DigistARTS
Final Report

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Prepared for
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Prepared by   In collaboration with

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Nordicity

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About the Study

Context – *What is Digital Disruption?*

Proliferation of mobile devices	Transformation of public engagement	Social media changing how we communicate
Sharing economy and disintermediation	Big data, analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Uneven distribution of digital infrastructure/access

Context – *Digital Disruption in the Arts*

Resilience in the Arts calls for…

- Innovation
- Co-creation
- New entrants
- Changing funding models
- **Digital Literacy**

Digital Literacy

- Functional skills
- Creativity
- Critical thinking and evaluation
- Cultural and social understanding
- Collaboration
- Ability to find and select information
- Effective communication
- E-safety

About the Project Team

Nordicity is a leading global consulting firm specializing in policy, strategy, and economic analysis in the media, creative, cultural and information and communications technology (ICT) sectors. Nordicity has **developed digital strategie**s for a variety of clients around the world.

Patricia Huntsman Culture + Communication is a BC-based consultancy specializing in communications and cultural development. Patricia is a sought-after and respected voice at the forefront of culture-led economic and community development in Canada. She has more than 20 years experience in leadership and senior management roles in the creative field.

About DigistARTS

DigistARTS assessed **the challenges and opportunities** related to digital innovation in the arts. The project also **developed materials** and **facilitated workshops** to help improve digital capacity across British Colombia.

Data Collection

The team undertook extensive stakeholder engagement via in-person sessions, interviews, webinars and an online survey.

Material Development

Based on the data collected, digital literacy 'learning/training materials' were developed/shared.

Knowledge Dissemination

Knowledge was shared through a variety of means (e.g., online and workshops) for the benefit of the provincial arts ecosystem.

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Needs Assessment Findings

(Appendix 1 illustrates full needs assessment findings)

What we Found - Artists

46% of artists use digital tools for collaboration with other individuals or organizations

Artists are most confident in efficiently finding information online and keeping up-to-date with information from authoritative people or Organizations

Least confident in using digital tools for artistic creation, collecting and analyzing data to understand audiences and creating audience specific content

Would like to do more educational activities for a wider audience, networking, marketing and research

Barriers to digital innovation & uptake are **lack of awareness** of capacity building resources (18%), **funding** (16%) and **digital skills/knowledge** (16%).

Preferred training opportunities identified by artists include **one on one mentorship** (19%), **online training course over several weeks** (17%) and **one-off face to face workshop** (17%).

See Appendix for further detail.

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What we Found – Organizations

81% of organizations DO NOT have a digital strategy

Organizations were most comfortable in using digital tools for designing and maintaining a website and digital communications

Least capacity used in using digital tools to create or enhance artistic creation and collaborating with other Arts organizations

Would like to do more of using digital tools for education activities aimed at a wider audience (45%) and training and professional development (43%)

Barriers for organizations are lack of staff time to take on digital initiatives (27%) and lack of available funding (21%)

Preferred training opportunities identified by organizations include online training courses over several weeks (20%) and one-off face to face workshops (19%)

47% of organizations indicated everyone should attend training programs in digital literacy

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Summary of Organization Interviews

- Majority of organizations cite a lack of funding while remaining largely unaware of free tools (many of which can save time and free up staff capacity)

- Most organizations are not ready for a comprehensive digital strategy, but they are ready to learn about different **digital tools** and how they can help with planning

- Most organizations struggle with getting board-level buy-in for the importance of digital

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ArtsBC Conference

4 barriers to change:

- "Have-not" thinking
- Need for decolonization and diversity
- Burnout
- Local cultural leadership

Needs identified through discussion:

- Digital strategy training
- Ensure buy-in from board
- Embrace and foster inclusivity
- Encourage digital champions
- Focus on strengths and opportunities

"Digital culture can't be delegated; leadership is critical"

Key tools:

- Basecamp (project management)
- Quickbooks
- Spendwise (procurement)
- Klipfolio (business intelligence tool)
- BambooHR (recruitment)

Existing Resource Guide for the BC Arts Community

Digital Resources and Tools

Low cost ticketing and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software:

Highly important to specify the organization's individual needs and criteria before selecting a CRM. See:

- [Tips for choosing a CRM for your museum of organization](#)

Some options:

