to users on an emotional level in the CDJ through storytelling.

4.3.4.3 Gamification

Another interesting emerging subtheme was gamification. For Clémence Ferry, gamification could be a way to keep people on the platform and also invite other people. Kristina Leipold agrees that games can be a successful tool to give the last nudge to people because it engages them in a way that stimulates them. She gave the example of the Tate Britain, which used *Sherlock Holmes* games that visitors played. The visitors were walking through the museum and had to discover objects that were shown on their phone. As this is in the physical museum, Ed Rodley mentions an example that is purely digital in which the UK-based citizen science web portal *Zooniverse* uses old ship logs from the 19th century to research global weather. The participatory cultural heritage project was named *Old Weather* and users had to go through these digitized ship logs and transcribe them. Even though it sounded extremely boring for Rodley, he was immediately hooked because such projects allow *“people to engage to the extent that they are interested in engaging. To provide them with opportunities. To not only grow in the mastery of the subject but to be aware that they have done it.”* This is done through providing users with feedback and raising difficulty levels after every mastered exercise. Through that project, people learned about navigation, geographical representation and the weather by personalizing the user's experience by enabling users to pick their own ship to work with. Games like this enable the users to engage with the museum's content in an entertaining way, which is similar to immersive experiences.

4.4 Interacting with the museum

4.4.1 Platforms

In the *Do* phase, it is mainly about interacting with the museum's educational content. Based on the questions there were three themes for the overarching themes of platforms. The first one is dealing with the educational functions on digital museum platforms. The second should have been about user preferences, but the answers were so similar to the educational functions theme that they were put together. The third theme is about the role of the physical museum itself in the digital sphere.

4.4.1.1 Educational functions on digital museum platforms

For Frédérique van Reij, a digital museum platform should stand under the motto "*to see more is to learn more.*" The digital platform should facilitate users to understand the objects better, which happens through tools that enable users to look at and use objects differently than in the physical space. These tools can vary from YouTube videos to online drawing courses, says van Reij: "[...] *we believe that the act of drawing makes you appreciate the object more, probably, but also understand the object better.*" Kristina Leipold and Wouter van der Horst think that digital platforms should also enable users to personalize their content, to actively engage with it and to deep-dive into topics and exhibitions. To keep the user engaged, Leipold proposes suggesting content similar to the Amazon logic: "*You have seen this, so you might like this!*" Olivia Vane and Nils Pokel agree. Platforms might thus be able to create connections to collections of other museums as well, which would relate to Schweibenz (1998). This could create never before seen connections between art pieces for the user, which creates a new life around art, one of the most important aspects of digital, according to Joy Melki. Additionally, for Melki, digitalization is "*at the center of everything but you could attach to digitalization, communication, being together, talking about art, creating communities, making the museum more visible all over the world.*"

On the platform itself, there should be a search engine that enables the user to find what he wants even faster. This search has to be as user-friendly and as fast as possible, think Joanna Doe and Michal Čudrnák. Things like auto-complete or a non-specialist user interface should be provided, so that even users who do not know how to look things up gets results, says Čudrnák. Another factor is that the platform should be rather visual and should be "*about a more intuitive way of accessing the collection,*" says Olivia Vane. This relates to Pallud (2017) and Sylaoiu et al. (2017).

Another educational function of keeping the user engaged is again gamification. Clémence Ferry thinks that the platform should have different levels that can be reached or some form of remuneration (e.g. a certificate) for the user in the end. Sanderhoff also supports this as users should have some feeling of pride after using the online product.

Furthermore, Ferry thinks that online platforms should be used to allow people who cannot go to the museum to see it. Therefore, some sort of digital tour would be interesting. Cecilia Martín agrees with the gist of Ferry's statement that platforms are used for people who are unable to come to the museum and adds that educational functions could also give a stage to people on which they can share their passion with others (van Kerrebroeck, Brengman & Willems, 2017; Pallud, 2017; Sylaiou, et al., 2017; Jung, et al., 2016).

People can share their passion by using re-use services that enable them to make their own, personal collections. So, users should be able to collect art by downloading it in high resolution, share their favourite paintings and maybe even design things with it, think Peter Gorgels Michal Čudrnák and Joanna Doe. This is at the core of the Rijksstudio, Europeana or Webumenia. It brings the users closer to art and makes art more relatable and personal because they are proud to have created something instead of simply buying it in the gift shop. Additionally, platforms should help users discover unknown artworks. John Stack agrees to that and thinks that museums have to give people unique answers and tell them hidden stories about events they are familiar with already to give them a more relatable angle.

4.4.1.2 The role of the physical museum

In all of that, the question arises what the role of the physical museum will be. Even though the aim of this thesis was to research how museums can further their mission online, all experts stressed the importance of the physical museum. Interestingly, the emerging theme is that digital is like a concierge for the real thing, as Chan said. The authentic museum experience cannot be replaced, which all experts agree with. The virtual museum Schweibenz (1998) thought of might be here already in some cases, but the physical museum is still the paramount entity. Even though showing a digital presence, museums should still aim for getting the people to encounter the real thing because digital is simply not the same, thinks John Stack. Clémence Ferry agrees and adds, "[...] *you should still want to see the real one. Because you get a better idea of how it is framed, and if you can see the paint levels and everything.*" Especially, things like scenography, the colour on the walls, all that contributes to the physical experience, which the digital cannot replicate. Frédérique van Reij agrees and thinks that online, users could lose all context of the collection compared to the physical museum.

