



# WEB STRATEGY SCHEME

HOW TO MONITOR AND DESIGN  
CULTURAL COMMUNICATION  
THROUGH THE WEB

ICOM Italia  
Digital Cultural Heritage Research Group



## ICOM italia - Digital Cultural Heritage Research Group

# WEB STRATEGY SCHEME - WSS 2019

## How to monitor and design cultural communication through the web

The purpose of this scheme is to provide a tool for the analysis of the strategic orientation of the Museum on the web and to answer the following questions:

- What are the choices and the priorities of your Museum in respect to the web?
- What is your web strategy like? What are its proper characteristics?

It is a tangible tool conceived to assist the museum in outlining the elements that characterize its web strategy, intended as a communication strategy, in line with the mission, the visual identity and brand awareness of each single museum and as integrated use of the site, of its social media channels, its online platforms and of projects for the creation and participation of communities. An invitation to go beyond the technological "grammar" in order to become the actual authors of the cultural narration.

The objectives of the survey are two-fold: to collect data on a national scale and to provide museum professionals with a practical tool to evaluate and increase the awareness about web strategy-related issues in museums. The scheme comprises 5 sections and 17 parameters:

- Level 1 - Information Architecture;
- Level 2 - Content strategy;
- Level 3 - User interface design;
- Level 4 - Creating communities;
- Level 5 - Creative (re)use of contents.

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You can download the publication from the [ICOM Italia website](https://www.icomitalia.org/) under: "MUSEUM WEB STRATEGY. How to monitor and design cultural communication through the web 2019".

Your comments help us to improve it: [digital.cultural.icomitalia@gmail.com](mailto:digital.cultural.icomitalia@gmail.com).



# 1. INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

Is the structure of contents and navigation on the website adequate, simple and clear?

The objective of this level is to analyse the strategies that determine the "tone of voice" and the "reputation" of the website among search engines.

## 1.1. MENU AND CONTENTS

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What kind of contents and menu items organization is used?

1. The navigation menu is not immediately visible, and its positioning does not make it easy to find. The font of the menu is unclear, and the contents linked to the menu and submenu are not clear.
2. The menu is visible, but the items under the menu and the submenu do not clearly indicate the contents associated with them. E.g. Lack of links to return to home page.
3. The menu is easily identifiable and the items under the menu and the submenu clearly present the contents connected to the sections and the areas of intervention of the Museum.
4. The main menu is present in at least two positions on the page and is always clearly identifiable when browsing the website. There is also a secondary menu, which is also always clearly identifiable during the navigation. E.g. The main menu is present in the header and the footer.

## 1.2. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL LINKS

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Are there internal links between the contents of the different pages of the website and links to external resources? Is there any embedded content from external platforms?

1. There are no links between the different pages within the website. Each page presents contents without any connection to other internal or external resources.
2. There are few links between pages and those are not periodically checked.
3. There are internal links between pages, but there are few to none links towards external websites.
4. The website has internal links that allow an effective navigation from one section to another. The website also has links to external resources and/or embedded external content (e.g. Links to other museums and cultural institutions or other relevant websites).

### **1.3. WRITING FOR THE WEB**

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Do keywords, titles, subtitles and texts make the contents' hierarchy clear?

1. Texts and titles are very complex and do not clearly present the relation with the contents to which they should refer.
2. Texts and titles present relations with the contents but do not help the user in a specific search.
3. Texts and titles are related to the contents and are recognized as keywords by the user.
4. The definitions used in texts, titles, tags, captions of images and videos are clear and facilitate the user in a specific search.

# 2. CONTENTS STRATEGY

What is the level of readability of texts and multimedia contents used? Are the contents diversified by target (e.g. Experts, children, people with disabilities, foreigners)? Is the copywriting appropriate for the web?

The main purpose of this level is to analyse the use of text and multimedia contents, which should represent the institutional role of the Museum and be made specifically for the web, according to the concept of usability, using suitable languages, images and formats.

## 2.1. KIND OF CONTENTS

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A multimedia narrative consists of textual contents, an accurate iconography and different contents (e.g. Audio, video, images, text, external files). Is there present a precise qualitative strategy made for the multimedia narrative?

1. There is not an accurate iconography or there are low quality (grainy and blurred) images, and/or there are no captions to explain the images, nor external links for further information. Only complex texts in technical language are present.
2. There are few images and/or videos incorrectly positioned on the page and difficult to be connected to the texts to which they refer to. In general, the texts target an audience composed by experts of the sector. The images used do not always have a format suitable for the web (e.g. Low quality or, on the contrary, too "heavy").
3. The images have a format suitable for the web and there are links to the sources, but they are not placed in a structured and coherent narrative throughout the website (e.g. Only few sections are examined in depth. Image captions are not accurate or not always present).
4. There are high-definition images, up-to-date and functioning links to both inter-

nal and external sources. The titles are clear, the texts readable and accessible and correlated with images and multimedia contents. The multimedia contents are available and accessible on other web platforms.