- [Membership Works](#) – an effective, affordable CRM given the number of integrations it offers (e.g. with QuickBooks, MailChimp). USD $29-$239 p/m depending upon the number of database contacts

- [Membee](#) – another effective, affordable CRM. USD $88 p/m for the first admin user, then $66 p/m for others

- [Neon](#) – CRM, ticketing and email marketing for not-for-profits. USD $600 setup then $50 USD p/m

- [Eventive](#) – CRM and tickets. Free for free events, or 2% fee + 99c charge per paid transaction

Digital Resources and Tools

Free or low cost off-the-shelf digital tools:

Cloud-based storage and collaboration:
- **G Suite** – email, calendar, cloud-based file storage (Google Drive), Google Docs, instant chat and video calling (Hangouts). Free.

- **Microsoft Outlook 365** – email, calendar, cloud-based file storage (Sharepoint), Microsoft Office, instant chat and video calling (Teams). Free/very low cost.

Project management:
- Trello / Asana / Monday / Notion

Website design:
- Squarespace / Wordpress

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Google SEO Guide – overview of how to get started with website optimization, with links to free tools
- Wordpress plugins – Yoast SEO, All in One SEO pack
- Squarespace – SEO guide

Digital Resources and Tools

Free or low cost off-the-shelf digital tools – continued:

Email newsletters:
- Mailchimp / Constant Contact / Hubspot

Digital surveys:
- Survey Monkey / Google Surveys

Social media management:
- Schedule posts and update accounts simultaneously: Hootsuite, Buffer
- Schedule updates and grow followers faster: Crowdfire

Marketing collateral creation:
- Canva – digital design platform for flyers, presentations etc.
- High quality royalty-free photography – Unsplash, Burst

Digital tools to create art:
- Adobe Creative Suite – discount of 40-60% for not-profits available via Techsoup
- Procreate – a powerful iPad drawing tool
- Clip Studio Paint
- Affinity Designer – vector graphic design tool
- Also: Artweaver 6 / ArtRage / Krita / CorelDRAW

Digital Resources and Tools

Free digital training resources:

- **Free training from Google –** grow.google

- **Microsoft** Digital Skills Center for Nonprofits

- **MOOCs** (massive open online courses) from learning institutions worldwide – Class Central

- **Techsoup** – digital training webinars

- **500+ online training resources** for non-profits at nonprofitready.org

Digital Resources and Tools

Other useful information and links:

- Arts BC's Useful Links Library – numerous helpful resources for artists and arts organizations

- Canada Council Digital Strategy Fund – funding to increase digital literacy, public access to the arts, and to transform organizational models. Rolling open deadline for funding up to $50,000 for digital literacy

- Techsoup – preferential rates on digital software for not-for-profits

- NESTA report: Making Digital Work – Digital Toolkit for Arts and Culture Organizations

- Nesta Report: Making Digital Work – Business Models and new opportunities for arts organizations

Next Steps

The Resource Approach

"What would help your organization to leverage digital tools more effectively?"

Sounding Board responses at the Arts BC conference 2019:

- Where do I find reputable/reliable creators/artists to come in and give workshops on different mediums/talks etc.?
- Grants to upgrade aging tech or to create a server
- A webmaster
- Grants that pay for staff time!

- A centralized platform for arts organizations with digital templates and advice
- Buy in from the board
- A fly-in consultant that knows the "tools" options and understands non-profit arts
- More hours (paid) to make the transition effectively rather than rushed and ad hoc "as needed"

The Resource Approach

"What would help your organization to leverage digital tools more effectively?"

Feedback from discussions at the Arts BC conference 2019:

- Need to first understand internal needs and plan effectively before choosing digital tools; necessary to avoid being "locked in" to the wrong digital platforms (such as CRMs)
- Digital often exists in silos within the organization but needs to be incorporated throughout, even if senior leadership aren't digital experts themselves
- Need for simple, intuitive tools that require minimal training

- An internal "digital champion" who can lead digital efforts and get others excited about it, acting as a "translator"
- Face-to-face training – someone whose door you can knock on to show you how to do it in person
- Board members often "don't know that they don't know" digital - they don't really understand where to start, or even its importance

The Workshop Approach

The aim of a DigistARTS Workshop is to further develop the digital literacy of arts workers in particular regions in BC, and improve their ability to think strategically about the role of digital tools in their organizations and the opportunities offered by digital developments. An example of a workshop outline is below as part of exploring *next steps*:

Icebreaker – introductions, followed sharing what, if any, digital tools participants are aware their organizations are currently using.

