

# Mobile Media, Mobility and Mobilisation in the Current Museum Field

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Mobile media have entered the museum, offering new affordances for museum communication and supporting new modes of visitor engagement. Accordingly, and increasingly so with the advances of smart phone technology, the potential and implications of mobile museum media have been given a great deal of attention by museum technologists and museological research (e.g. Arvanitis, 2005; Tallon & Walker, 2008; Proctor, 2010a, 2015; Katz, LaBar, & Lynch, 2011; Kelly, 2013; Stuedahl & Lowe, 2013; Kidd, 2014; Hughes & Moscardo, 2017; Pau, 2017). As significant as the arrival of smart phones in the galleries, however, is the emergence of a mobile mindset within the museum field. This mindset and its related practises, which can be understood in terms of a “mobile museology,” is the focus of this chapter.

“Mobile museology” presents a way to describe and discuss certain movements in the current museum field. As a perspective it relates to, but goes beyond mobile media and the uses of mobile phones in museums, as the notion of mobile also corresponds to wider concepts of mobility and mobilisation. A mobile museum is thus a museum set in motion, an institution characterised by change and organisational agility. Mobility, on the one hand, relates to making the museum mobile by transcending the museum space, physically and virtually. At the same time, mobility denotes a cultural and organisational movement, taking place in the museum field. Mobilisation, in turn, represents the triadic objective of mobilising museum knowledge to make it relevant for a wider, current audience; of mobilising the public to engage with museum heritage; and of mobilising museum institutions to adopt the mobile mindset and engage with digital culture and societal needs.

This chapter will present and discuss this compound perspective through an assembly of theoretical ideas with illustrative examples of mobile museum practices. First, I will address the

underlying incentive for being mobile as both a need and an urge to stay current. Next, I will zoom in on the uses and implications of mobile phones in museums. Zooming out to see how media are also used to transcend the museum setting, I will then explore how the notion of mobility also calls for an expansion of how we understand the museum field. Finally, I will look at how museum collections, audiences and organisations are being mobilised in different ways, but with the common goal of sharing cultural knowledge and making museums relevant for society.

In the mobile museological perspective, mobile phones are seen as both a concrete medium and an exemplary technology that is emblematic of a mediatised environment (Hjarvard, 2008). Hence, while this contemporary study considers the implications of mobile and digital media as both catalysts and instruments for specific, situated present-day developments, in a more general sense the mobile museology perspective also exemplifies how museums and museology are (always) set in motion by technological, theoretical and cultural developments. The confluence of technological advancements, changing user cultures, institutional objectives and museological ideas has thus inspired museums to reach out and rethink their missions and practices. By highlighting these movements through the use of a common, multifaceted concept, mobile museology offers a perspective for considering the correlation of particular aspects of current museum practice.

As an inherently transdisciplinary field, museology is well suited to address these interrelated developments. In particular, in addition to the attention given to the experience economy paradigm on museum thinking (Weil, 2012; Weaver, 2007), recent years have seen a notable expansion in the area of digital heritage, drawing on insights and approaches from media and

communication studies (Parry, 2007, 2010a, 2010b, 2013; Katz et al., 2011; Giaccardi, 2012; Drotner & Schröder, 2013a). Moreover, a new wave of “post-critical” museology (Dewdney, Dibosa, & Walsh, 2013) has again put existing practices and museum development at the centre of museum research (Macdonald, 2011), contributing knowledge that may help institutions navigate a new sea of possibilities. While this orientation towards practice is vital, the critical interests and insights of the New Museology (Vergo, 1989; Teather, 1998) are still invaluable for reflective museum practice and scholarship (Marstine, 2006, 2011).

In this chapter, these perspectives are supplemented by understandings from fashion theory (Kawamura, 2005; Svendsen, 2006; Mackinney-Valentin, 2010), presenting a new framework for understanding motivations and change mechanisms in the museum field. Hence, while often focusing on the fashion clothing field, the academic discipline of fashion studies also addresses the processes and implications of fashion as a wider societal phenomenon, showing how a range of cultural objects are affected by trends, corresponding to sociological needs and desires. Thus, institutional developments should not be seen in isolation, but as contingent with the rationales and shifts in the surrounding cultural environment. Therefore, as the desire for the new as an underlying driver of development is as acutely sensed in the cultural world and the digital domain as in the field of fashion, fashion theory can help us understand how the museum absorbs and is affected by digital trends and cultural ideas.