Cecilia Martín thinks as well that there is nothing that can replace the physical experience of being in a place. However, it is possible to add layers to it. The platform could serve as another layer of the physical museum with which people who cannot go to the museum can educate themselves. John Stack has another suggestion: "[...] *in a world that is very digitally saturated... actually one of the things museums might offer in the future is... the real thing.*" According to him, digital has encouraged physical visits and led to a kind of

greater interest into the content, which could be an indication of digital as a concierge for the real museum. The role of the museum continues to be important as digital cannot seem to replace the physical space, which is in contrast to Schweibenz (1998). Users rather use it as a surrogate form of entertainment and education about collections and exhibitions. As John Stack says, in a digitally saturated world, the museum can be the real thing; the smartphone-free zone people could flee to.

4.4.2 User persuasion

To persuade the users to use the digital educational platform is similar to the first two phases of the customer journey. Different audiences have to be targeted in a different way as their needs differ, according to Frédérique van Reij and Joy Melki. Melki adds that to bring the user to the platform, museums have to provide the users what they are looking for. This hints on a possible personalization factor of platforms that has been discussed in the theory (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017). Again, Wouter van der Horst thinks that giving the user an entrance that is relevant for them can persuade the user, meaning that the value proposition should somehow inspire the users' their lives somehow, by using the collections and stories of the museum. This is how you make art accessible and relevant for the user online.

John Stack thinks that a good way to persuade the users could also be by focusing more on mobile. The challenges here are of course that the affordances of mobile are very different than on the desktop. Mobile has a smaller screen, is consumed on the go and not at a desk, and there is probably no fast Internet. Therefore, Stack asks the question that can also be related to the non-mobile version: "[...] *what does that context mean for the kind of content we are creating?*" In order to digitize, whether it is on desktop or mobile, museums really have to understand these contexts and affordances if they want to be there.

4.4.3 Experience personalization

One of the essential themes in the theory was the theme of personalizing the experience of the users. Most experts think that such a personalization in the digital sphere is as essential as the personalization offline, if not more important. There are much more opportunities to engage the user online. For Ed Rodley, personalization is essential because "*it is the reason why people are going to engage in anything you build that is an educational experience online.*" Most users want to see their personal art museum which is the result of their taste and their choices, think Pascal Beucler, Olivia Vane and Merete Sadnerhoff. Therefore, a personalization in terms of the ability to create their own museum should definitely be a part of a museum-owned platform, but could also happen in partnership with external channels like Pinterest, claim both Pascal Beucler and John Stack (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-

Chameeva, 2017). When it comes to museum-owned platforms, the Rijksstudio serves as excellent example. On the Rijksstudio users can make personal collections and can create personal designs by downloading and reusing the digital images from the Rijksstudio. This is also similar to Europeana (see Doe) and Webumenia (see Čudrnák). Such platforms should also enable users to share their point of views their, thinks Joy Melki. Kristina Leipold agrees that when users are highly likely to share and speak about personal collections. Sanderhoff adds that personal collections provoke a sense of pride, which could explain their keenness on sharing. This is the chance for museums to initiate community building and provide the users channels to communicate with each other. Additionally, Joy Melki proposes the possibility for users to create their own journey or program through the digital or physical museum:

[...] like I want to see the Water Lilies of Monet, then I want to go back to Gauguin. Then, [...] you could have at the same moment... art history [...], press articles on the piece you are looking at; [...] what was the history of the artist at that moment in which he painted... the Water Lilies for example.

Melki adds that personalization helps to create emotions around subjects, which makes the users want more of it. Education is certainly part of it, Melki thinks, “*because [users] could personalize what [they] are looking at and want to learn more about.*” For Melki, personalization could also be done through an app with which users make use of audio guides, receive information immediately and even adjust their level of knowledge. Also, Clémence Ferry thinks that content and technology allows museums to offer a more personalized journey, if it is within the limitations of funding (Izzo, 2017). In that way, adjusted to the user’s knowledge and interest, content can tailored to the user’s needs. Van Reij makes a similar point when praising the non-judging environment of the Rijksstudio for not imposing anything on users. To use the Rijksstudio, users do not have to have any pre-existing knowledge at all and still use it. It is the job of museums to find a way to satisfy the user needs. Users choosing their level of knowledge is an interesting way to address the matter (Verhoef et al., 2009; Frow & Payne, 2007). Although its high convenience for the user, it also has its negative side. Digital personalization can be full of distractions, thinks Seb Chan: “*If I go to the cinema, what I have actually done is committed two hours of my life to sitting in a room with nothing else. So, it is a different thing. The type of experience is fundamentally different.*” Digital does also have its negative sides.

4.4.4 Active participation

The theme of participation has already been touched upon within the theme of Co-creation, when John Stack mentioned that user data could be utilized to create new content or exhibitions. Wouter van der Horst also mentions something similar. He talks about user-generated content on YouTube in form of comments, which can be seen as form of participation. Museums could use it as feedback and suggestions for future content. In general, John Stack finds the notion of participation really interesting because opening up the museum and asking the public for input can be a way for museums to convene interest around their collections digitally in a way that scales. By letting users participate in content creation, participation changes the relationship with audiences. Audience become more active participants. Stack thinks that the museum has an important role in that active dialogue “[because] *it means that we are not just about telling the world [...] the things we want to tell... we are entering into a dialogue about the future. And about [...] culture.*” Merete Sanderhoff supports the dialogue approach.

