

# muSEAum – Branding the Sea Museums of Portugal

## Research findings and perspectives of an innovation journey

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### Abstract

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The presence of the sea in Portuguese museums, monuments and sites is formidable, a multifaceted heritage providing experiences transposing history, exploration, industry, commerce, lifestyles, technologies, architecture, popular and fine arts. muSEAum focused on management competencies for the competitive exploration of museums' characteristics, environment, and collection. The co-innovation project with a nationwide sample of sea-themed museological institutions – not just maritime or marine museums -- addressed the definition, management and communication of the museum brand, the benefits of a Sea Museum of Portugal collective brand, visitor experience technologies, national and international reach and awareness, spirit of belonging, new learning partnerships, and local tourism. Research on audiences and management practices provided a solid evaluation basis. Notwithstanding some noteworthy, good practices, most institutions suffer from insufficient funding and administrative autonomy. Promotional efforts are geared towards local constituencies leading to residual national and international visibility, affecting particularly those off tourist circuits. Incipient or inexistent brands, inefficient or non-existent websites, inconspicuous SEO and digital marketing activities, own domain names a rarity keep many museums absconded in the internet maelstrom.

### Key words:

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maritime heritage; museum; Portugal; branding; museaum

## muSEAum – Branding os Museus do Mar de Portugal Resultados da pesquisa e perspetivas de uma jornada de inovação

**Resumo:** É formidável a presença do mar nos museus, monumentos e sítios portugueses, um património multifacetado que proporciona experiências que transpõem história, exploração, indústria, comércio, modos de vida, tecnologias, arquitetura, artes populares e belas-artes. muSEAum focou em competências de gestão para a exploração competitiva das características, localização e acervo dos museus. O projeto de co-inovação com uma amostra de instituições museológicas temáticas do mar – não apenas museus marítimos ou marinhos – em todo o país abordou a definição, gestão e comunicação da marca museológica, os benefícios da marca coletiva *Museu de Mar de Portugal*, tecnologias de experiência do visitante, maior consciência nacional e internacional, espírito de pertença, novas parcerias de aprendizagem e turismo local. A pesquisa sobre públicos e práticas de gestão forneceu uma base sólida de avaliação. Embora algumas boas práticas se destaquem, a maioria das instituições sofre de insuficiente financiamento e de falta de autonomia administrativa. Os esforços de promoção são direcionados para os círculos locais, resultando numa visibilidade nacional e internacional residual, afetando sobretudo os museus fora dos circuitos turísticos. Marcas são incipientes ou inexistentes, sites são ineficientes ou inexistentes, atividades inconspícuas de SEO e marketing digital, ausência significativa de domínio próprio mantém muitos museus escondidos no turbilhão da internet.

**Palavras- chave:** património marítimo; museu; Portugal; branding; museaum

## muSEAum – Branding les musées de mer du Portugal Résultats de recherche et perspectives d'un parcours d'innovation

**Résumé :** La présence de la mer dans les musées, monuments et sites portugais est formidable, un patrimoine aux multiples facettes offrant des expériences transposant l'histoire, l'exploration, l'industrie, le commerce, les modes de vie, les technologies, l'architecture, les arts populaires et les beaux-arts. muSEAum s'est concentré sur les compétences de gestion pour l'exploration compétitive des caractéristiques, de l'environnement et de la collection des musées. Le projet de co-innovation avec un échantillon d'institutions muséologiques sur le thème de la mer - pas seulement des musées maritimes ou marins - dans tout le pays a abordé la définition, la gestion et la communication de la marque du musée, les avantages d'une marque collective *Musée de la mer du Portugal*, les technologies d'expérience des visiteurs, la portée et la sensibilisation nationales et internationales, l'esprit d'appartenance, les nouveaux partenariats d'apprentissage et le tourisme local. Les recherches sur les publics et les pratiques de gestion ont fourni une base d'évaluation solide. Quelques bonnes pratiques sont à noter, mais la plupart des institutions souffrent d'un financement et d'une autonomie administrative insuffisants. Les efforts de promotion sont orientés vers les clientèles locales conduisant à une visibilité résiduelle nationale et internationale, touchant particulièrement ceux qui sont hors des circuits touristiques. Marques embryonnaires ou inexistantes, sites Web inefficaces ou inexistantes, activités de référencement et de marketing numérique discrètes, absence en beaucoup the musées de nom de domaine propre maintient de nombreux cachés dans le maelström Internet.