## **2.2. CONTENTS FOR DIVERSIFIED AUDIENCES**

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Are there contents and sections diversified according to target groups (e.g. Adults, general public, families, schools, specialized operators, etc.)? Does the narrative style fits the different sections: the most informative ones, the educational ones and the specialized ones?

1. There are no diversified contents targets. Linguistic style is not well-finished.
2. There are targets. But the style is always the same whether there are specialized/ educational sections or informative sections. There are specific contents for diversified targets, but the linguistic style is always the same in any section.
3. There are contents for diversified targets and the texts present an appropriate language.
4. There are diversified targets; for each target different contents, texts with diversified language and suitable multimedia contents are prepared accordingly. There are several levels of detail that the users understand to be constantly updated.

## **2.3. INFORMATION**

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What space is given to practical information and to the presentation of the Museum (e.g. Timetables, closing days, location, activity program, costs, contacts, etc.)?

Is there any other useful information for users (e.g. Museum mission, organization chart, research activity, etc.)?

1. There is no practical information.
2. Practical information is present, but it is unclear and/or difficult to find. Moreover, information provided is not coherent and updated within the different sections of the website and with social media profiles accordingly.
3. Practical information is clear and easy to find, it is coherent and aligned in different sections of the website and with social media profiles.
4. Practical information is well organized, it is coherent and aligned in the different sections of the website and social media profiles. There are pages dedicated to the museum mission, the organization chart, the description of the structure, etc.



## **2.4. INTERNATIONALIZATION**

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Are there contents translated in multiple languages, making the website accessible to international public and stakeholders?

1. All texts are in national language only.
2. All texts are in national language; English texts are present only in the main sections of the website.
3. All texts are translated into English.
4. All texts are translated into at least English and practical information also in other languages.

# 3. INTERFACE DESIGN

What is the graphic appearance and the arrangement of the elements (layout) within the web interface? Does it facilitate the operations that the user has to perform? Is it too complex and does it tend to confuse the user? Is it too anonymous?

An effective web interface should make navigation within the website as simple and efficient as possible for all users, facilitating the carrying out of the various activities to be performed, thanks to a correct and balanced use of the visual communication elements. The design of interaction should take into account the concept of usability, by adopting a user-centered design strategy.

## 3.1. OPERABILITY

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Efficacy and intelligibility of the website interface, measurable in terms of immediate identification of functions or quick-learning of the functions of the different elements of the pages.

1. There are problems of understanding of some of the functions of the website, making it difficult to be used.
2. Some elements are unclear, but the main functions are immediately recognizable.
3. There are minor problems; the user takes more time than expected to perform a task, but she/he still manages to find the information she/he is looking for.
4. No problem at all; navigation is prompt, information and functions are intuitive.

## 3.2. RESPONSIVE DESIGN

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The website automatically adapts to the devices where it is displayed (e.g. desktop monitor with different resolutions, tablet, smartphone, web tv), minimizing the need for the user to resize the contents.

1. The website is not responsive, therefore it is not usable by mobile devices. E.g. Tablet or smartphone.
2. The website is not responsive, but it is still visible from different devices. Some limitations prevent it from being used correctly. E.g. Not every item of the menu is visible on smartphones.
3. The website is responsive, but anyway usable by different devices, even though with some limitations that reduce its functionality.
4. The website is responsive and the interface is designed to be fully usable by different types of devices.

## 3.3. VISUAL IDENTITY

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Visual language (e.g. colours, shapes, composition, etc.) is able to convey symbolic meanings and makes the Museum brand effectively recognizable.

1. Lack of visual identity. Visual communication has not been studied: shapes, colours, composition are simply functional to the structure.
2. The graphic style is identifiable but it is not consistent with the visual identity of the Museum, as used in the other communication channels. E.g. Flyers, posters, downloadable materials, etc.
3. The graphic style is identifiable and coherent with the visual identity of the Museum, as used in the other communication channels. E.g. Flyers, posters, downloadable materials, etc.
4. The graphic style is original, and it is the result of a comprehensive research; it is consistent with the visual identity of the Museum, as used in other communication channels and effectively supports the usability of the Web interface. E.g. The sections of the website to which we want to give greater importance are correctly highlighted through appropriate graphic elements and coherent within the general visual identity.

# 4. CREATING COMMUNITIES

Does the Museum have a dialogue with other museums and with its audiences? Does the Museum encourage the online interaction between its users? Analysis of the interaction between the users themselves, and between the users and the Museum, thanks to social network platforms and other sharing tools.

## 4.1. SHARING TOOLS

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Sharing contents on social network channels. The frequency of posting, the timing of response to comments and notifications should also be considered.