### **The Desire of the New as a Driver of Museum Development**

Changing trends, reflecting changing ideals, can be traced across the museum field, e.g. in relation to exhibitionary practices (Schulze, 2014), curatorial interests (Baggesen, 2014b), and even museum architecture (MacLeod, 2013). Technology, too, has been everchanging throughout

museum history, and new developments have often been met with excitement and concern in equal measure (Griffiths, 2003; Parry, 2007). According to Parry (2013), however, as digital technologies have now been an intrinsic part of museum practice for so long that digital thinking has become hardwired into some “postdigital” institutions, the persistent talk of digital media within the framework of “newness” in museological research makes little sense.

At this point, therefore, rather than discussing the novelty of digital media per se, it might be useful instead to consider digital museum developments as an example of the wider significance of “newness” in museum practice. Thus, while museums may serve as repositories of the past, they exist in the present and are therefore affected by societal changes and contemporary demands, including the demand to be contemporary, reflecting the now and the new. Indeed, in contrast to Gertrude Stein’s (alleged) comment that “You can be a museum, or you can be modern, but you can’t be both” (as cited in Dercon, 1999), present-day museums are required to be exactly that.

Accordingly, museums today are faced with the challenge of navigating a technological field that is rapidly evolving. The postdigital condition is thus not simply a matter of “going digital” once and for all or shifting to a “perpetual beta” mindset, but also of perpetual assessment of or experimentation with a steady stream of newly introduced platforms and technologies, and, not least, meeting the expectations of a public switched-on to the latest tech trends. Museum technologists and museum researchers are therefore working to understand the significance and complex uses of digital media for information seeking, meaning-making, social interaction and entertainment in society, to adapt communication strategies to existing user cultures and make best use of digital affordances for museum missions. Yet, as documentation struggles to keep up

with the speed of innovation, developments are also affected by the hype following launches of new technologies or platforms:

We have learned that the scope for digital work is vast and continues to evolve, and that our collective desire is mutable and at times unpredictable. “Apps, apps, apps—we must have an app!”, “Augmented Reality—that’s the new thing. We’ve got to get us some of that”, “Touch-activated tables. They’re really nifty—shouldn’t we get one for our next exhibition?!” The examples are legion, and the eagerness to burn money on the latest thing is huge. (Wang, 2014, pp. 180–181)

Thus, while examples such as mobile applications, augmented reality and touch tables each represent unique affordances that may successfully be leveraged for museum mediation, the adaptation of these technologies is also driven by a perceived need to keep abreast as well as a simple desire for the new.

According to fashion scholar Maria Mackinney-Valentin (2010), this craze for novelty corresponds to the modernist fascination with the new as a sign of progress, but also with a postmodern experience of the “failure of the new,” a feeling of meaninglessness and lack of satisfaction that leads to perpetual lust for new impulses. As each new technology or platform promises new opportunities for museum communication, while many new services in reality turn out to disappoint in terms of experience or uptake, both of these factors are found in the museum field. Moreover, as noted by Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant and Kelly:

the “new” in new media as a reference to “the most recent” also carries the ideological sense that new equals better and carries with it a cluster of glamorous and exciting meanings. The “new” is also “the cutting edge,” the “avant-garde,” the place for forward-thinking people to be. (Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant, & Kelly 2003/2006, p. 11)

Digital innovation thus presents not only a solution to a practical or communicative need, but also an added signal value, marking (sometimes explicitly marketing) the museum as up to date with culture and technology. Moreover, and ironically, whereas musealised artefacts appear timeless in their representation of times past, digital museum technologies date rapidly, meaning that even the most “bleeding edge” media are eventually destined for the museum of past museum technologies. As a consequence, museums may feel compelled to replace serviceable, but out-dated technologies and mediation formats with newer models, simply to avoid a sense of staleness.