**Mots clés :** patrimoine maritime; musée ; Portugal; branding; museaum

## muSEAum – Branding los Museos de Mar de Portugal Resultados de la investigación y perspectivas de un viaje de innovación

La presencia del mar en los museos, monumentos y sítios portugueses es formidable, un patrimonio multifacético que brinda experiencias que transponen la historia, la exploración, la industria, el comercio, los estilos de vida, las tecnologías, la arquitectura, las artes populares y las bellas artes. muSEAum se centró en las competencias de gestión para la exploración competitiva de las características, el entorno y la colección de los museos. El proyecto de co-innovación con una muestra nacional de instituciones museológicas con temática marina, no solo museos marítimos o marinos, abordó la definición, gestión y comunicación de la marca del museo, los beneficios de una marca colectiva del Museo del Mar de Portugal, tecnologías de experiencia del visitante, alcance y conciencia nacional e internacional, espíritu de pertenencia, nuevas asociaciones de aprendizaje y turismo local. La investigación sobre audiencias y prácticas de gestión proporcionó una sólida base de evaluación. A pesar de algunas buenas prácticas dignas de mención, la mayoría de las instituciones adolecen de financiación y autonomía administrativa insuficientes. Los esfuerzos de promoción se orientan hacia los electorados locales, lo que genera una visibilidad nacional e internacional residual, que afecta particularmente a aquellos que se encuentran fuera de los circuitos turísticos. Marcas incipientes o inexistentes, sitios web ineficientes o inexistentes, actividades discretas de SEO y marketing digital, nombres de dominio propios que son una rareza mantienen a muchos museos fugados en la vorágine de Internet.

## Introduction

While major museums have major economic impacts at the national level, smaller museums have major economic impacts at the local or regional levels. Research reveals that investment in the arts and culture can drive improvements in the quality of the local environment and the standard of living of local communities. Regional museums have positive spill over impacts in the economy covering areas such as tourism, skills, improving productivity and as catalysts for economic regeneration (Centre for Economics and Business Research, 2015). Investment in the arts and culture can drive improvements in the quality of the local environment and the standard of living of local communities. Museums should promote the creation of “landscape communities” aware of their identity, involved in their preservation, participating in their sustainable development (Siena Charter ICOM Italy, 2014). Museums inspire powerful and identity-building learning in children, young people and community members (National/Regional Museum Education Partnerships of the UK, 2004). The competitiveness of cities as tourist destinations heavily relies upon building a unique brand image and identity, providing memorable brand experiences, and developing positive WoM (Sahlin et al., 2014). The concepts of serious leisure and museum prestige, pleasant emotions, memory, and WoM among Lisbon tourists reveal that effective motivations are an important engagement driver with museums leading to the creation of positive emotions and memories, which contribute to the willingness to communicate and recommend the city’s museums (Loureiro & Sarmiento, 2017).

Falk’s (2022) new research led to more information on visitors’ motivations. When people reflect on their museum experiences the benefits they describe fall into four distinct areas of enhanced well-being: Personal Well-Being; Intellectual Well-Being; Social Well-Being; Physical Well-Being: museums are perceived as safe, healthy, and restorative environments that allow people to gather (physically or virtually), interact, explore, play, and enjoy without fear or anxiety.

Drotner (2022) alerts to the limitations of “the so-called visitor-studies tradition” that are concerned with understanding on-site visitors’ experiences and their needs and motivations for going to the museum. She argues that the personalisation discourse is underpinned by a long-term tradition of studying individual museum visitors.

