mtm

Literature

Ninety-six Literature organisations participated in the Digital Culture Survey 2017 of how arts and cultural organisations in England use digital technology. They include organisations of different sizes from across England, giving us a detailed picture of how the Literature sector is using technology to support its work.

Importance of digital technology

Most important for	Marketing
Least important for	Distribution and exhibition

Across different areas, literature organisations tend to place more importance on digital technology than does the sector as a whole. In four of the six areas tested, more literature organisations place importance on technology, with an additional area (marketing) being identical (see Figure 1). The two areas where the difference is most significant are distribution and exhibition (63 per cent vs. 54 per cent in the wider sector) and business models (64 per cent vs. 53 per cent).

Since 2013, following a sector wide trend, the number of Literature organisations that place importance on digital for business models has grown very significantly. However, the importance of digital technologies for creation, preserving and archiving, and distribution and exhibition has significantly declined.

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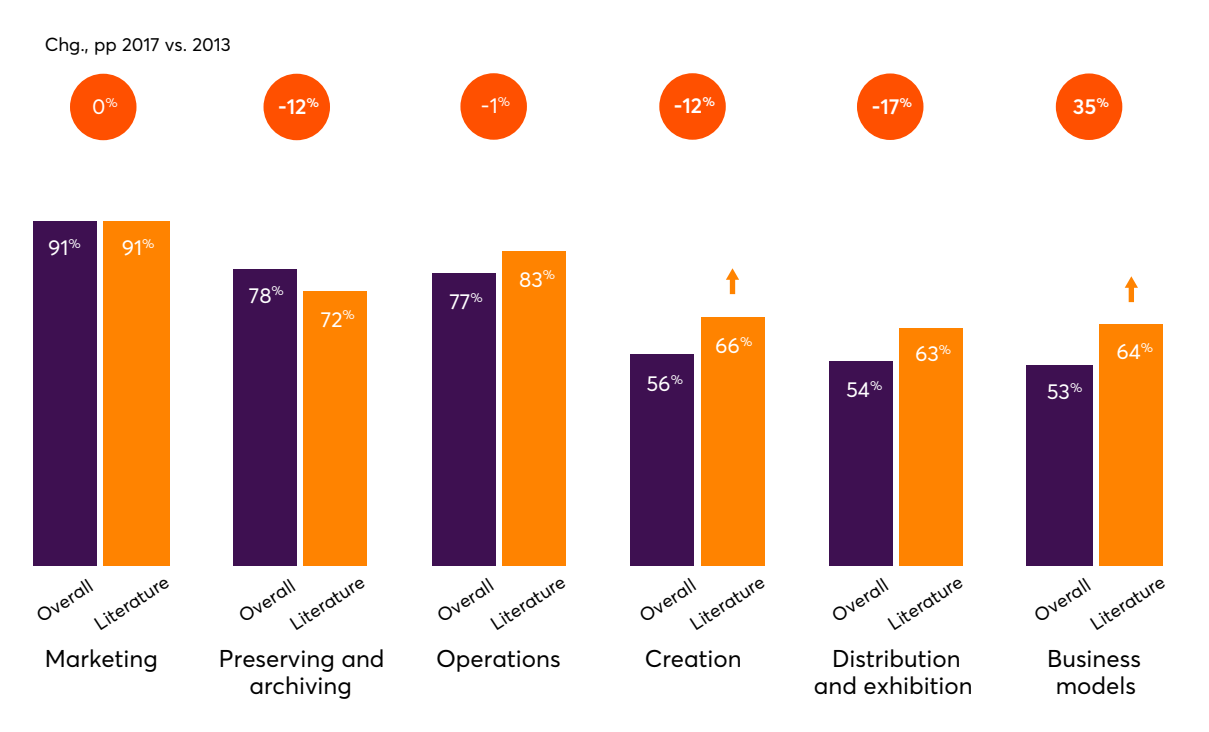
Figure 1: Importance of digital to different areas - whole sector vs. Literature, 2017



How important is digital technology to your organisation overall, at the present time, in each of the following areas? Statistically significant changes 2013-2017 (at a 95 per cent confidence level) highlighted in bold. Arrows show statistically significant differences vs whole sector.

2017: Literature n=95, Overall n=1,391, 2013: Literature n=54.