Thus, technological trends do affect the museum space as well as museological practice and discourse, as museums take inspiration from each other (Sanderhoff, 2014b), following the lead of pioneering institutions, copying successful concepts and learning from the experience of fellow practitioners. While different institutions take different approaches, certain strategies—being also rationally motivated in accordance with institutional objectives, learning potentials and cultural tendencies—gain prominence, while others are soon forgotten. However, as is also the case for fashion clothing (despite its reputation of ruthless dismissal of last season’s looks in favour of “the new black”), trends in museum technologies and strategies are not simply a case of one dominant wave after another, of *in* vs. *out*. Instead, as suggested in Mackinney-Valentin’s study of trend mechanisms, we may see the development of digital trends in the museum as an

“organic and sprawling” process (Mackinney-Valentin, 2010, p. 192), a dynamic evolution and ebbing out of particular tendencies, distributed spatially as much as temporally.

Either way, keeping up with the fast-paced evolution of digital media and use cultures is demanding and requires both insight, resources and dedication. Not least, it requires a willingness to embrace a condition of perpetual change and a new set of ideas. Hence, this dynamism and readiness for change is (cast as) a necessity for keeping up with a changing society, including changing technologies and use practices. Following this argument, being a modern, progressive museum organisation means moving with the times and being organisationally mobile; that is, movable or in a state of movement - embracing a mobile mindset.

### **Mobile Media in the Museum**

The accelerated evolution of mobile technologies as well as the entanglement of social/mobile media with the digital culture complex that together inspire a rapid adaptation and innovative uses of smart phones for museum purposes, makes mobile communication strategies an interesting focal point for examining the wider conception of a mobile museology. Hence, as our daily lives and social interactions have increasingly become permeated by our use of mobile, social and online media (Ling, 2004, 2008; Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu, & Sey, 2007; Deuze, Blank, & Speers, 2012; de Souza e Silva & Sheller, 2015), so museums have learned to inspire and engage with a networked audience through these channels (Kelly, 2013; Drotner & Schrøder, 2013b; J. H. Smith, 2015). Thus, the privileged position as personal media along with the unique possibilities for augmenting the museum experience resulting from advanced technology including cameras, bluetooth technology and GPS software, has made the

smartphone an attractive platform for museum communication. Accordingly, writing in 2010, Nancy Proctor proclaimed that “[w]eb apps and iPhones are the latest great hope, and offer exciting new ways of reaching audiences on-site and beyond.” (2010a, section “It’s not about the technology,” para. 3).

As noted above, different institutions have adopted different strategies for mobile communication, yet a few prevalent approaches can be seen across the field. The most widespread solution, tailoring informative content for smart phone consumption to serve as a guide to the museum or to enrich the experience of a specific exhibition, is now common practice. Many institutions have also embraced the opportunity to rethink the traditional tour format, however, as suggested in Proctor’s instructive guidelines for designing for mobile (Proctor, 2010a; cf. Tallon & Walker, 2008). Other projects have successfully managed to break with the tour format altogether. And just as museums have been keen to experiment with new concepts for mediation, so the combination of tech and heritage has appealed to digital developers, resulting in a multitude of inventive designs.

Some of these take a playful approach, as in the case of *Tate Trumps*—modelled on the popular card game Top Trumps—or *Magic Tate Ball*, that combines information about location, time of day and local weather conditions, to present you with an artwork from the collection to match your surroundings. Others, such as Museum of London’s *Street Museum* app, use location software and camera-based AR technology to overlay historical images onto present day street scenes, while the *Vizgu* app employs object recognition software to provide information about artworks in the National Gallery of Denmark. Another notable orientation is found in projects

inviting users to engage in conversation with museum curators, such as Brooklyn Museum's *ASK!* application or the recurring cross-institutional #askacurator event on Twitter.

Interestingly, despite such inventiveness, and in contrast to the popularity of mobile phones for personal and social media communication outside and even in the galleries, getting the public to use the mobile interpretation tools offered by museums has turned out to be as big a challenge as upholding former prohibitions against the use of mobile phones in museums (Proctor, 2010a; Katz et al., 2011; Sanderhoff, 2014a). Nevertheless, while the early-day excitement around museum apps has abated somewhat, a mobile phone may still prove an invaluable tool for enhancing your museum visit, whether or not you choose to engage with institutional offers.