Museums cannot only ignite conversations with participation, thinks Cecilia Martín, but digital participation in museums means that museums “*give people who cannot go to the physical museum a platform in the things they cannot see.*” It can be like a window to the world, Nils Pokel mentioned. This inspires users and ignites a dialogue, in which people share personal collections, and subsequently build communities, thinks Gaby Laudy. To keep them engaged in the content and the platform, Ed Rodley suggests that the platform should have some sort of feedback mechanism that provides users with feedback. This provides them with opportunities to not only grow in the mastery of the subject but to be aware that they have achieved something. Users should certainly be able to make their own personal experience through participating in the digital.

However, Clémence Ferry warns of exaggeration, which provides visitors with a hyper-participation, which is similar to Seb Chan’s notion of distractions. This can become a problem in the digital sphere as well. According to Clémence, it is sometimes impossible for visitors, who do not want to use an audio guide or an app, to have their own personal experiences. Some museums “*removed all the signs and postures, so just that [visitors] download the app.*” Clémence continues that

... the big question that we are facing today is how to allow... no participation... like a super personal experience that people want to do... to like someone that is really looking forward to exchanging with the people, learning more about the art, exploring it in more detail and everything... and allowing all this to happen in the same room in the same meeting, can be quite challenging for museums.

Again, these statements correspond with Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017) who think that by participative features, museums promote an entertaining learning by playing approach that stimulates the users' senses.

4.4.5 Immersion

In the theory, the second big part of the museum experience was immersion (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017). Immersion stimulates the users' cognitive processes by simultaneously educating and entertaining them with the intention to encourage relaxation, contemplation and reflection (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017). Digitally, according to most the experts, immersion is more often linked to VR and AR, but does need to be confined to only VR and AR. Cecilia Martín thinks that technology can help a lot in immersion due to its ability to facilitate digital experiences. However, nowadays the technology is still too underdeveloped, says Martín. Pokel adds that it is usually expensive. Gorgels thinks it is hard to come up with a good concept and the right places where museums can do it. Museums therefore would have to be dependent on their sponsors. Additionally, Gorgels thinks that even though VR and AR are still in development, it is already phasing out when looking at Gartner's Hype Cycle: "[...] *we are now, after the hype...* [illustrates it with hands]... *we are now in the low [...]*." However, Gorgels thinks that until now, Instagram is the appropriate medium because people are using it. Pascal Beucler agrees with Gorgels' view that museums are rather moving from total immersive technologies to something simpler, which is just social media. It also does not necessarily have to be digital but could also be just to sleep at a museum for a night. Therefore, in contrast to expectations in the theory, AR and VR seem to be less worthy for further analysis. The educational aspect in immersion is an important balance to keep. For Frédérique van Reij, immersion is an interesting line to cross: "*When is the experience too digital, too fancy... too much?*" She thinks that if it is too much of an immersive experience instead of focusing on the transfer of knowledge then there might only be an entertaining value for the user. Nils Pokel agrees. He is convinced that the learning effect is certainly higher, but the attention span is decreased. Users should still be supported by museum staff to aim for the perfect balance of entertainment and education. The key focus should be on content and education, but of course not only. Museums should provide the combination of both.

Immersion as a concept itself can be conceived quite broadly and is a crucial aspect for museums (van Kerrebroeck, Brengman & Willems, 2017; Pallud, 2017; Sylaiou, et al., 2017). Immersive user experiences do not have to be limited to VR or AR, but can be experienced through something as simple as social media. The most important aspect to keep in mind is the balance between entertainment and education to avoid boredom or missing educational effects.

4.4.6 Channel selection

The channel selection in the *Do* phase seems a little bit misplaced as the platform as the value proposition should be the main channel to use in this phase, yet the platform should definitely be linked to other channels as well. Cecilia Martín suggests a multiple channel environment with multiple and diverse content: “*skills development, explainer videos, emotional graphics, music, multidimensional... and develop this kind of content.*” Sylaiou et al. (2017) have the same opinion, as they think that museum have to “convey information about the objects and their context in an engaging, meaningful, diversified and self-controlled way” (p. 63). According to Nils Pokel, the focus within the diverse content should be on making it reusable, open, modular, and endpoint agnostic. Endpoint agnostic means that it can be constantly updated and reused to avoid extra cost of creating new content.

No matter how diverse the content in the end, for van der Horst a positive experience should be the highest goal. For him, YouTube can be a platform for educational content as it already serves as platform for tutorials and how-to videos. YouTube can therefore be used as engagement tool and platform itself on which museums can offer their content, which would relate to Sylaiou et al. (2017). Van Reij agrees and adds that YouTube can be a channel to push the viewer to dig a little bit deeper and deep-dive into the stories museums offer through suggestions.

Additionally, visual social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and also Pinterest offer the possibility to share and personalize content, as well as community building, which have been endorsed by most experts. Especially the possibility to share something is important, as it is the biggest endorsement if the user actively chooses to share it, thinks Lauren Hesse. However, online education via different channels is quite hard. Face-to-face education has an energy that cannot be replaced, thinks Cecilia Martín. Therefore, when it comes to interactions, online can certainly be used as the concierge for the visit, as Seb Chan mentioned. Clémence Ferry thinks that the physical museum itself can be a channel as well because “*it is communicating at the moment where the visit starts when people are learning on the site.*”

Channels and the digital educational platform in the *Do* phase should therefore include all features the experts and the theory have discussed so far: sharing, linking, personalizing and community building. Although the focus of this thesis is on the digital sphere, nevertheless it should not be disregarded that museums can serve as channel in this journey as well.