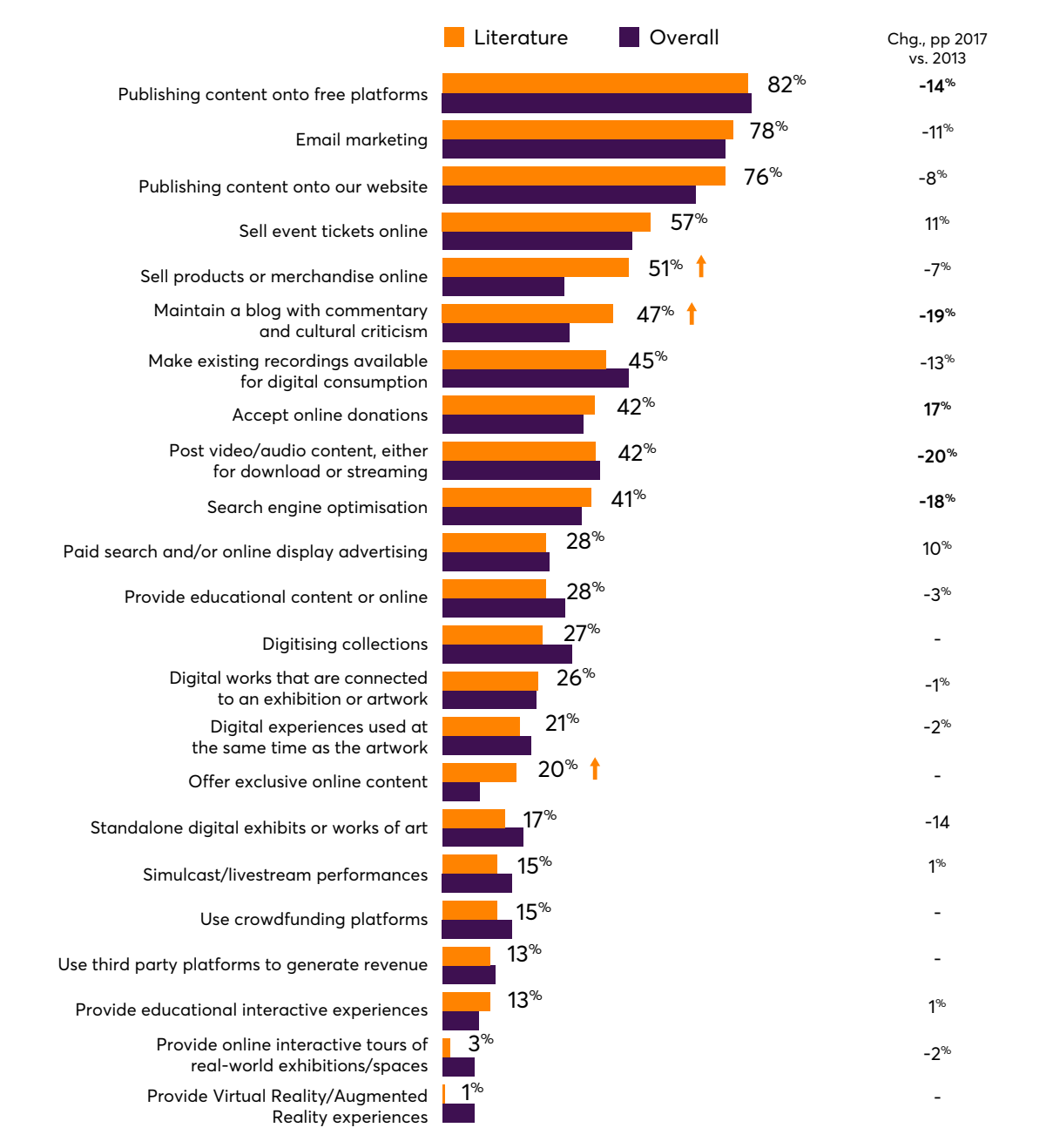
Digital activities

Top digital activities	Publishing content on free platforms and our own website, and email marketing
More likely than other artforms to…	Sell products or merchandise online, maintain a blog, and offer exclusive online content

On average, Literature organisations are doing eight different types of digital activity, which is in line with the sector as a whole (7.8).[1] There are differences between Literature organisations and the wider sector in individual activity areas. For example, literature organisations are more likely to sell products or merchandise online (51 per cent vs. 33 per cent), maintain a blog (47 per cent vs. 35 per cent), and offer exclusive online content (20 per cent vs. 10 per cent).

Though maintaining a blog is more prevalent for Literature organisations than for other artforms, it is one of four activities that have seen a significant decline over time. Since 2013, significantly fewer Literature organisations are also publishing content onto free platforms, posting video/audio content for download or streaming, and engaging in search engine optimisation.

Figure 2: Digital activities for Literature organisations vs overall sector 2017 (and change from 2013)



Now thinking about your organisation's digital activities, please indicate which of the following your organisation currently does. Statistically significant changes 2013-2017 (at a 95 per cent confidence level) highlighted in bold. Arrows show statistically significant differences vs whole sector.

