



Postgraduate Program in Social Information Systems  
School of Pure and Applied Sciences

**Understanding Museum Social Media Experiences**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by Sophia Bakogianni

Supervisor: Jahna Otterbacher

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## VALIDATION PAGE

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Doctoral Candidate: Sophia Bakogianni

Doctoral Thesis Title: Understanding Museum Social Media Experiences

### **Examination Committee:**

**Chair of the examination committee:** Professor Dr. Michalinos Zembylas, Open University of Cyprus.

**Supervisor:** Associate Professor Dr. Jahna Otterbacher, Open University of Cyprus.

**Committee Member:** Associate Professor Dr. Vayia Karaiskou, Open University of Cyprus.

**Committee Member:** Reader Dr. Jenny Kidd, Cardiff University.

**Committee Member:** Assistant Professor Dr. Chiara Zuanni, University of Graz.

Professor Dr. Michalinos Zembylas,  
Open University of Cyprus.

Associate Professor Dr. Jahna Otterbacher,  
Open University of Cyprus.

Chair signature: .....

Supervisor signature: .....

## DECLARATION OF DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

The present doctoral dissertation was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Open University of Cyprus. It is a product of original work of my own, unless otherwise stated through references, notes or any other statements.

Sophia Bakogianni  
September 2022

.....  
Signature

## ABSTRACT (IN GREEK)

Τα Μέσα Κοινωνικής Δικτύωσης (ΜΚΔ) έχουν διεισδύσει με κατακλυσμικό τρόπο στην καθημερινή επικοινωνία. Τα μουσεία έχουν υιοθετήσει αυτόν τον τρόπο επικοινωνίας, για να διαδώσουν τις δράσεις τους και να κάνουν αισθητή την παρουσία τους στο νέο επικοινωνιακό περιβάλλον που διαμορφώνεται με την κυριαρχία των ΜΚΔ. Οι σύγχρονες μέθοδοι αξιολόγησης της δραστηριότητας των μουσείων στα ΜΚΔ βασίζονται κυρίως σε μετρήσεις και αναλύσεις στατιστικών δεδομένων που παρέχονται από τις πλατφόρμες κοινωνικής δικτύωσης. Ωστόσο, αυτά τα δεδομένα δεν μπορούν να αποδώσουν ούτε το πλαίσιο ούτε την πολυπλοκότητα της επικοινωνίας που συντελείται στα ΜΚΔ. Για τον λόγο αυτόν, η συγκεκριμένη διδακτορική διατριβή στρέφεται στους χρήστες των ΜΚΔ που είτε ακολουθούν τα μουσεία είτε όχι, ώστε να κατανοήσει τις απαιτήσεις των χρηστών. Επιπλέον, υιοθετεί μία προσέγγιση που θέτει τα ΜΚΔ σε ένα κοινωνικό-πολιτιστικό πλαίσιο και ενδιαφέρεται για την οπτική των ανθρώπων που τα χρησιμοποιούν, ενώ δεν τα αντιμετωπίζει μόνο ως ένα επικοινωνιακό εργαλείο με χρηστική αξία.

Η διδακτορική αυτή διατριβή προτείνει ένα εννοιολογικό πλαίσιο για την ανάλυση και ερμηνεία των εμπειριών των χρηστών που ακολουθούν τα ΜΚΔ των μουσείων, χρησιμοποιώντας μουσειολογικές και επικοινωνιακές θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις και μεθόδους από την έρευνα κοινού. Επίσης, χρησιμοποιεί θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις από τη θεωρία των συναισθημάτων και των αισθήσεων (affect theory). Συγκεκριμένα υποστηρίζει ότι η εμπειρία των χρηστών αποτελείται από το σύνολο των πράξεων, των σκέψεων και των συναισθημάτων τους, αποδίδοντας μία τριπλή διάσταση στο βίωμά τους.

Η διατριβή αυτή βασίζεται σε ευρήματα από εκτεταμένη εμπειρική έρευνα που πραγματοποιήθηκε με τρεις τρόπους: με ερωτηματολόγια, συνεντεύξεις και ανάλυση σχολίων χρηστών από σελίδες μουσείων σε ΜΚΔ. Συνεπώς, η διατριβή αυτή παρέχει συγκεκριμένες πληροφορίες για τον τρόπο που οι ακόλουθοι των μουσείων σχετίζονται με τα μουσεία στα ΜΚΔ, τι κάνουν, τι σκέφτονται και τι προσδοκούν από αυτούς τους λογαριασμούς, καθώς και πώς νιώθουν και αισθάνονται αυτή τη σχέση που δημιουργείται με τα μουσεία και το μουσειακό περιεχόμενο που δημοσιεύεται στα ΜΚΔ. Επιπλέον, η έρευνα στράφηκε και στους χρήστες που δεν ακολουθούν τα

μουσεία στα ΜΚΔ, αλλά έχουν ενδιαφέρον για τις τέχνες και τον πολιτισμό, με στόχο να ακουστούν οι απόψεις τους και να εμπλουτίσουμε τις γνώσεις μας για αυτούς, τους εν δυνάμει ακολούθους των μουσείων στα ΜΚΔ.