4.5 Innovation of the *Care* phase Building relationships: the *Care* phase

4.5.1 Customer relationships

While the *Care* phase and the building of customer relationships has been common practice in commercial businesses for a long time, it has not been the case in public institutions like museums (Stack, 2013). Building customer relationships is an essential emerging topic and uncharted territory for museums nowadays, thinks Stack. In Beucler's opinion, this is especially important since the digital age is a social age in which everyone is connected. Most experts think it is relevant for museums to focus on building such relationships in some way or another after users have interacted with them either physically or digitally. The difficulty is to not make it appear like stalking, adds Pokel. As a customer relationship is based on reciprocity of values, this chapter will focus on the added value of customer relationships for museums and users alike. Since this is an emerging topic in the museum field in general, the literature for this is extremely sparse.

4.5.1.1 Customer relationships - Added value for museums?

For museums, the main challenge *"is always on someone who comes once a year to make the person come twice a year,"* says Clémence Ferry. In the physical sphere that is already difficult, as most of the people in the audience might think one visit to a museum is enough. In digital, this is an emerging topic. The big problem hereby is, according to Ferry, that museums have to first figure out how to use their data properly in order to create and generate value from such a relationship. Collecting such data can be done via, for example, survey after the visit, thinks Melki. Users could mention their special interests in these surveys, which creates the opportunity for museums to further engage the user in learning new things through contacting them as soon as, for example, artefacts of their interest are available on the digital platform or in the museum. Such a tactic of suggestion could also be similar to the Amazon logic, thinks Kristina Leipold. Museums could suggest their user new content: *"You saw this, so you might like this as well."* This could build a more personal relationship between museum and user and would prolong educational effects, thinks Leipold, who sees it a chance for museums to gain better insights and reach a higher degree of personalization.

The relationship should also start earlier during the interaction of the user with the digital educational product or during the physical visit. For Ed Rodley, one of the *"[...] [key differentiators] between online audiences and physical audiences is that like social media is really good at letting people express notions of affiliation that are bigger than the transactional visit to the museum."* Digital does not confine the customer relationship with museums to the *"[...] very circumscribed period of time and place"* of the physical visit in a museum, but *"[...] tends to be much longer in duration and it stands multiple visits and it has*

at least the potential to construct new kinds of audiences." From online audiences, so Rodley, museums see more interactions in terms of likes, comments, shares online, which they would not see in the physical space. Rodley is sure that this creates a kind of longitudinal relationship between user and museum, which has a tremendous upside for museums, if handled with care. Longitudinal in this case means that the relationship is not being built after the interaction but already begins with the interaction. Unsurprisingly, this customer relationship area receives "*lots of interest from people of the field trying to do more with*" it because it has high potential for growth according to Rodley and almost all other experts. These relationships should be nurtured, which can be done by making the user a part of the museum and make them feel part of a community, think Rodley and van der Horst. For Martín, it is clear that "[it] *is no longer about being a museum visitor, it is more about being a member of the museum community.*" Stack adds to that such community management needs to be introduced to nurture these communities and to keep the users close to the museum community. This could be done through online tools like social media, MOOCs, or even Friends programs like the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) did in the physical space.

Clémence Ferry mentioned this example that the DMA introduced the *DMA Friends* program with which visitors could be museum members without any extra charge. This digital engagement platform enabled museum staff to analyse individual user behaviour, but also it enabled them to group visitors into communities of interest. The museum discovered that there was one visitor who came almost a 100 times within six months. When the museum looked into the matter, it turned out that the visitor was a teacher who avoided traffic by coming to the museum almost every day after his class. The teacher became involved in the museum as a consultant on the education program and helped the museum in reaching out to students and children. "*Now, he is an ambassador. But the museum had no idea that he was coming every other day,*" says Clémence. Although this is an example from the physical sphere, the Rowing Museum example that was mentioned in the *Do* phase shows that the user demand is existent, meaning that digital can facilitate the creation of programs similar to DMA Friends. The foundation could be the creation and the nurturing of these museum communities. By turning users and visitors alike to brand ambassadors of museums, these communities grow through word-of-mouth. This in turn could create curiosity, whereby museums find themselves at the first phase of the CDJ again and subsequently satisfy the new users' curiosity-led needs.

However, Gorgels does have a point when he says that museums cannot expect their users to use museum channels or platforms on a daily basis like social media. Most of the time, he says, the Rijksstudio will be used once only. So, there is a downside of the digital sphere, which is simply that there is so much output that the museum content might drown,

which John Stack also mentioned. Therefore, it makes sense to build a customer relationship for the physical museum visit, but not for the digital, thinks Seb Chan. “[...] *for me, if I visited the museum, it is much easier to get me to come back to the website than when I have never visited the museum.*” So, for Seb Chan, museums really have to spark curiosity during the visit to create a foundation for any future interaction. “*The digital experience should allow me to extend and curate that curiosity further [...]*,” for example on digital platforms or through museum communities.