2017: Literature n=96, Whole sector n = 1,424; 2013: Literature n=54.

When it comes to mobile and social media, Literature organisations are on par with the wider sector, with 70 per cent saying they have a mobile-optimised web presence (vs. 69 per cent sector average). A growing number of Literature organisations have adapted to mobile (70 per cent vs. 39 per cent in 2013).[2] As over 60 per cent of UK online time (for consumers generally) is now spent on mobile, Literature organisations that are not yet optimised for mobile should recognise this as a priority.[3]

The most popular social media platforms among Literature organisations are: Twitter (93 per cent vs. 85 per cent sector average), Facebook (92 per cent vs. 92 per cent), and YouTube (55 per cent vs. 50 per cent), which mirrors the wider arts and culture sector. Literature organisations are more likely to use Twitter (93 per cent vs. 85 per cent), but less likely to use LinkedIn (19 per cent vs. 28 per cent) and Vimeo (15 per cent vs. 27 per cent). The only platform that has gained in popularity since 2013 is Instagram (40 per cent vs. 5 per cent) which is the case across the whole arts and cultural sector.[4]

Significantly more Literature organisations use audience/visitor contact details to send out newsletters than the wider arts and cultural sector (91 per cent vs 76 per cent among the whole sector). For all other data-driven activities asked about, Literature organisations are in line with the sector as a whole.

Since 2013 there has been a significant decline in the number of Literature organisations undertaking one of the data-driven activities, with fewer Literature organisations now reporting that they use audience/visitor data to personalise and tailor different marketing, sales and/or fundraising campaigns for different types of user (40 per cent vs 58 per cent in 2013).[5]

The impact of digital

Proportion seeing major/ fairly major impacts overall	77 per cent (vs. 70 per cent for the whole sector)
Main area of impact	Boosting public profile

Overall, 77 per cent of Literature organisations report a major or fairly major positive impact from digital on their ability to carry out their mission. This is higher than the sector average of 70 per cent, although not significantly so.[6]

In comparison with the wider sector, Literature organisations report higher impact levels for 23 out of the 26 impact areas asked about in the survey (see Figure 3) and the impact is significantly higher in seven areas. These include: how we distribute our work, collaborating with other organisations on artistic projects and exhibitions, engaging more extensively with our existing audience, and product sales and overall revenue generation.

Since 2013, significantly more Literature organisations report an impact from digital across audience development areas, such as engaging more extensively and deeply with existing audience, reaching a more diverse audience, and understanding our audiences. They are also more likely to see an impact on selling tickets online and collaboration with other organisations.

Figure 3: The impact of digital on business areas (Literature vs. whole sector, 2017)

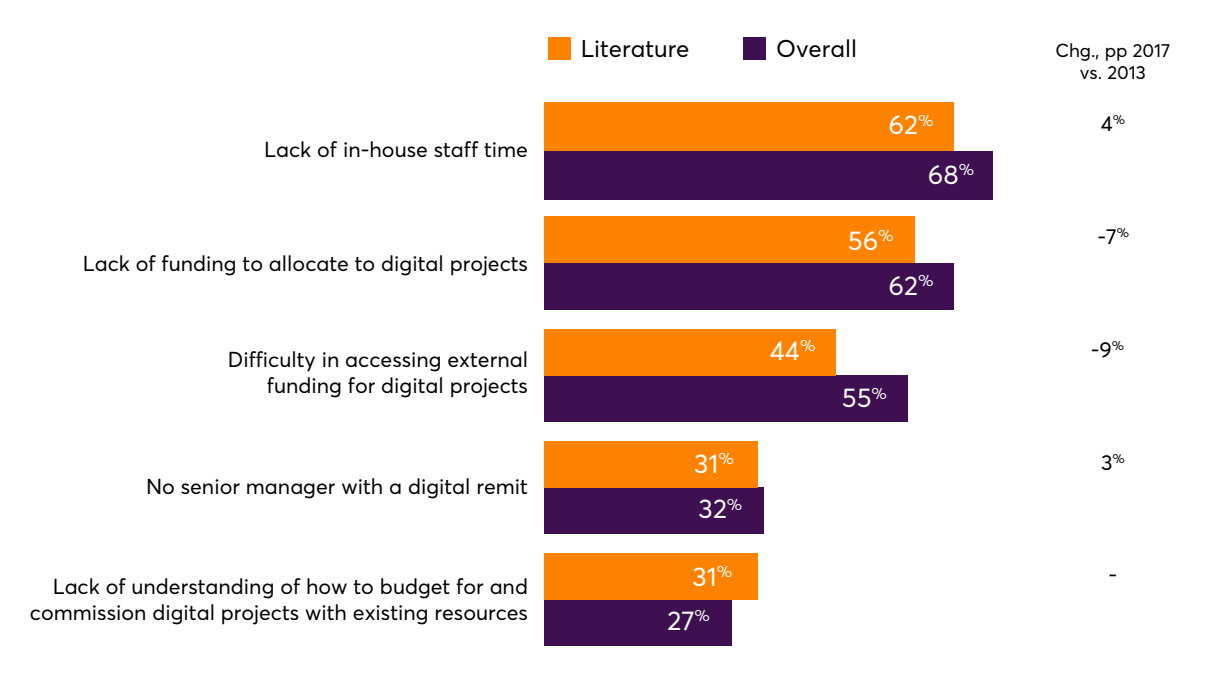
Thinking back over the past 12 months, would you say your organisation's use of the internet and digital technology has had a major positive impact, a minor positive impact, or no positive impact at all on each of the following? Statistically significant changes 2013-2017 (at a 95 per cent confidence level) highlighted in bold. Arrows show statistically significant differences vs whole sector.