When surveying research, it becomes evident that rather little is made of how people interact socially and find meaning together when relating to museums. And this is despite the fact that numerous reports document that most people very much define museum visits as social events. In particular, we often underestimate the importance of the last element. (Drotner, 2022, conference)

This observation is confirmed by the muSEaum audience study (2019). Museums assert themselves as a social space for their visitors, a space where respondents spend their social leisure time (Grácio et al. 2019).

## Museum branding

Brand is best described as an idea, a perception, an intellectual construction, a representation of the performance of a product, service, corporation, or institution. A brand is a communications device for promoting the same consistent message about corporate identity to all concerned parties – consumers, suppliers, workers and, of course, the press (Olins, 2008). Branding is an affirmative device, a shorthand assurance of quality where old forms of local reputation no longer functions (Stallabras, 2013).

Schroeder (2014) asserts that brands are now looked from cultural perspectives, acknowledging the importance of brands in society, and providing a necessary complement to managerial and psychological views of branding. He considers that if brands exist as cultural, ideological, and political objects, tools are needed to understand culture, ideology, and politics in conjunction with more typical branding concepts, such as equity, strategy, and value.

Museum branding is linked with identity and psychological associations between the cultural products (artefacts/collection) and its audience. Brand identity boosts familiarity, loyalty and encourages partnerships. Competition within the leisure industry or funding cutbacks forced museums to adopt for-profit strategies aligned with marketing principles (Belenoti, Vassiliadis, 2015).

The museum brand must encapsulate the key elements of the integrated visitor attraction experience -- expectations, experiences, and memories captured in a powerful brand promise (Wallace, 2006). Museum branding is linked with identity and psychological associations between the cultural products (artefacts/collection) and its audience. To engage targeted groups, the museum must position itself in the minds of the consumers and build a brand image that will reinforce the disposition of the consumer to visit it (Kotler et.al, 2008). The marketing positioning exercise requires an analysis of the structure of the intended market that considers the value proposition to consumers, the audience segments to be addressed, and the strength of competitors (Keller, 1997).

Several major museums with resources and skilful managers, have successfully applied the branding discipline. However, some brand sceptics have expressed ethical concerns about applying branding to museums. A Baumgarth (...) study revealed that museums directors need to be open to the adoption of management techniques, despite the widespread misgivings of many art administrators. Research by Torres et al. (2019) of eleven small museums in five EU countries revealed some common persistent trends: museums do little or no research on the audiences; social media is not used to

its full potential; local partnerships are not a common practice; the use of the English language is lacking; merchandising could be improved; only a tiny percentage of the budget is allocated to communications and advertising; a unique visitor experience is a remote concept; branding the museum is rarely implemented; digital marketing is rudimentary.

Museum branding identifies the many touchpoints at which the museum meets its stakeholders and reinforcing the brand at every point, that must be identified, reinforcing the brand at every point. Stakeholders are visitors, employees and volunteers, scholars and board members, sponsors and community partners, and educators (Wallace, 2016). Activities must fit together as a self-reinforcing system and differentiation is more necessary than ever but also more complex to achieve (Porter, 2001). Brands today have to learn how to cut through the information clutter, how to connect meaningfully with consumers and how to create integrated experiences (Roberts, 2006).

## Museum experience

The idea that museums should be places where visitors enjoy a pleasurable experience to fully appreciate the aesthetic quality of artistic objects is almost hundred years old. Museums needed to break an invisible wall between the art seeker and the artistic object in its “remote pedestal” and the “human effort” that went into its achievement. This signifying connection should be experienced by the viewer (Dewey, 1934).

When artistic objects are separated from both conditions of origin and operation in experience (...) art is remitted to a separate realm, where it is cut off from that association with the materials and aims of every other form of human effort, undergoing, and achievement. (Dewey, 1934, p.3)

Digital technologies possess qualities to create the events that Dewey would consider as significant objects. The context favours the acquisition of new ways of operation and new properties through the process of association, but that transcends it: “Significance resides not in the bare fact of association, (...) but in the consequences that flow from the distinctive patterns of human association” (Dewey, 1934). The multiplexing power of digital technologies excel in the development of significant objects through the process of human association. It is, indeed, a new form of art and artistic expression that propels to a new dimension the process of human association. The museum experience becomes a digital happening of the multisensory and multifactorial new (Torres, 2019).

muSEAum’s research (2019) revealed that museum visitors expect new technologies to enhance the visit. The survey of 431 museum visitors revealed that visitors do

enjoy having access to multimedia and interactive content. Cost-effective digital technologies can offer pleasurable experiences that engage with the art object. Immersive sound is now contributing to a new museum experience. A great recent example is the Japan Supernatural audio experience at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sidney, Australia (Bertrand, 2022).