Unpacking Digital Innovation – exploring future innovations in digital technology including 5G, VR, streaming services, robots, 3D printing, blockchain and AI, ensuring that these concepts are easily understood by all participants.

Digital Capacity in BC's Cultural Sector – findings from DigistARTS' provincial needs assessment findings, highlighting specific needs and opportunities for the provincial arts ecosystem.

Group Discussion – 'World café' discussion on key digital themes identified from research (e.g., communicating the value of digital strategies, creating art using digital tools).

Resource Sharing – to conclude the session, materials and tools will be shared to help arts organizations leverage digital tools in strategic ways. The resources include guides for digital planning as well as contemporary funding opportunities.

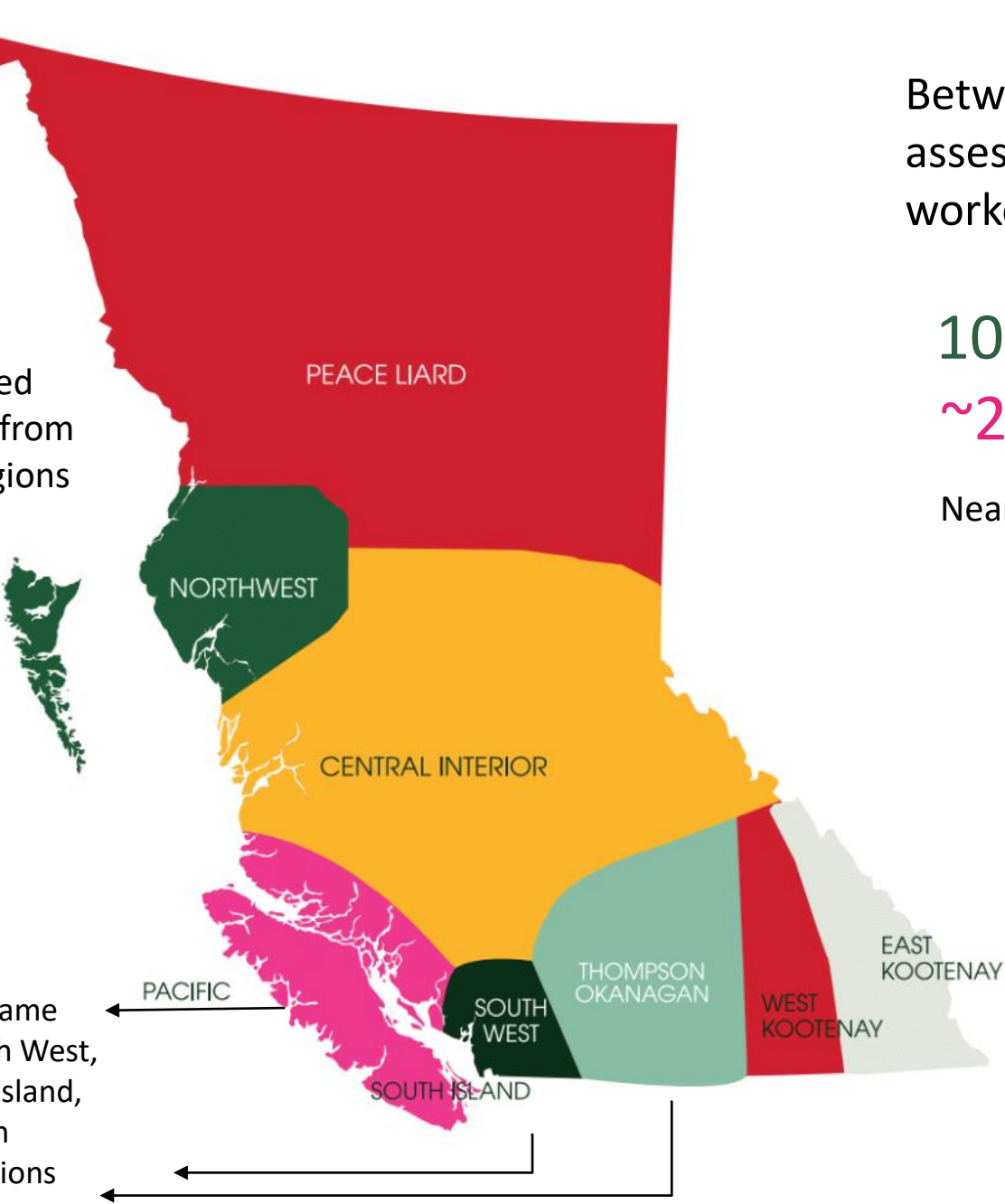# Appendix 1 – Extended Needs Assessment Findings