2017: Literature n=81, Whole sector n=1,239; 2013: Literature n=54.

Management factors

Like all other artforms, Literature organisations report a lack of time and resources as the most prevalent barriers to their digital ambitions. However, significantly fewer Literature organisations report experiencing two barriers compared to the sector average: lack of control over our IT systems/infrastructure (12 per cent vs 24 per cent for whole sector) and slow/limited IT systems or networks (23 per cent vs 33 per cent for whole sector). Access to funding is reported as a barrier by fewer Literature organisations compared to 2013.

Figure 4: Top 5 Barriers felt by Literature organisations (Literature organisations vs. whole sector, 2017)

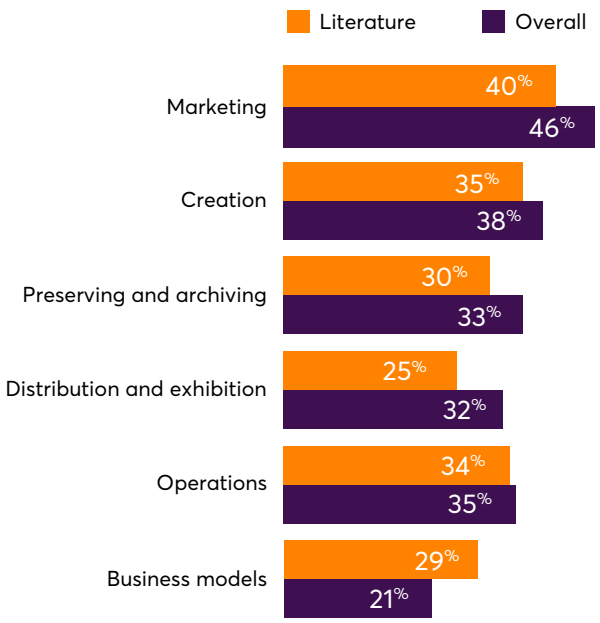


To what extent do you see each of the following as barriers to achieving your organisation's aspirations for digital technology?

2017: Literature n=80, Whole sector n=1,200; 2013: Literature n=53.

In areas where organisations report above-average skills in comparison with their peers, literature organisations are slightly behind the whole sector. The exception to this is skills related to business models, where more literature organisations report above average skills in comparison to the whole sector. However, none of these differences are statistically significant.

Figure 5: Proportion that report their organisation to have above average digital skills – 6-10 out of 10 - compared to their peers (Literature vs. whole sector, 2017)



For each of the following areas, how advanced do you feel your organisation's digital skill levels are compared to your peers? Arrows show statistically significant differences vs whole sector.

2017: Literature n=79, Whole sector n=1,187.

There are no skills areas where significantly more Literature organisations report being well-served, compared to the whole sector. There is one skill in which significantly fewer Literature organisations report being well-served – digital production (37 per cent vs 48 per cent).

Since 2013, there has been no significant change in the number of Literature organisations reporting being well-served across the different skills areas.

Endnotes

1. 2017: Literature n=96, Whole sector n=1,424.
2. 2017: Literature n=82, Whole sector n=1,245.
3. ComScore MMX Multi-Platform, January 2017.
4. 2017: Literature n = 88, Whole sector n = 1,291.
5. 2017: Literature n = 88, whole sector n = 1,298, 2013: Literature n = 52.
6. 2017: Literature n = 81, Whole sector n = 1,234.

Learn more about the 2017 Digital Culture survey findings

For a better understanding of how Literature and other organisations are using digital, you can access the Digital Culture data portal and explore the full set of data yourself.

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