Falk considers that digital technologies, under the right circumstances, are positive enablers of what he calls the “meaning making” role of museums. However, to be effective, Falk postulates that since visitors do not make meaning from museums solely within the four walls of the institution, effective digital media experiences require situating the experience within the broader context of the lives, the community, and the society in which visitors live and interact.

McCracken’s (1986) theory on the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods provides an appropriate framework to museum transfer of meaning. Usually, cultural meaning is drawn from a culturally constituted world and transferred to a consumer good. Then the meaning is drawn from the object and transferred to an individual consumer. In other words, cultural meaning is located in three places: the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual consumer, and moves in a trajectory at two points of transfer: world to good and good to individual.

The 21st century museum breaks with the profile of the traditional museum, assuming itself as a means of mass communication, an instrument at the service of the community and its heritage, writes Remelgado (2014). She points out that museums are understood today as producers and diffusers of information and knowledge, characteristics that are greatly enhanced using information and communication technologies. To remain appealing and conquer new audiences, museums find in multimedia applications an innovative and current way of disseminating their collection, promoting their activities and enrich the museum experience.

Vermeeren et al. (2018) argue that experiences inside museums have become more engaging, by extending the experience beyond the physical visit. This is achieved by deepening experiential engagement during the visit, by extending the museum experience beyond the physical visit, or by involving the public in content generation, objects classification or other forms of crowdsourced stewardship of collections. As the art gets closer to the individual, and it acquires a meaning that is more personal and may, therefore, resonate longer in the visitor’s memory, the authors argue.

This view is shared by Vargas (2019) regarding today’s technologies who argues that once technology is integrated into daily life and each information structure, platform, device and media are used to interact, the groundwork for a seamless user experience is then set. As new technology opportunities enter the communication and media mix, museums are challenged with how to incorporate the activity into an already rich and complicated interconnected information structure, he concludes.

Biedermann (2017) argues that the significance of digital technologies for core museum tasks of collecting, investigating and mediating museum object data from the perspective of museology assumes that presentations of museum objects in a virtual space cannot compete with real museum exhibitions, as they cannot replace an encounter with the original object. However, they serve as a medium.

The role of process design and digital communications technologies is today crucial to the concept of the “new museum”, as argued by Styles (2010). She highlights design as an enabling discipline to develop participatory experiences that engage the visitor with the artistic object. The design process is evolving, from a static, linear process, where the design is presented to the user as a *fait accompli*, to a dynamic, cyclical process where the design is adjusted during its production in response to user experience (a participatory process), but also possibly after its release, in response to its use (a participatory experience), she proposes. There are as many solutions as visitor journeys. For the visitor experience to succeed, the story must fit the environment, the infrastructure and the everyday source device used by the visitor.

The emerging terminology summarizes the complexities of projecting and managing the new museological meaning making environment: process, design, storytelling, journey, experience, dynamics, immersion, resonance, democratization.

## Project review

Portuguese museums form two major groups. The 23 national museums, monuments and sites, under aegis of the National Directorate of Heritage (DGPC), a department of the ministry of Culture, and dozens of small mostly municipal museums, incorporated as an administrative division or department of the municipality. Some municipalities created specialised bodies that oversee several museums, such as Lisbon’s EGEAC that includes the Lisbon Museum (itself a collection of several museums and sites) or the Bordalo Pinheiro museum.

