

Technology and the Artist:
Artists Adapting to Technology

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Abstract

In the modern epoch, the advent of technology has significantly redefined artist-society interaction paradigms. There exists a discourse positing that technological advancements may compromise artists' intellectual property rights; however, a prevalent consensus underscores the beneficial influence of burgeoning online social media platforms, file-sharing services, and digital communities on the sustenance and prosperity of artists' careers. This discourse aims to critically evaluate the transformative effect of technology on artistic methodologies pertaining to the creation, curation, and dissemination of information. Integral to this analysis is the exploration of how artists adeptly navigate the dual roles of information utilization—as consumers and as creators. Moreover, this study contemplates the pivotal role of digital security and privacy in the preservation of artistic integrity within the digital sphere.

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In an era characterized by rapid technological progress, the very fabric of how we generate, access, and distribute information has undergone a profound metamorphosis. This paradigmatic shift has made a particularly notable impact on the realm of the arts, affecting artists and their mediums with unprecedented velocity. As new media outlets and digital resources burgeon, both individual creatives and institutional bodies within the arts are compelled to adapt dynamically. This paper delves into the ramifications of contemporary social media platforms and arts organizations on the aesthetic and operational dimensions of the artistic sphere. The pervasive reach of the Internet and emergent digital technologies has indelibly altered the conventional art world's landscape, engendering new methodologies and conceptualizations of art (Thompson, Purcell & Rainie, 2013).

Historically, the appreciation and study of art were rooted in physical engagement—be it through the tactile pages of a book or the hallowed halls of museums. These time-honored modalities of artistic engagement are being redefined by the digital revolution. Today's technologies have crafted a dynamic terrain, inviting art aficionados to explore and engage with art in innovative and unprecedented modes. The profound technological upheavals extend beyond mere consumption; they have instigated a ripple of transformation across the art world's very ethos. As posited by Thompson et al. (2013), the concept of what constitutes art itself is in flux (p. 2).

In this intricate dance of change, artists are not merely passive recipients but active participants who harness these new tools to reconceptualize the creative process. The digital canvas is vast, allowing for an intermingling of traditional techniques with digital artistry, giving

rise to hybrid forms that challenge and expand the boundaries of what art can be. Digital art, video installations, virtual reality, and augmented reality experiences are but a few examples of how the integration of technology is birthing new art forms. Furthermore, these technologies facilitate a democratized platform where art is no longer confined to the elite echelons of society but is accessible to a global audience, offering unprecedented exposure and opportunities for artists. As a result, there is a burgeoning digital art market that not only provides a new revenue stream for artists but also invites a broader demographic to partake in art collection and investment.

Moreover, the proliferation of online art platforms and social media has catalyzed a shift in the artist-audience relationship. Artists now have direct channels for engagement, bypassing traditional gatekeepers and fostering a more intimate and interactive dialogue with their audience. Through platforms like Instagram, artists can showcase their works in progress, share their creative journey, and receive immediate feedback, thus cultivating a community of followers who are invested in the artistic process.

The implications of these developments are manifold, with significant effects on art education, curation, and preservation. Art educators are increasingly incorporating digital media into their curricula, recognizing the need to prepare students for a future where digital literacy is paramount. Curators and art institutions are leveraging digital archives and exhibitions, expanding their reach beyond physical limitations. Moreover, the question of preservation in the digital age presents new challenges and opportunities; digital artworks necessitate novel conservation techniques, prompting a reevaluation of traditional methods in favor of more adaptable, future-proof strategies.

To comprehend the influence of media platforms on art and artists, we must first interrogate the essence of 'media'. Media, as characterized by Dictionary.com, represents channels of communication with extensive reach and influence. The academic pursuit of media studies is relatively nascent. Walter Benjamin, a luminary within the German critical theory tradition, was among the pioneers to scrutinize media academically. He contended that the profusion of information and imagery propagated by the media fosters a detachment between the artwork and the observer, eroding the unique "aura" that original artworks possess (Nakamura, 2014). Benjamin's analysis underscores the experiential nature of art, which is often diluted when disseminated through mass-produced media content.

In contrast to earlier apprehensions about mass media, contemporary art organizations have embraced technology and the digital sphere, employing the internet and social networking platforms extensively. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have burgeoned into essential tools for artistic networking, allowing artists to engage with peers and audiences on a global scale. This democratization of content generation enables artists from varied mediums and professional backgrounds to connect and collaborate as never before.

Art-specific social networking platforms have emerged, carving out niches for artists on platforms not originally designed for artistic dissemination. For instance, artists are utilizing platforms like DeviantArt, Pinterest, Instagram, The Dots, and Behance not only to showcase but also to commercialize their art. These platforms have become integral to how artists share, create, store, and sell their art. In contrast to the pre-internet era, when art acquisition typically occurred in local galleries or marketplaces, online e-commerce sites such as Etsy have

revolutionized the commerce and community aspects of art, offering a marketplace for everything from jewelry to home décor and fine art.

Furthermore, the internet has proven to be an invaluable asset for artists seeking to monetize their creations. Madden (2014) reports that a significant portion of online artists utilize the web for promotion, fan engagement, and event organization, with a mere minority perceiving the internet as a threat to their creative output. This digital expanse provides artists with vast repositories of information, fostering daily innovation and evolution within the art genre. Online platforms also endow art enthusiasts with the means to partake in communities fostering interactive engagement and knowledge sharing.

Art institutions traditionally facilitate access to the arts, underscoring its significance within contemporary culture. The digitization of media has propelled these organizations to harness online resources, aiming to expand their audience reach significantly. The frequent activity on social media platforms by these organizations illustrates a strategic engagement with their community, with a majority posting content multiple times a week and a substantial portion updating several times daily (Kirstin et al., 2013).

The Pew Research Center survey reveals that nearly all art organizations possess an online presence, with a significant number of individual employees maintaining professional social media profiles, thereby personalizing the organization's outreach (Kirstin et al., 2013). The increasing popularity of online exhibits indicates the positive impact of the internet on art and artists collectively.

Artists themselves are pivotal in adopting technology, utilizing new platforms as a means of expression and innovation. Artistic creation is being reimagined through technology, with artists leveraging tools such as CAD software to forge new artistic possibilities. The synergistic evolution of CAD and technologies like 3D printing has created a new frontier for artistic media, significantly expanding the scope of what can be achieved.

The dynamic nature of digital media, as noted by Deuze & Prenger (2020), enables a versatile approach to storytelling, allowing artists to explore and illustrate narratives in diverse formats. Moreover, the online realm raises the imperative of securing digital artworks. Emerging technologies in cloud storage and database architectures offer robust solutions for safeguarding online portfolios, ensuring the longevity and durability of digital art collections (Fuchs, 2020).

In conclusion, as technology incessantly advances, artists and art organizations are transitioning toward online ecosystems that not only showcase but also cultivate and connect art communities. These digital communities are exerting a profound influence on the art world, propelling artists to explore and embrace new territories within the genre. As the evolution of technology continues unabated, the artistic landscape will persist in its transformation, reflecting the endless potential for innovation and the reinvigoration of art in the digital age.

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