Documenting experiences on social media and posing for museum selfies has thus become part of the museum visit, at least for a significant section of museum audiences; a practice which may be viewed as both communicative engagement (Budge & Burness, 2017) and as a form of identity work (Kozinets, Gretzel, & Dinhopf, 2017). If the dominance of visual appeal over other types of sensory experiences in traditional exhibitions can be otherwise problematised (e.g. Hooper-Greenhill, 2000), at least in the context of visual social media culture, museums' combination of aesthetic displays and cultural capital has thus proven to be a winning formula. Consequently, just as mobile phones have become visibly prominent in the museum space, so museums and galleries have gained a strong presence on visual platforms such as Instagram, thanks to uploads from the public as well as from museum communicators, who have been quick to adapt to evolving social media practices (Kelly, 2013; J. H. Smith, 2015; Wilson-Barnao, 2016). As such, these developments in mobile communication strategies illustrate the institutional agility implied in the notion of mobile museology.

As the mundane habits of social media communication have entered into the museum context, and audiences have begun to “hack” the museum experience (Mendes, 2015), however, the traditional notion of the museum as a privileged space for hushed reverence and contemplation has also become challenged by the changes of behaviour resulting from mobile and social media culture. While the actual problem with overeager photographers may be exaggerated, heated discussions about mobile etiquette and the virtues and vices of museum selfies have been doing the rounds in the general media as well as in the museum twitterverse and blogosphere, where the question of mobile media in museum has sometimes become invested with notions of “culture wars.”

In this way, mobile media have not only presented museums with an opportunity to design for new experiences and rethink how to communicate institutional knowledge to their visitors. In a more profound sense, the spontaneous entry of mobile media habits into the museum has reopened the question about who has the right to define how to experience the museum.

### **Mobility: Transcending the Museum Space**

But just as mundane behaviour is spilling over into the museum space, so museums are increasingly beginning to transcend their physical premises to offer cultural experiences online, on location or to-go. The *Street Museum* app, mentioned above, is one example of this approach, while other strategies, calling attention to local history and places of interest through city walks, mobile interfaces, augmented reality or social media campaigns, are examined by e.g. Arvanitis

(2005), Stuedahl & Lowe (2013), Sharples, FitzGerald, Mulholland, & Jones (2013) and Liestøl (2014).

That museum mobility is more than a matter of mobile media, however, is illustrated in Bautista & Balsamo's mapping of contemporary spaces of museology:

Museums utilized early versions of mobile technology in the 1950s with handheld devices based on a closed-circuit shortwave radio broadcasting system. The real innovation in new museology, however, came when mobile communications were applied to new populist practices that took the museum experience out of the physical place. Today the "mobile museum" consists of satellite museum spaces around the city or the globe, museum programs conducted off-site by museum staff in schools, libraries and community spaces, and special vehicles designed to provide a multi-media learning experience based on museum collections that travel to schools and other organizations throughout the city. In the past decade, the "mobile museum" has morphed into what we call the "Distributed Museum": a postmodern formation through which the modern museum seamlessly adapts its traditional functions and spaces to the new cultural environment of the digital age. (2011, section "From place to space," para. 4)

While Proctor (2015) similarly speaks of a "museum as a distributed network" in reference to an online network of media platforms, Bautista & Balsamo thus propose that new practices of mobility have contributed to the transformation of the museum from a place-based institution to a dispersed and practiced space (2011, with reference to de Certeau). Hence, not only is the

museum space transformed by changing practices, it is also potentially present wherever practiced in public and private spheres.

Today, therefore, museums increasingly seek to become part of and relevant for the everyday life of its public (Black, 2012; Simon, 2016). Creating social events and cultivating museum spaces as recreational hangouts; reaching out to educational institutions and local communities; and generally making museum artefacts and knowledge approachable and comprehensible for a wide audience; all these initiatives can be seen as strategies for breaking down museum walls, metaphorically speaking, and converting the temple of the muses to a welcoming public space, and, conversely, make the museum present in the everyday (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Proctor, 2010b; Sanderhoff, 2014b; Cameron, 1972).

The mobility perspective is thus also connected to a growing museal interest in the everyday, mirrored outside the museum field by an impulse to curate the quotidian. The miniscule “Mmuseumm,” for example, exhibits prosaic objects in a disused New York lift shaft as well as on Instagram, presenting itself as a “natural history museum about the modern world.” In a similar vein, the “Museum of the Mundane” (actually a clever campaign advertising the conceptualising design agency), attaches museum-style labels to urban objects like ATMs, manhole covers or traffic lights around London and New York, to highlight the significance of design. This promotion of the ordinary is reminiscent of Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk’s “Modest Manifesto for Museums,” stating that “We don’t need more museums that try to construct the historical narratives of a society, community, team, nation, state, tribe, company, or species. We all know that the ordinary, everyday stories of individuals are richer, more humane, and much more joyful.” (2012, §3) Together, they show up a pattern of interest in common experiences, a

“re-enchantment” of the mundane (cf. Huyssen, 1995; Gumbrecht, 2006) and a blurring of the boundaries between museums and the surrounding society.