Between Feb 12 and Mar 29th we collected data to assess the digital literacy levels of BC arts and culture workers

10 Interviews

~200 useful online survey responses

Nearly 50% of the respondents were 55+ years of age

We obtained responses from all 8 BC regions

PEACE LIARD

NORTHWEST

CENTRAL INTERIOR

EAST KOOTENAY

THOMPSON OKANAGAN

WEST KOOTENAY

PACIFIC

SOUTH WEST

SOUTH ISLAND

80% of respondents came from the South West, Pacific/South Island, and Thompson Okanagan Regions

Role breakdown

35% Artists

26% Individual working in the Arts

31% Representing an Art organization
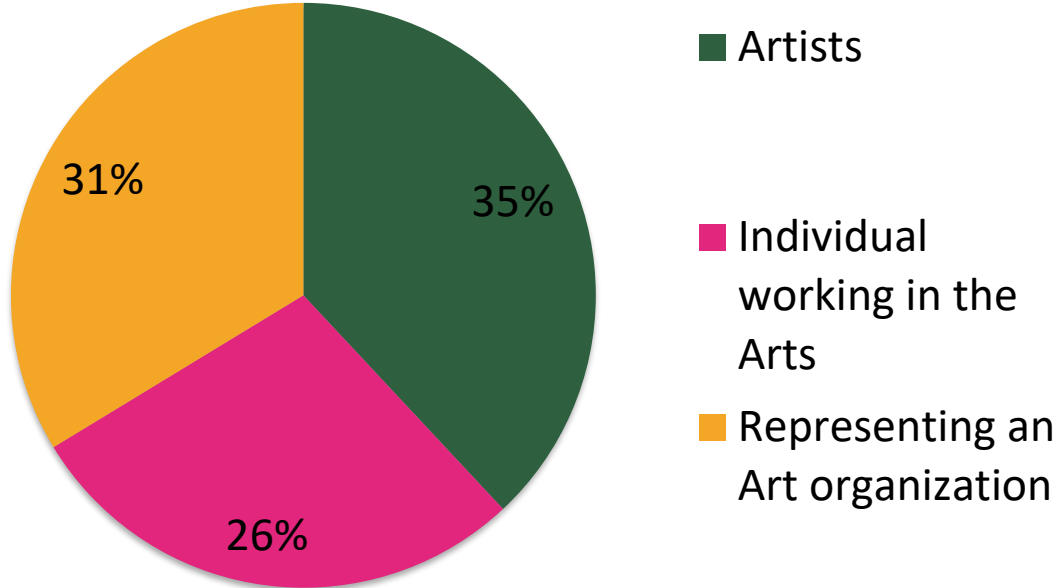
Individual Artists

Individual Artists - Who are they?

Basic Demographics:

55% are engaged in creation/ production of art or cultural experiences

14% from art services (e.g. administration and finances)

65% have 10+ years of experience in working the arts in BC

80% were female

They self identify as:

12% LGBTQ2+

10% a visible minority

7% a member of an Indigenous community

7% a person with disability

By Discipline:

55% are in the Visual and Applied Arts sector followed by

14% in Music

What we Found

Regarding digital skills, **46%** of Artists use digital tools for collaboration with other individuals or Organizations

Artists expressed most confidence in:
- Efficiently finding information online
- Keeping up-to-date with information from authoritative people or Organizations

Least confident in:
- Using digital tools for artistic creation
- Collecting and analyzing data to understand audiences
- Creating audience specific content

Would like to do more of:
- Education activities aimed at a wider audience (44%)
- Networking (47%)
- Marketing, communications and promotions (45%)
- Research, monitoring and evaluation (37%)

What we Found

Most significant barriers to digital innovation & uptake for Artists are:

- Lack of awareness of capacity building resources (18%)
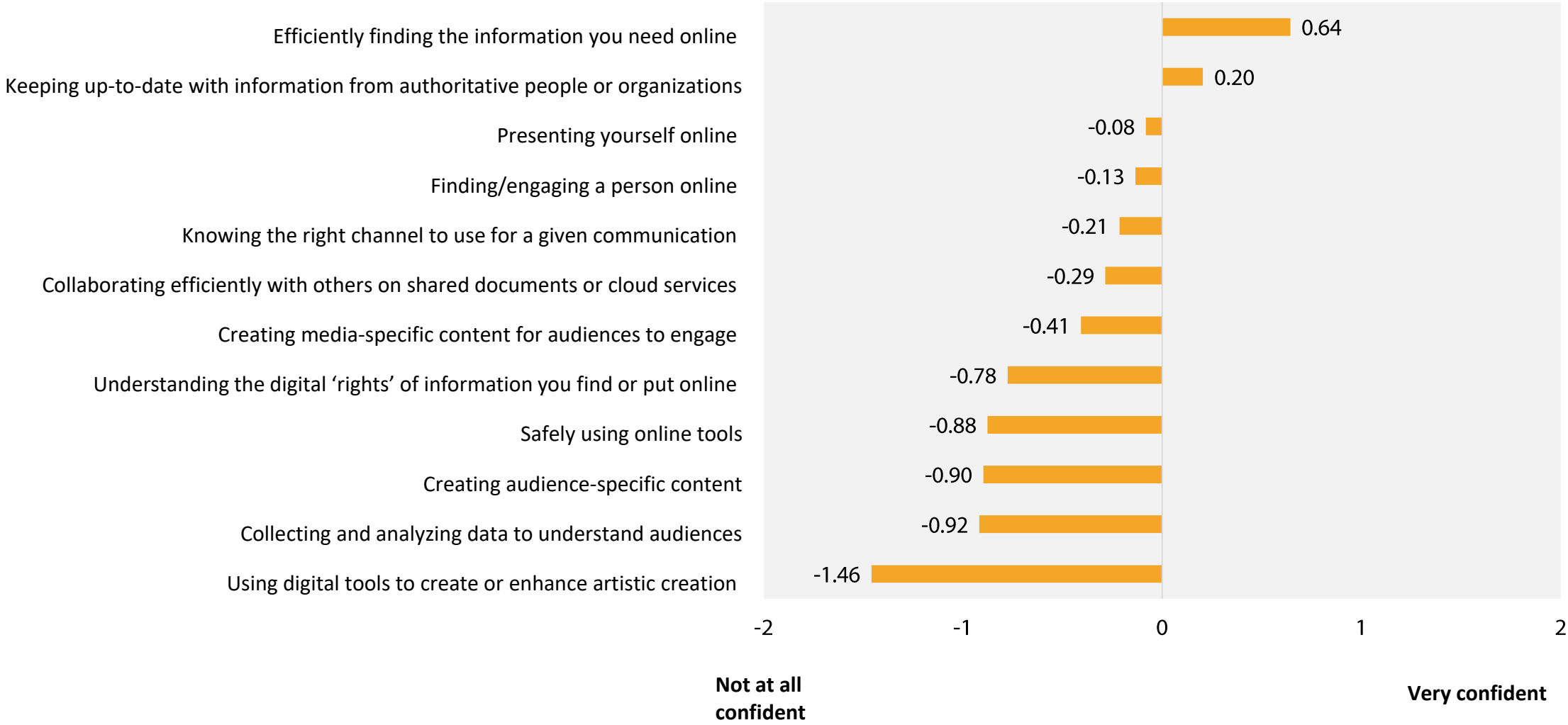- Lack of funding (16%)
- Lack of digital skills/knowledge (16%)

Preferred Training opportunities identified by Artists include:

- One on one mentorship (19%)
- Online training course over several weeks (17%)
- One-off face to face workshop (17%)

Figure 1: Digital Skill Confidence (Individuals)

Skill	Value
Efficiently finding the information you need online	0.64
Keeping up-to-date with information from authoritative people or organizations	0.20
Presenting yourself online	-0.08
Finding/engaging a person online	-0.13
Knowing the right channel to use for a given communication	-0.21
Collaborating efficiently with others on shared documents or cloud services	-0.29
Creating media-specific content for audiences to engage	-0.41
Understanding the digital 'rights' of information you find or put online	-0.78
Safely using online tools	-0.88
Creating audience-specific content	-0.90
Collecting and analyzing data to understand audiences	-0.92
Using digital tools to create or enhance artistic creation	-1.46

Axis: -2, -1, 0, 1, 2

Not at all confident — **Very confident**

Organizations

Organizations - Who are they?