4.5.2 Channel selection

The channels that can be used to create such longitudinal relationships with customers should most definitely have the affordances that are able to uphold these relationships and enable museums to nurture them. Ferry stresses the point that using tools with “[...] *a long-term effect is a good way keep people active and [...] keep them engaged in the museum to get more data about them.*” Certainly, this expands into the digital sphere during the interaction with the digital educational platform. Other key elements that these channels need to have are the key elements Cecilia Martín already mentioned when it comes to creating communities: inspire, share, connect. This is important after the interaction because, just like Seb Chan said, interactions with the museum should be the foundation for curiosity to explore more in the digital sphere. One of the objectives hereby is making the user a brand ambassador, which has the possibility to spark curiosity in others through word-of-mouth. Social media platforms like Pinterest or YouTube are able to satisfy such needs. Especially sharing options and recommendation options on Pinterest and YouTube are important. Users should be able to discover more through the provision of suggested content and also by looking at what other people are doing. Van Reij thinks that it is best to always keep in mind that museums cannot change channels like YouTube but museums should “*use [it in] a way that works to their advantage.*” Museums should be sure they are familiar with “*how users use YouTube and why they use YouTube and why they like to use YouTube.*” They should look at what is successful and try to do that without imposing “*anything on them other than [the museum’s] educational mission.*” In the end, the user decides what channel will be used. By providing the user content on a platform familiar to them, chances are higher to uphold the relationship and keep the user engaged.

While social media serve as tool to reach people and create customer relationships, says Stack, the museum content will still have only a low percentage of actual readers. Therefore, Stack suggests using more conventional ways besides social media, like email, as a channel. Email might be more valuable to the user because it is more personalized. For the museum, email newsletters are museum-owned channels that are within the museum’s control. Kristina Leipold agrees with this, whereas Olivia Vane and Nils Pokel do not really

like follow-up emails because they could be considered as annoying or creepy. Whatever the channel might be in the end, the most important thing to keep in mind is again Cecilia Martín's assertion that "[it] *is no longer about being a museum visitor, it is more about being a member of the museum community.*" By keeping this in mind and providing personalized and user-centred touchpoints to keep the user engaged when he wants to, museums are on a promising way to build these communities. As with everything, the user always has to be the starting point.

5. Conclusion and discussion

The aim of this research was to find out how museums can innovate the conventional CDJ to create a cultural CDJ that helps museums to further their mission of educating the public in the digital sphere. As cultural institutions have been traditionally dependent on visitors coming to the physical institution, museums have been struggling with the advancement of the digital sphere. Users in this day and age expect to have every need fulfilled immediately and to receive any information possible at one click. This is challenging for museums due to organizational, bureaucratic, infrastructural and financial reasons. By finding a way to deliver their online users what they want and satisfying their needs at the exact moment they need it, museums can reinforce their institutional and social value. This could result in furthering their educational mission in the digital sphere. Using the phases of the CDJ, museums could not only anticipate the users needs but also satisfy them, engage with users, educate them and turn them into ambassadors. Therefore, the main research question was: *How can museums use the phases of the customer journey to further their educational mission in the digital sphere?*

5.1 Significant findings

The expert interviews and the thematic analysis enabled to unearth themes that museum professionals and experts familiar with the museum sector regard as important within the framework of the CDK and beyond. The most significant findings will be structured in the phases of the customer journey to point out the essentials for each phase. It is also important to assess the themes that are the foundation of these findings: the value and the mission of the museum, and the topics of community building and co-creation, personalization and participation.

When it comes to the value and mission of museums, Ed Rodley emphasizes that behind the term museum is a heterogeneous group of institutions that all have different missions and values to different groups of people. It has been repeated over and over again by experts that finding out who their users are should always be the starting point. This relates to the user-centric approach of Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017) and MacLeod, Dodd and Duncan (2015). To reinforce their societal value, museums have to re-manifest themselves as not only the stereotypical immobile institution but as a place to be and as a force that is able to drive social and cultural change. This relates to Tsai and Lin (2016) and Ernst, Esche and Erbslöh (2015). Their general mission of education is the ever-present constant that is of most value in the drive for social and cultural change. Before taking over this role, the experts agree that museums have to overcome organizational, media-related and infrastructural challenges posed by digitalization. The biggest of these challenges are the distrust in the digital sphere and the fear of denigrating the actual

museum experience, although the importance of a digital presence is recognized. However, only museum professionals share this view. Experts who work on the cultural agency side embrace everything digital and share the opinion that digital will play a paramount role in the future of the museum. This certainly relates to Schweibenz' (1998) vision of the virtual museum. What all experts share though is that there should be no difference in the offline and online strategy for museums. What museums offer offline, they should also offer online.

When discussing digital educational products of museums and the museum CDJ, it is important to start with the user and find out the user's needs. A new finding of this research is the distinction between curiosity-led and inquiry-led user need that was brought up by John Stack. Distinguishing these two types of needs helps museums to segment the audience in more detailed manner because the museums know what drove the user in the first place. Then, museums need to create an entrance point to their digital educational product that has a relevance to the user's life. Several experts have praised using popular culture for this. To maximize the reach of channels and achieve a cross-channel consistency that was discussed in the theory, museums should develop transmedia strategies that allow them to create and add endless content. Museums use their own narratives and create a story universe. This fulfils the quality factors of imageability and narration, which museums should have according to Sylaiou et al. (2017). Another new finding is the building of communities, which can be used when creating awareness. The building of communities and making users part of a museum community fulfils the interactivity factor of Sylaiou et al. (2017) and is of utter importance for museums as these communities simultaneously create awareness through word-to-mouth. These communities can inspire people, enable them to share their creativity and connect to other users. The theme of community building should be one of the priorities of the digital strategies and should permeate the whole CDJ. For creating awareness, entrance points to the product could be channels like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the Google search itself.