As argued by Arvanitis, “museums can use mobile media not just to leave their walls to enter the everyday, but also to disclose the everyday that usually goes unnoticed.” (2005, p. 255).

Moreover, he states, mobile mediation strategies may not only serve as extensions of the museum, however, but could also be used to bring the voices of the everyday into the museum.

For that to happen, however, museums need to mobilise the public as stakeholders in the museum mission, and be willing to share the ownership. Thereby, according to Proctor,

[t]he museum as distributed network is a persistently radical, rather than temporarily revolutionary, model not only because it gives voice to the silenced, but also because it decentres traditional structures of power, enabling relations both hierarchical and rhizomic between its nodes (people, communities conversations) and their connectors. (2015, p. 521)

As illustrated, mobile media have provided a useful tool for elaborating on pre-existing trans-museum practices, helping museums extend their reach and make their knowledge available in new contexts outside the museum building. Now with technological amplification, natural history can be studied in the wild, sites of historical significance can be brought to life, and art and design can be mediated in the urban space. But the transcendence of the physical museum can also take many other forms, in which the museum blends into everyday environments in partnership with local communities.

Fundamentally, the notion of museum mobility therefore reflects a new way of thinking of museums not in terms of bricks and mortar buildings or even as collections of objects and artworks, but as an inclusive practice where the museum becomes an actor or node in a distributed network of knowledge. Such a notion may prove challenging, not only to an audience that may still think of museums primarily as places to visit (cf. Falk, 2013), but also for museum institutions, as the implied symmetry between the musealised and the mundane, and between expert and everyday knowledge, upsets traditional cultural hierarchies.

### **Mobilisation: of Collections, Audiences, and Institutions**

The interest in breaking down the barriers between museums and the surrounding society is rooted in a long running ambition, ignited by the protest movements of the sixties and seventies, to remodel the museum institution in opposition to earlier associations with exclusivity, elitism and authoritarianism (cf. Cameron, 1972; Mairesse, 2007/2010; Weil, 2012). However, having lost—or deliberately left—their former position of privilege, museums today need to work hard, and work differently, to legitimise their cultural status and show their relevance for society.

Hence, as described by critical theorist Andreas Huyssen

there is now a verb “to curate,” and it is precisely not limited to the traditional functions of the “keeper” of collections. On the contrary, to curate these days means to mobilize collections, to set them in motion within the walls of the home museum and across the globe as well as in the heads of the spectators. (1995, p. 21)

The various strategies for mobile mediation, referenced above, as well as all other exhibitionary or communicative strategies onsite, outside or online, can thus be seen as an effort to actualise

museum collections and institutional knowledge, to make it relevant and meaningful for a current-day audience.

In keeping with both the expectations of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), and the inclusive and constructivist ideals of new museum practice (e.g. Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Simon, 2010), mobilising museum knowledge has increasingly come to mean engaging, as opposed to lecturing to, the audience. Furthermore, the *ICOM Cultural Diversity Charter* explicitly calls for museums to work for inclusion, diversity, innovation and also participatory democracy: “To promote enabling and empowering frameworks for active inputs from all stakeholders, community groups, cultural institutions and official agencies through appropriate processes of consultation, negotiation and participation, ensuring the ownership of the processes as the defining element.” (ICOM, 2010, §2).

Hence, museums need engagement from the public in order to comply with these principles and meet institutional and political objectives. They must therefore work to mobilise the public to take part in outreach initiatives and co-constructive practices, such as crowd-curation (Bernstein, 2008), citizen science and crowdsourcing tasks (Ridge, 2014), remix and dialogue projects (Sanderhoff, 2014a) or Wikipedia edit-a-thons (Roued-Cunliffe, 2017).