The muSEAum project was oriented towards small or peripheral museums which collections stem in many cases from local economic and cultural activities, such as the Ílhavo Maritime Museum founded in 1937 and renovated in 2001 in a small industrial and fishing city in central Portugal. This charming museum is a case study of how a small museum can build a national brand based on the creative use of its collection based on the historical cod fishing industry, including a museum-ship, a codfish aquarium, annual conferences, and the early use of the Internet for increasing reach. Much of the success municipal museums stems from the enthusiasm and personal of the respective mayor. In fact, at the local level, it was found that the mayor is key, as is partnering with a university. The Ílhavo museum benefited from the strenuous support of successive mayors who understood the electoral benefits of a close connection

between cherishing the local heritage and the local constituency. A judicious initiative establishing a virtuous relationship museum-academy was crucial. Álvaro Garrido, professor at the University of Coimbra and the foremost authority in the history of Portuguese cod fishing in the North Atlantic was invited to lead the Ílhavo museum from its renovation until 2019.

The local focus comes in detriment of national or international reach. The muSEAum project found that many museums, large, medium and small had and many still have poor national visibility, not to mention a deficient if not a non-existent international presence, a consequence of the absence of a structured brand and marketing activities targeting multi national audiences. These are submerged by very localised promotional efforts and suffer from incipient or not existent digital activities. It was found that most museums did not have dedicated websites, and many still don't. Some were only present in sites like Visit Madeira or Azores Tripadvisor. Most municipal museums lacked a specific immediately googled domain name as they are functionally and administratively part of the municipal organogram. An internet search will return the site of the municipality and requires a further search to find the museum, if it exists, among the municipalities' departments.

Over the four years of the muSEAum project, the issues of the development of a brand, the internal struggle within municipalities for an autonomous domain name and multilingual website were ever present. Several museums always had their own directly accessible websites, like the exemplary Museu de Portimão in the Algarve or the pristine Fábrica da Baleia de Porto Pim, housed in a former whale factory. This industrial museum was established in a partnership between the Azores Sea Observatory (OMA) and the Regional Government of the Azores. It has an autonomous website and optioned for renaming the institution and the design of a brand identity spearheaded by its participation in muSEAum. However, some institutions are still hosted in the municipal website and website multilinguism is rare.

Even larger national museums still do not recognize the crucial importance of the multilingual autonomous web presence. The Jerónimos Monastery in Lisbon has over one million visitors per year. It is Portugal's major tourist attraction. Long queues are a recurrent feature of the place. It could be argued that a website is not necessary. But today a brand and website are must haves whatever the current prestige and prominence of the institution. The website is not just a source of practical information, like opening times, but a source of knowledge to generate more knowledge. At the time off writing this piece (24/08/2022), I googled "Mosteiro dos Jerónimos". The first result is a paid ad from a ticketing agency. The second is the Portuguese Wikipedia entry with good enough information. The Wikipedia English entry is found under "Jerónimos Monastery", a short version of the Portuguese one. Any of these are better than the "official webpage" which is hosted in the DGPC website, meaning that there is no autonomous



website, no specific Internet domain. Furthermore, the displayed information in a dismal single page is a very short story of the monument and with some further down links to videos of past activities. A lot remains to be done by Portuguese museums big and small to acquire relevance and reach in the digital domain.

The first task of muSEAum was to establish the concept of “sea museum”, “museu de mar”, design the logo, securing the .pt and .eu domain names and the Vimeo video hosting, design and launch the muSEAum.pt website. At the same time a PhD was selected from several candidates who responded to the international call for a PhD job posting at the muSEAum team. The next and decisive task was the establishment of signed cooperation protocols with museological institutions across the whole country. This implied meetings with mayors and other municipal and regional governments’ officials and museum staffs in Portugal continental, the Azores and Madeira. Twenty-four protocols were signed with mayors or with the heads of supervising institutions like the Navy Chief of Staff who supervises the Marine Museum (Museu de Marinha), that sits next to the Jerónimos Monastery in the same historical building. Several other museums, museological poles, monuments and sites later asked to become part of the nascent muSEAum network bringing the total of participating institutions to about 80.