Επιπρόσθετα, η διατριβή αυτή χρησιμοποιεί θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις που αφορούν στα συναισθήματα (affective approaches) για την ανάλυση των δεδομένων που έχουν συγκεντρωθεί από τα ερωτηματολόγια, τις συνεντεύξεις και τα σχόλια των χρηστών. Συνεπώς, προσφέρει μία καλύτερη κατανόηση του τρόπου με τον οποίο οι ακόλουθοι μουσείων στα ΜΚΔ επηρεάζουν και επηρεάζονται από τα μουσεία. Συγκεκριμένα, η ανάλυση εστιάζει στις σχέσεις που δημιουργούνται μεταξύ των μουσείων και των ακολούθων τους στα ΜΚΔ, και πώς οι ακόλουθοι αισθάνονται, νιώθουν, βιώνουν τα μουσεία στο περιβάλλον των ΜΚΔ. Τέλος, η διατριβή προσφέρει μία μεθοδολογική πρόταση για τον εντοπισμό του αισθητηριακού και συν-κινητικού βιώματος με το οποίο οι ακόλουθοι των μουσείων συνδέονται με τα μουσεία στα ΜΚΔ.

## ABSTRACT

Social media has become an omnipresent part of everyday communication and museums could not but embrace this communicative form to spread their message. Regardless, current methods to evaluate and assess activity on museum social media based on metrics and analytics provided by the social platforms are unable to capture the context, the specificities and the complexity of how communication unfolds. This dissertation takes a different approach. Repositioning museum social media from a tool or use-oriented frame to a socio-cultural frame, it gives the first word to the people who use (or do not use) these accounts, adopting a user-centered perspective.

Employing both museological and communicative perspectives towards the use of social media in museums, drawing on affect theory, and using methods from the tradition of museum visitor and audience studies, it suggests a conceptual framework for the empirical analysis and interpretation of users' experiences in museum social media, which is constituted by three dimensions: the behavioral, the perceptual and the affective one.

Drawing on the findings of a three-stage study conducted (surveys, interviews, analysis of users' comments), it provides useful insights of how users engage with museums on social media, what they think and anticipate of museum accounts, and how they feel and sense this engagement on social media. Furthermore, social media users who do not follow museums, but have an interest in arts and culture, have the chance to be heard, for the first time, and their saying is truly valuable.

Finally, this dissertation, informed by theoretical affective approaches into the analysis of data collected from surveys, interviews and comments, enables new depth to our understanding of how museum followers affect and are affected by museums on social media. It also concentrates on the ways in which relational encounters are shaped between museums and social media users, highlighting how bodies connect, feel, and relate to these environments, and providing us with the apparatus to notice the new senses and sensibilities that emerge.

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This dissertation contains work, some of which has been published in Journals and Conference Proceedings and has been presented in Conferences.

## Publications

Bakogianni, Sophia. 2021a. “Exploring and Reflecting on Digital Methods to Study Followers and Non-Followers of Museums on Social Media.” *Museological Review* 25:12–25.

Bakogianni, Sophia. 2021b. “Meet the Users: Understanding the User Experience on Museums’ Social Media.” Pp. 161–78 in *MW21: MuseWeb 2021*, edited by R. Cherry and A. Heney. Culver City, CA: MuseWeb.

Bakogianni, Sophia. n.d. “The Museum Social Media Experience: User Practices, Views and Feelings.” *Malta Review of Educational Research* (Supplement Issue- Shaping Museum Futures (forthcoming)).

Bakogianni, Sophia and Jahna Otterbacher. 2020. “Research Recruitment Using Facebook, Instagram and Twitter Advertising: Challenges and Potentials.” *Archeostorie – Journal of Public Archaeology* 4.

## Conference Presentations

Bakogianni, Sophia. 2021. “Meet the Users: Understanding the User Experience on Museums’ Social Media” in *MW21: MW2021 Online*, April 2021.

Bakogianni, Sophia. 2021. “The Museum Social Media Experience: User Practices, Views and Feelings” in *MUŽE.X. Shaping Museum Futures*, Malta, 18-20 October 2021. (Conference presentation).