As indicated by these examples, increasingly—if by no means exclusively—the engagement objective is realised with the help of digital means, and with inspiration from digital participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006; Simon, 2010) and digital ideologists (Sanderhoff, 2014a). Mobilisation of the public is therefore often associated with (social) media, whose interactive features are discursively constructed as particularly conducive for civic engagement (Lister et al., 2003/2006;

Meecham, 2013). Hence, as argued by Axelsson, “[t]he concepts of participation and interactivity are often intertwined in highly normative and persuasive discourses according to which the technological solutions for interactivity will translate into more active forms of participation, even in the field of traditional governmental politics” (2011, p. 163). Similarly, “audiences” are recast and activated as “users,” following digital jargon and reflecting an ideological investment in notions of activity, expression, and (social) interaction as preferable to (passive) observation (Axelsson, 2011; Holdgaard & Valtysson, 2014).

Seeing how, in these efforts and in this discourse, the social obligations of museums are conflated with the democratising potential of digital media, it is clear that digital ideology, as much as digital technology, has had a profound impact on how museums understand their role and relationship with the public. Hence, according to museum educator Mike Murawski,

we can no longer unplug the effect of digital technologies and Internet culture on the ways we think about and re-imagine museums today. If the lights go out in the museum and all the WiFi hotspots and screens go dark, we might lose the physical technology infrastructure, but we do not lose the powerful participatory, networked, open source culture that has taken root in our audiences and communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (2015, p. 209)

Murawski’s essay derives from the *CODE|WORDS: Technology and Theory in the Museum* anthology (Rodley, Stein, & Cairns, 2015), which started as “an experiment in online publishing and discourse” on the dialogical post-blogging platform *Medium*. The original format is thus in itself interesting, as an example of the digital imprint on museum thinking and practice (and an

inspiration, perhaps, also for the academic museological community). The collection of essays is written by and primarily for museum practitioners, and, like the *Sharing is Caring* anthology (Sanderhoff, 2014b), aims to inspire both action and reflection in the museum field. Of course, these informed and balanced writings also address challenges and concerns. Nevertheless, the overall message is clear: that the world of today is transformed by the world wide web, and that museums must get with the digital programme to stay relevant and make this a change for the greater good:

The future is ready for us now; hungry for our resources, craving our expertise, listening for what we have to say. It is our obligation—our *privilege*—to respond and serve. A few brave institutions lead the way, but even they must race to keep up. (Edson, 2014, p. 15)

What transpires in these volumes, and across conference fora, museum blogs and #musetech twitter streams, is thus an ongoing effort to mobilise museum institutions to “embrace digital” and (thereby) effect social change.

The drivers of this discourse are museum technologist and digital curators and educators seeking to inspire and engage colleagues and management, in order to accelerate digital developments. Hence, while postdigital institutions (cf. Parry, 2013) may already have been profoundly changed by the implementation of digital practices and technologies, these practitioners argue that an even more radical change in attitudes and actions with regards to openness, inclusion, agility and impact, is still needed (e.g. Sanderhoff, 2014a; K. Smith, 2014; Stein, 2015; McKenzie, 2015). While museum debates have always been imbued with ideology, what is new in this particular discourse is the linking of social objectives with digital ideals and

infrastructures. In the words of Ross Parry (2017), what we see is thus a movement towards becoming “digitally purposeful,” that is using the power of digital technologies to fulfill museum missions and live up to social and societal responsibilities.

While this movement may be gaining momentum, the compulsion of a collective of digital champions to motivate their peers is, however, also fuelled by a fear of stagnation or sense of *immobility* and hence a sign of continued resistance and ambivalence in the museum sector regarding institutional change and digital developments. The concept of mobilisation, understood here as the triadic ambition to amplify collections, to activate audiences and to advance a responsive and responsible digital mindset in museums, is therefore also—inherently—related to potentially conflicting ideas and interests.

Hence, while the idea of mobilising collections may not be contested in and of itself, the strategies for doing so can be, as evident in the recurring debates decrying populist programming and rampant technophilia. Similarly, the ambition to engage the public as collaborators and stakeholders is not necessarily met with a similar level of enthusiasm by the invitees. Moreover, the role of the museum as solicitor and owner of the exchange, is problematised (Lynch, 2010), as are the assumptions around the democratising powers of social media for civic empowerment (Baggesen, 2014a). And while the altruistic ethos of OpenGLAM (Sanderhoff, 2014b) and similar initiatives are clearly in keeping with the core mission of museums, it is still an open question whether digital investments, participatory projects, or mobile expansions for that matter, are really the best way to realise the potential of museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As such, the mobilisation perspective speaks to the ongoing experimentations and negotiations about how to be relevant and how to move forward.