1. Sharing tools are not used.
2. Some sharing tools are used, but the contents published on the social media channels do not have any links with the museum activities or are not consistent with the Museum's mission.
3. Sharing tools are used inconsistently. Information contents are published, but without activating a dialogue or stimulating a response from the users. The contents are similar or the same, as those published on other platforms connected to the museum.
4. Sharing tools are used accordingly to the museum's mission and are related to the activities and events taking place at the Museum. Each social channel has an appropriate multimedia language. The published contents stimulate curiosity, interest and invite the public to the dialogue.

## 4.2. MUSEUM - PUBLIC DIALOGUE

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The possibility for the public to dialogue with the Museum in order to create or consolidate a virtual community on social platforms.

1. Absence of contact details (e.g. Online form, email contact) that allow the users to

contact the Museum staff to ask for information.

2. The public has the possibility to dialogue with the Museum. There are contact forms and/or Museum staff email contacts, but enquiries are not dealt with rapidly, causing user dissatisfaction.
3. The public can initiate a dialogue with the Museum. There are contact forms and/or Museum staff email contacts and the response time to enquiries is quick.
4. Social activities are planned periodically for specific projects, to which the public takes part actively. There is also a remote interaction with the Museum (e.g. "[Ask a curator](#)") and/or between the users.

### 4.3. ONLINE CATALOGUES

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Regional, national, international publishing platforms. E.g. [Google Arts & Culture](#) (stand-alone server); [Europeana Collections](#) (linked open data); [Cultura Italia](#) (open data national platform).

1. There is no content on external platforms or it is not linked to the Museum website.
2. Some contents are placed on regional online platforms.
3. Some contents are placed on national online platforms.
4. Some contents are placed on international platforms and linked to the Museum's website.

### 4.4. MONITORING TOOLS

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Knowledge of the public through the web monitoring tools. E.g. Google Analytics (including the referral function to monitor traffic from social networks or from other external websites).

1. No web monitoring tool is used.
2. Only certain functions of Google Analytics are used; data are sporadically analysed and not used to improve the web strategy.
3. Only certain functions of Google Analytics are used, data are sporadically analysed and used to improve the web strategy.
4. Many of the Google Analytics tracking features are used and the collected data is analysed and used to improve the web strategy.

# 5. CREATIVE RE-USE OF CONTENTS

Is it possible to leave a comment, post or share a research on the Museum's website? Can one user create her/his personal digital collection with personal comments and images? Analysis of the interaction tools that allow the users to create and share contents, both through the use of external platforms (blogs, social networks, and specific platforms), and through a particular section of the Museum's website.

## 5.1. MANAGEMENT AND REUSE OF CONTENTS

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Presence of tools for the interaction between users with the possibility of managing and sharing the contents, as for example [EdMuse](#), [Rijksmuseum](#), [Virtual Museums of Canada](#).

1. There are no tools that allow the creation of user content.
2. There are tools that allow some basic interaction functions (e.g. The possibility of saving contents in the "favourites" list, but not the possibility of commenting and sharing).
3. There are tools dedicated to the creation and management of personal contents (e.g. Personal galleries and collections for educational use).
4. There are tools dedicated to the creation and management of personal contents that allow interaction between users.

## 5.2. LICENSES FOR THE (RE)USE OF CONTENTS

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Licences and copyright information about the reuse of content included in the Museum's website under the section "Terms of use".

1. There are no indications on how to use the contents, not even in the "Terms of use" section.
2. There is no policy for content reuse, but there is the explicit possibility to share the contents (social media sharing buttons).
3. The indications on how to use and re-use the contents are present but are not clear. The users can save contents available on the Museum's website.
4. Creative Commons licenses are present. It is possible to save contents and reuse them.

### **5.3. USERS GENERATED CONTENTS**

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Registered users can access a specific area of the Museum's website, where it is possible to annotate and edit contents; create new private content (not visible to other users); create new public content.

1. There is no reserved area. The user cannot add notes, texts, comments or images.
2. The user can propose a contribution that is mediated by the editorial staff before publication, but the time of mediation process cannot be estimated, and no feedback is given to the user.
3. The user can propose a contribution. When present, the mediation process is effective, and the contribution is published in a short time.
4. The user can contribute, edit or create content on the Wiki model (with or without mediation).





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### **ICOM Italia - Digital Cultural Heritage Research Group**

Created in 2015 by the Italian National Committee of ICOM, it is composed of five professionals with interdisciplinary expertise in the field of cultural heritage: Sarah Dominique Orlandi, coordinator, Gianfranco Calandra, Vincenza Ferrara, Anna Maria Marras, and Sara Radice. The research focuses on the Museums web strategy, creating tools for their self-evaluation and planning. The ICOM Italy President, Tiziana Maffei supported the project.