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DIGITAL CURATORS AND THE USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS IN MUSEUMS: NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

The report is based on the results of the study of digital literacy of employees of Russian museums, which was conducted by the Russian Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM of Russia) together with the Association of Electronic Communications (RAEC), the National Research University "Higher School of Economics" (HSE) and Microsoft in Russia with the information support of the project "PRO.Culture.RF" in March-April 2020. The method of research is a quantitative online survey. The survey sampled 917 respondents from 322 museums.

The results of a representative telephone survey of Russians aged 18 and over conducted on April 30, 2020 by VTSIOM and Social Business Group using a similar methodology (n-1600) were used as a basis for comparison.

The study found that museum workers generally have a higher level of digital literacy than adult Russians, as well as working Russians. In the cluster analysis (the K-medium method) four groups of museum staff were identified, varying in the level of digital competence. In addition, four groups of digital competencies have been identified, depending on the level of ownership of museum staff.

With the spread of digital technologies in museum activity raises the question of the emergence of a new actor - a digital curator, which becomes a link between the various functional blocks of the museum.

In general, the museum community supports the concept of a new profession. About 80% of the study participants gave a positive answer to the question about its necessity.

Distribution of THE answers to the question "IN THE LAST TIME IS VERY NEW PROFESSION DIGITAL CURATOR - DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANT. What do YOU THINK, DO YOU REALLY YOUR MUSEUM?" % of all respondents (n'917)
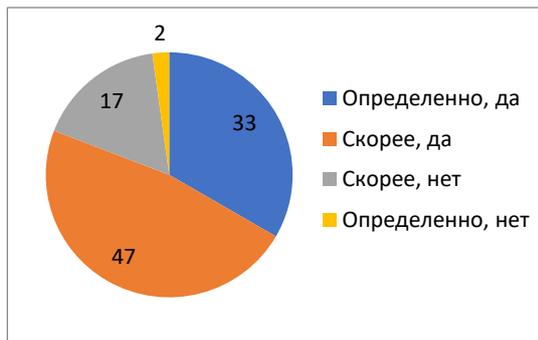
The survey showed that the answer "Definitely yes" is more often chosen by employees whose main functions are RELATED to IT. Thus, digital curators are not perceived as professional "competitors" for IT professionals; on the contrary, the latter could potentially be seen as allies in the development of this direction.

Depending on the answer to this question, respondents were asked to openly make arguments for or against the digital curator. As a result, 69% of respondents supported the introduction of the position under discussion, compared to 17%. The point of view, which does not fit into the framework of a simple dichotomy, was expressed by 7% of respondents, and 13% found it difficult to answer.

Analysis of the answers to open questions shows that there is no common understanding of the functional responsibilities of this specialist in the museum community. Positive cues of the supporters of the digital curator can be divided conditionally into three groups.

The first group of replicas (about 40% of respondents expressed them in total), contains arguments about the need for a digital curator in the museum and offers a new IT function.

The second group of responses (about 14%) - comments that unfold the thesis about the need for a digital curator in the era of rapidly developing digital technologies, which once again emphasizes the sharpness of the transformation of the content of the profession in which museum employees are located.

In the third group of responses (about 15% of them) in total. there is a desire to distinguish IT in a separate sphere of museum activity, in a sense to professionally distance themselves from them and at the same time to free up the time of the core staff to solve other problems.

About 8% of respondents believe that a digital curator will save employees time and increase the efficiency of their activities, employees will be able to keep up with the main work.

The increasing workload in the digital technology industry dictates the requirement in an individual who is neither an IT employee nor an employee of the museum administration. This opinion is 5% of the survey participants.

There is an attempt to shift on the shoulders of the digital curator the current tasks of the museum's marketing and advertising policy.

Opponents of the introduction of the position of digital curator, basically, argue their position with the adequacy of internal resources of museum institutions to solve emerging digital problems. Thus, 6% of respondents believe that museum staff can help each other and cope with the "digital" tasks. Some

respondents expressed the view that the introduction of a digital curator could have the opposite effect, reducing the motivation to master digital technologies among other museum staff who would try to delegate any problems with digital systems to this specialist.

Also, in order to study the digital equipment of museums, the study participants were offered a list of 22 digital systems, each of which was offered the following information:

- The presence of this system in the respondent's museum;
- Assessment of the need to install the system in the museum (in case it is not installed);
- Whether the respondent works with this system.
- Satisfaction with the system.

Interpreting the data, it should be taken into account that the parameter of the presence of a system in the museum in our study reflects not the fact of its presence or absence, but a subjective view of it by employees, which in one way or another corresponds to reality.

The most difficult questions were raised about the availability of systems designed to manage interaction with visitors and counterparties (CRM) and automation of financial and economic activities. The number of those who could not give an answer on these positions is 34% and 27%, respectively.

However, the findings show a high level of both the proliferation of digital systems and the involvement of employees in their use. Indeed, there are an average of 13.3 digital systems per respondent, of which it works directly with 5.7. Only 4% of the study participants do not work with any of the digital systems listed in the questionnaire. In addition, the installation of another 5.8 systems are considered relevant at least in the long term.

Taking into account the need to expand the digital systems and tools used, the introduction of the position of digital curator of the museum seems to be a necessary step to help in the training of digital technologies, to accelerate their adaptation in the museum, to improve the individual, least developed digital skills of museum staff, which make up the current staff of Russian museums.

In the future, however, a high level of digital competencies should become the norm for employees, and the role of digital curators can be transformed into digitalization specialists in individual areas and assistants in the digital transformation of museum activities.