Basic Demographics:

65% respondents held the position of director or an executive level position

75% came from the South West, Pacific/South Island, and Thompson Okanagan Regions.

By Discipline:

35% Arts Service Organization

17% in Theatre

15% Visual and Applied Arts

To improve inclusion, they indicated having programming targeting:

30% a member of an Indigenous community

20% LGBTQ2+

21% a visible minority

21% a person with disability

By types of Organization:

31% Dissemination Organization
(e.g. sharing and presenting art or cultural experiences)

23% Arts Service Organization

19% Creation/ Production Organization

What we Found

Organizations use digital tools to:

1 Communicate

~90% of respondents communicate with:
- social media (31%),
- website (31%)
- email marketing/ newsletter (29%)

27% of Organizations use social media platforms and apps to disseminate information

52% of Organizations use a communication/ telepresence software to collaborate with other individuals or Organizations

2 Collect Data

For research, monitoring and evaluations used in:
- grant applications (19%)
- informing programming (18%)

3 Create and Produce

- Social media platforms (25%)
- Website creation tools (23%)
- Text tools (21%)

Only 19% of Organizations are using digital tools for collaboration with other individuals or Organizations when creating content

4 Develop & engage new audiences

- Direct traffic from social media account(s) (25%)
- Direct traffic from email newsletter (22%)
- Direct traffic from website (20%)
- Facebook Adboost (20%)

What we Found

81% of Organizations DO NOT have a digital strategy

In terms of capacity:

Organizations were most comfortable in:
- Using digital tools for designing and maintaining a website and digital communications

Least capacity used in:
- Using digital tools to create or enhance artistic creation
- Collaborating with other Arts Organizations

Would like to do more of:
- Using digital tools for education activities aimed at a wider audience (45%)
- Training and professional development (43%)

What we Found

Most significant barriers for Organizations are:
- Lack of staff time to take on digital initiatives (27%)
- Lack of available funding (21%)

Preferred Training opportunities identified by Organizations include:
- Online training courses over several weeks (20%)
- One-off face to face workshops (19%)

47% of Organizations indicated everyone should attend training programs in digital literacy

Key Takeaway from Interviews

Readiness

- Most Organizations are not ready for a comprehensive digital strategy, but they are ready to learn about different **digital tools** and how they can help with planning.

- Current digital capacity varies with some Organizations ready to move beyond 'digital 101' lessons, while others are still unsure of the value of digital to begin with.

Internal & External Obstacles

- Most Organizations struggle with getting board-level buy-in for the importance of digital.

- Connectivity is a barrier for many Arts Organizations, especially in rural areas, and some urban Arts Organizations struggle with making the case for the worth of high-speed internet.

- For many arts councils, their members are not digitally inclined, making it difficult to justify investing time or money in digital innovation.

Key Takeaway from Interviews

Education & Awareness

- Majority of Organizations cite a lack of funding while remaining largely unaware of free tools (many of which can save time and free up staff capacity).

- Even where Arts Organizations are utilizing digital tools, many workers don't know why (or if) they are doing a good job – they just do it "because my predecessor did."

- Keen to learn what other Organizations are doing first (i.e., best practice), which will help develop a more common understanding of opportunities for collaboration with other arts orgs (or outside the sector).

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Figure 2: Digital Skill Capacity (Organizations)

Skill	Value
Designing and maintaining a website (e.g., keeping content and design up-to-date)	1.21
Digital communications	1.19
Knowing the right channel to use for a given communication	0.85
Utilizing business software to maximize organizational and operational efficiency	0.79
Creating media-specific content for audiences to engage with	0.60
Effectively creating an online digital presence/ identity for your organization	0.48
Safely using online tools	0.35
Creating audience-specific digital content	-0.21
Measuring success or engagement of online initiatives	-0.30
Collecting and analyzing data to understand audiences	-0.47
Creating opportunities to engage online	-0.56
Collaborating with other arts organizations	-0.60
Using digital tools for artistic production or creation	-1.00
Using digital tools to create or enhance artistic creation	-1.44

No capacity — Very little capacity — Some capacity — High capacity