The stage of consideration serves as extension of the first CDJ phase and focuses broadening awareness. After creating the relatable and relevant entrance point for the user, museums should focus on reinforcing the message here by positioning themselves and their digital product in a way that the user considers it to be of personal benefit. This could be done by creating interesting angles on conventional stories and presenting a rather hidden story within the bigger context. Another way could be emphasizing the digital museum platform as a toolbox for the user's self-development. User engagement is essential here to keep the user captivated. Again storytelling plays a significant role here (Sylaiou et al., 2017). New findings here are the possibility of keeping the user engaged through gamification or the idea of museums enabling their users to co-create and participate in the creation of content and exhibitions in form of feedback. Interestingly, the channels seem to be different in each

phase. In this phase, YouTube and Instagram, but also MOOCs or platforms like Google Arts and Culture and Europeana were considered to be appropriate.

Under the motto *to see more is to learn more*, the interaction with the platform should offer the user as much imageability and interactivity as possible. Digital educational platforms should enable people, who cannot come to the museum physically whatever the reason, to interact with the museum's content. Digital can make it possible as digital can create new art around life. Thus, it can create new curiosity within the users themselves. However, even though a digital museum experience can be quite engaging, the experts think there is nothing more authentic and educational than the physical museum experience itself. The use of digital is rather considered as a means to further the mission and reach broader audiences. The main goal at the moment still is conversion, which again seems to be in contrary to Schweibenz (1998). Museums should therefore focus on personalizing the digital museum experience to appeal to users on an emotional level, which relates to Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017) and Harms, Bijmolt and Hoekstra (2017). Users should be able to actively participate in their experience to go through an entertaining learning experience (Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017). Although the platform itself should be the pivotal point of interaction in this phase, diverse content like explainer videos, audio, graphics and more should still be provided in a multiple channel environment as well to create a holistic experience (Stack, 2013).

The *Care* phase is still in development in the museum sector as Stack (2013) mentioned, which was unanimously agreed to by all of the experts. The experts understood that building customer relationships and communities could help museums thrive, which some experts noticed during recent projects. Building museum communities is a new finding that was not mentioned in the literature. It was repeated several times by experts, who emphasized its growing importance on the field. Digital should facilitate the building of museum communities in which users have the opportunity to connect to and share their interests with other users. Through nurturing and fostering such user participation in communities, there is a chance to turn users into museum ambassadors. This has an immense potential to increase the museum's reach, make more users aware of their existence and eventually further their educational mission in the digital sphere.

In contrast to the assumption in the theory that only the digital educational product includes educational value, it is important to point out that every phase of the customer journey should offer some sort of educational value to the user to keep him engaged in the content a specific museum provides. The educational mission is the most important asset that permeates the whole CDJ. Since the field itself seems unexplored, most of the findings are based on best practice knowledge of the interviewed experts. The findings can therefore be seen as a current depiction of how museums can make use of a digital multi-channel

environment to further their mission. Considering everything that has been said, it is clear that the museum as the institution as we know it, is changing. The museum cannot be an end destination any more in the 21st century. It is the can-opener, the springboard and the catalyst of dialogue, diversity and inclusion. It is the driving force of cultural and societal change. It is not the end destination any more; it is an open process.

5.2 Theoretical reflection

Apart from the significant findings, most of the findings correspond to a large extent with the theoretical framework. However, the findings of the expert interviews show that the developments in museum practice are several steps ahead of the most recent research like Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva's (2017) research in terms of creating digital value propositions. Its up-to-date data increases the relevance of this research immensely. Also, most of the theory focused on the in the physical museum, whereas this research focused on the digital presence of museums. Therefore, some aspects in the theory itself that were related to the physical museum were not applicable to the digital museum presence.

Concerning the mission and the role of museums, the experts agree to a large part that museums are not only immobile institution but also drivers of social change and cultural change, which is also argued by Tsai and Lin (2016) and Ernst, Esche and Erbslöh (2015). With their actions, museums can spark curiosity in the public and educate about the important things that shape society like cultural history. Museums definitely should move into the digital sphere, but theory seems to glorify the possibilities of digitalization for museums (e.g. VR, AR etc.), whereas experienced museum professionals point out the dangers of digital like scale, organizational and infrastructural gaps and also funding.

The theory regarding the CDJ phases in relation to the expert interviews revealed some gaps. This points to the fact that it is indeed the case that the research on the field of digital value propositions, but also the research on CDJ in the museum context is rather sparse. The notion of community building was repeatedly stressed by the experts but not mentioned in the literature. An emerging theme that was also not discussed in the literature and only touched upon in the findings is the inclusion of communities like immigrant community, the LGBTQ-community, communities of people with disabilities or invisible conditions, or even kids. Several experts also stressed that a digital museum experience can be a huge step towards including audiences that shy away from going to the physical museum due to certain personal issues like disabilities or social anxieties. Facilitating educational museum experiences, whether digital or physical, for these audience members was considered to be an important topic in the future. In light of current political movements like the #MeToo movement, the topic of inclusion becomes also increasingly relevant for public institutions and is certainly capable of development.

Also the definition and distinction of user needs like John Stack's curiosity-led and inquiry-led need was not present in previous research. There certainly needs to be more research in order to help museums improve in this area and fulfil their educational mission. This is also the case when it comes to technologies like VR and AR, which were prior considered to be worthy for further analysis. In practice, if the experts mentioned them at all,

VR and AR were almost frowned upon as the technologies might be too entertaining and might absorb the educational factor of the digital experience, when not used in the right manner. Some considered the hype of both technologies to be over. The trend now points to the use of simpler media like Instagram, YouTube or even Tinder that have a similar visual impact and are excessively used by users.