## **Conclusion: Implications of Mobile Museology**

Mobile museology rests on the understanding that museum change is not so much a matter of metamorphosis, in the sense of realising an inherent, ideal potential once and for all, but of perpetual morphing and moving with a changing world—being mobile. In this chapter, I have argued that modern day museums are set in motion by a convergence of technological and cultural developments with museological and political ideals. What we see is thus a movement that is simultaneously inspired from within the museum, in keeping with the obligation to be in service of knowledge and society and the need to stay current and relevant, and stimulated by external pressures and possibilities, in particular the fast paced evolution and inherent ideology of digital culture and technology. In this perspective, we can therefore understand digital technologies, i.c. mobile media, as both instruments for and catalysts of a changing museum field. I have furthermore suggested that a desire for the new, as explicated with reference to fashion theory, is one of the driving factors in this development, to explain how the significance of technology in museums is not only related to communicative potential, but also to cultural currency. Moreover, the need to stay abreast means that institutions are encouraged to adopt a responsive, mobile mindset.

One of the most notable trends in museums over the past decade, has been the interest and innovation in uses of smart phone media for museum communication. As illustrated in the *Mobile Media in the Museum* section, institutions have employed very diverse strategies for supporting the museum visit with mobile interfaces. As importantly, museum visitors are now using mobile media to explore museums on their own terms, also as part of an ongoing engagement through social media. While mobile phones have thus opened up for new types of

museum experiences, they have also challenged the traditional museum ritual as well as the institutional monopoly on communication.

Mobile media have also been valuable for museums in their efforts to distribute knowledge and call attention to nature, art and heritage in original contexts. In this chapter, I have used the notion of mobility to describe this move to transcend the institutional setting and engage with the everyday. What is implied in this move, however, is also a blurring of power relationships and cultural boundaries, and a radical rethinking of the museum as practice rather than place.

Finally, as described in the mobilisation section, curatorial, educational and communicative practices are already changing, to support both intellectual and practical engagement. Hence, with inspiration from digital participatory culture, museum communities are being invited to engage in dialogue and participate in co-creative projects on site or online. Such initiatives have already had a notable effect on how museums act and understand themselves. However, a core of museum thinkers argue that the impact of museums could be greater still, if only institutions learned to harness the powers of the Internet. The concept of mobile museology suggests that we see these developments as interrelated. What the concept represents, is, however, not a fixed model of museum developments or of the interrelation of museum and media. Rather, it is an illustration, highlighting the connections between particular aspects of current museum practice, taking place in a dynamic and fluid interchange between institutions and technologies, cultures and ideologies.

Mobile media have thus created an impetus for museums to think outside the physical framework, and have also, in a very tangible way, brought connected and creative digital culture

practices into the museum space. In this sense, mobile media have both required and inspired organisational mobility. The mobilisation dimension, however, reminds us that this development has not happened in isolation, and is not simply an effect of media affordances. Instead, digital technologies and digital ideology have taken root in museums because they correspond to particular museum objectives and museological ideals. Hence, not only do digital technologies ease curatorial and administrative tasks; the values and practices of mobility, dialogue, openness and participation are also a perfect match for museums' commitment to create and disseminate knowledge, and to secure inclusion, diversity and relevance. As these aspects of museum work have gained a greater prominence in recent years, so the attention given to the potential of digital media to support these objectives have similarly increased. But the unique value of museums in society is also still linked to material collections and to the atmosphere and architecture of the museum as place; qualities that are not easily translated into binary code. Moreover, audiences are sometimes even more conservative than museum management when it comes to finding new ways to engage with heritage. Therefore, while the interests and instruments of digital culture and museum culture may overlap, they also differ in significant ways. How digital, mobile and social media can be used as means for museum missions, and how much digital culture and technology should be allowed to influence museum practices and understandings, are therefore questions for an ongoing debate, resulting in ongoing experimentations into how to be a modern day museum. Meanwhile, society and technology moves on, and mobile museums move along with them.

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