Considering channel affordances, the findings related to a large extent to the theory. The experts mentioned the factors of imageability, interactivity, intuitive use, personalization and participation quite often (Sylaiou et al., 2017; Pallud 2017; Ponsignon, Durrieu & Bouzdine-Chameeva's, 2017). These played an essential role in both theory and findings. Not only offline, but also online is the museum's educational objective dependent on the "ability to convey information about the objects and their context in an engaging, meaningful, diversified and self-controlled way" (Sylaiou et al., 2017). This explains the variation in the use of different channels. Each phase has a different objective and therefore the affordances of the channel in question are related to the objective of each phase. To ensure the engaging, meaningful and diversified conveyance of information Sylaiou et al. (2017) are talking about, the channels have to vary at each phase to fulfil the educational needs of users (Frow & Payne, 2007). This is much more multi-faceted than Bitar's customer journey of the physical museum (Bliss, 2016). As Cecilia Martín said, digital enables museums to add several layers to their physical appearance. So, in contrast to the assumption that museums should prioritize digital as a dimension of everything, it seems that at this point in time, digital still serves as a means to broaden the reach of the museum and bring more people to the museum. The physical institution is still paramount.

Relating this back to Schweibenz' (1998, 2004) vision of a virtual museum, the idea of a virtual museum itself needs to be reconsidered due to the importance of the physical museum. According to Schweibenz' (2004) definition of the virtual museum and the learning museum, it can be said that the virtual museum is almost there. Schweibenz (2004) describes the learning museum as a website "which offers different points of access to its virtual visitors, according to their age, background and knowledge" (p. 3). As the findings show, museum professionals currently strive for the provision of these personalized entrance points to the museum content. However, the links to digital collection of other museums are still not there (Schweibenz, 2004). The virtual museum is almost there, but it may be turn out differently how Schweibenz thought it would.

5.3 Limitations and discussion

In the end, 19 interviews have been conducted for this research, which is above the limit and led to more content than expected. However, the high amount of expert interviews gave an extreme variety and diversity in answers, which makes me confident in saying that the choice of conducting more interviews led to an increased relevance of this research.

Nevertheless, there are still limitations in this research. Minor limitations are that the questions that were asked during the interviews were not precise and exhaustive enough. This, at times led to only superficial answers and also to the experts running off track of the actual current topic of discussion because museum professionals are surprisingly open and love talking about their profession. Although it might seem appropriate for the semi-structured interview, the interviewer is at fault here to not intervene and steer the interview in the right direction again. Also, for the last interviews the topic list was slightly shortened and focused more on pinpointing certain themes to receive more insights. This tarnishes the reliability a little bit.

Major limitations are on the one hand that even though the research aimed for a diverse sample of interviewees, certain differences between the experts might have had an influence on the results. Some experts were highly opinionated which had both a positive and a negative effect. Most of the museum professionals regarded the topic of stand-alone digital platforms more realistically and pessimistically than experts working at agencies. It was noticeable that museum professionals are still thinking in physical terms and first and foremost about conversion. This led to some kind of simultaneous disapproval and appreciation of everything digital, in which the distrust in digital seemed to be prevalent. Experts like Pascal Beucler and Clémence Ferry are more ambitious when it comes to using technology and anything virtual whereas experienced museum professionals see it rather soberly and assess the use of technology more critically. On the other hand, the biggest limitation and interesting outcome seems to be that even though the RQ of this thesis aimed to be only on the topic of digital experiences, all experts were clear on the fact that the physical experience cannot be replaced by the digital experience. Therefore, most of the insights they mentioned had a lot to do with the physical museum or had the ultimate objective of bringing people to the museum. The focus was sometimes not really on stand-alone digital educational platforms. This makes this topic certainly a difficult one, which still is under development.

5.4 Societal relevance

Using the CDJ to further their educational mission in the digital sphere is a promising opportunity for museums to fulfil the social mission of education and turn museums into visible actors in society. Especially the factors of participation and personalization enable museums to create personal points of entrance for an even bigger audience, which eventually could lead to a renewed and increased popularity of museums. The factor of co-creation activates the target audience of museums and can make the educational content of museums highly relevant for the audience.

Concluding, the CDJ in the digital sphere is not only a possibility to democratize art like Peter Gorgels mentioned. It is also a possibility to democratize and decentralize the museum as a whole to benefit the whole society, which Pascal Beucler briefly touched upon. Due to its personalization factor, the CDJ is a possibility for museums to become more inclusive and promote inclusion of everyone, whether immigrants, disabled, part of the LGBTQ-community, people with invisible conditions, and of course people who are not able to go to the physical museum. Through building museum communities, museums can engage with multiple target groups and activate these groups, whether it is tourists, daily visitors, or bigger communities. Through the inclusion of all communities, the museum can successfully increase its social relevance as an educator and acting force for social and cultural change. Additionally, the findings of this research are of utter societal relevance because it demonstrates the importance of showing a digital presence nowadays. If museums do not make the move into the digital sphere, they will put themselves at risk of becoming irrelevant. Furthermore, this research provides museums with possibilities on how to take the role as driver of societal and cultural change and create a museum that is accessible for all.

5.5 Future research

Future research could focus more on the institution itself and analyse the organizational point of view in order to facilitate an innovation of the museum from within. Other future research could focus on actual platforms themselves from a user point of view to crystallize the user's actions on these websites to create an overview of the user's needs during the interaction with the platform. User research can also be done at every phase of the museum CDJ to find out more about the user's behaviour, which would be important knowledge for museums.

The topic of inclusion that was mentioned in the previous chapter is also an interesting topic that has a lot to offer for future research. The CDJ facilitates inclusion due to its personalized touchpoints, which adjust the value proposition to the user's preferences and conditions. However, how inclusion of several overlooked communities can be best integrated in the physical museum seems to be an emerging topic. This includes also how prejudice against members of the LGBTQ community or against people with disabilities can be eradicated to create a museum for all. Additionally, there should be more thorough research into how museums can build and nurture the museum communities about which the experts talked about in this thesis, but also how museums can further engage and include communities like the LGBTQ community and people with disabilities. There are many opportunities to deep-dive further into topics of improving the digital museum environment that emerges thanks to the multi-faceted results of this research project.

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7. Appendix

Appendix A - Operationalization

The social mission and value of museums in the digital sphere	
<i>Mission of the museum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What is the educational mission & purpose of the/your museum?’
<i>Value of the museum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What are the challenges of digitalization for museums?’ • ‘What is the museum’s educational value in the digital sphere?’
<i>Digital sphere</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Is it important that museums give the development of digital strategies attention and why?’ • ‘How could you provide digital educational experiences – both offline and online?’
<i>Digital mission</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘How would you translate the museum’s educational mission into the digital sphere?’

Creating Awareness: The See phase	
<i>Awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What is your strategy to make people in the digital sphere aware of the fact that you and your digital educational product exist?’ • ‘How can you best reach your audience online?’ • ‘Do you think digital innovations or channels as a means helped to create awareness of your digital educational product?’
<i>Marketing & external communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What is your strategy when it comes to digital marketing?’ • What is your strategy when it comes to external digital communication?’
<i>Channel selection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How would you use multiple digital channels to make people aware of your digital presence and your educational product?’

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘By which criteria do you select these channels?’ • ‘What are the user’s needs at this step and how could you meet them?’
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The stage of consideration: the Think phase	
<i>Consideration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘After creating awareness, how do you make sure that people online think your museum’s digital product is interesting for them?’
<i>Message reinforcement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What is your strategy to reinforce your message online during the consideration process of the user?’
<i>Channel selection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Would you use multiple digital channels to reinforce your message and how?’ • ‘By which criteria would you select these channels?’ • ‘What content or story does the user need here to make him consider using the digital educational product?’
<i>User engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Does user engagement play a role here to support the user in this phase and why?’

Interacting with the museum: the Do phase	
<i>Platforms</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Are you using any digital platforms to interact with users?’ • ‘What would the functions for education be that should be offered on your platform?’ • ‘What would you like people to do on the digital platform?’ • ‘Would it be possible to have a whole museum experience on a digital platform and what role does the physical museum play?’
<i>User persuasion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What is your strategy to persuade the customers to engage and interact with your digital educational product?’

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Do you think it is possible to bring the museum to the user rather than the other way around?’
<i>Experience personalization</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Should the educational part of the museum website/platform be personalized and why?’
<i>Active participation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Is active participation of the user important for your educational digital products and why?’
<i>Immersion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Is immersion important for your educational digital products, why?’
<i>Channel selection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Would you link multiple digital channels with the platform to let users interact with it?’ • ‘By which criteria would you select these channels?’ • ‘How would you meet the user’s needs for a best possible experience in this step?’

Building relationships: the Care phase	
<i>Customer relationships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Would you think it is important to keep the user engaged after interacting with your digital educational product and why?’ • ‘What are the steps of building customer relationships?’
<i>Channel selection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘How can again multiple digital channels be used to build relationships to users and how?’ • ‘By which criteria would you select these channels?’
Ending Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘If you would summarize it in one, two, or three bullet points: what are the benefits of digitalization for museums?’

Appendix B – Consent form

CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Laurin Ivetic
Aernt Bruunstraat 10
3067JE Rotterdam, NL,

Mail: 475542li@student.eur.nl
Mobile: +31645512558

DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in research about museums and their educational mission in the digital sphere. The purpose of the study is to understand how museums can use customer decision journeys to further their educational mission in the digital sphere.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to participate to be interviewed. In general terms, questions of the interview will be related to designing digital customer decision journey for museums, designing touchpoints, creating awareness of these touchpoints and overall about the best practices on how museums can communicate their educational mission in form of value propositions online.

Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will use a tape / video recorder for the interview. You are always free not to answer any particular question, and / or stop participating at any point.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

I am aware that the possibility of identifying the people who participate in this study may involve risks for past and future relationships, reputation associated with label and the individual, and/or other relationships that you may end up discussing these topics. For these reasons, unless you prefer to be identified fully (first name, last name, occupation, etc.), I will not keep any information that may lead to the identification of those involved in the study. I will only pseudonyms to identify participants.

I will use the material from the interviews and my observation exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

TIME INVOLVEMENT

Your participation in this study will take 45 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

PAYMENTS

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact - anonymously, if you wish - Matthijs Leendertse, leendertse@eshcc.eur.nl

SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you **DO NOT NEED** to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, you may prefer to consent orally. Your oral consent is sufficient.

I give consent to be recorded during this study:

Name	Signature	Date
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I prefer my identity to be revealed in all written data resulting from this study

Name	Signature	Date
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This copy of the consent form is for you to keep.