Two surveys were undertaken. The first was an online survey of management practices that was responded by 38 institutions. A majority (85%) revealed that their operational services were in general located and managed by the municipality. When it existed, the museum’s digital strategy was part of the municipality strategy (28%). The survey revealed widespread unawareness by museum staff members of many questions regarding their own museum branding and marketing practices. Only a third responded that the museum had a marketing plan and a communications strategy. Some museums (20%) did not even have access to the internet. Only half had an own independently hosted website. Only a small portion had a logo (17%) and smaller number still had a brand proposition or a slogan.

The second survey was an unprecedented audience survey in (mostly) small museums that lasted six months. 449 visitors in six museums responded to a multilingual online Lime questionnaire on visitor experience. The questionnaire at the Marine Museum, Lisbon, was developed on site as an academic stage for students from the Tourism Faculty. The resulting data highlights the importance of museums’ online presence and a digital strategy. Museums clearly assert themselves as a social space for their visitors, a space where respondents spend their social leisure time -- as revealed by the prevalence of visiting the museum accompanied. Interest in the museum is the main motivation for visitors, followed by the permanent exhibition. Opportunities were identified to develop audiences, attract different segments of the public, namely younger age groups, outside the school context, local and semi-local audiences and also foreign tourists. The development of audiences has the potential to be leveraged in the

vast and diverse collections of sea museums (historical, ethnographic, archaeological, artistic assets...), which allow different types of experiences to be provided to different segments of the public.



Three conferences took place in 2019, 2020 and 2022, the latter two in hybrid format due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The theme of the 2019 conference was “Digital Transformation in Museums: impacts on visitor experience and brand reach”. The keynote speaker was António Filipe Pimentel, former director of the National Museum of Ancient Art (MNAA), who was interviewed about the innovative MNAA collaborative funding campaign “Let’s Put the Sequeira in its Rightful Place” in 2015-16 that successfully secured the large amount necessary to buy the painting *The Adoration of the Magi* by Domingos Sequeira. Alessandra Capezzuoli Ranchi, of Centro Europeo Turismo e Cultura, Rome, recalled the project In\_Nova MusEUm, a consortium where CICANT had been partner, a Creative Europe project, focusing on the museum branding and marketing disciplines. The theme of the 2020 conference was “Histories that my museum tells”. Among the speakers were the directors of Museu de Lisboa, Joana Sousa Monteiro, and of Museu Bordalo Pinheiro, João Alpuim Botelho. Diana Marques,

Associate Manager of Graphic Production at the National Geographic Magazine, speaking from Washington, explained the introduction of AR at the Smithsonian. The 2022 conference took place at the MNAA. The theme was “Set sail! Stay the course!” and included three prominent key-note speakers. Kirsten Drotner from the University of Southern Denmark, author of the article in this dossier “Engaging citizen resources as catalysts of museum innovation” which is based on her presentation at the conference. Lily Kommonen-Diaz from Aalto University address was titled “ICT and Value Chain to Improve Community Engagement with Cultural Heritage Institutions”. Joaquim Guerreiro, director of the National Museum of Ancient Art, delivered the engaging address “The presence of the sea in the collections of the National Museum of Ancient Art: A short field guide”.

The Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns disrupted the works of the project and force-introduced digital communications in the research and communicational process with the partner museums. Two series of weekly webinars took place in the Springs of 2020 and of 2021 with a total of circa 400 participations, mostly museum staff members. The 2020 series was titled “Museum Communication and Branding in Times of Coronavirus”. The 2021 webinars were titled “After the Pandemic – Reinforcing the Brand and Regaining the Audiences”. The airtime was mostly dedicated to presentations by museum directors. The conferences and webinars were also the stage of ten workshops dedicated to museum communications and visitor experience.

Two interactive projects were developed and exhibited: “Nazaré Imersiva” (Immersive Nazaré), which is the topic of the article by Célia Quico in this dossier, and “Magalhães Digital Tour” for the Marine Museum developed by Nuno Cintra Torres. The latter was based on the concept of meaning acquisition and tour orientation through the visitor smartphone. It included the production of several digital animations and 3D photography of the royal brigantine and the royal cabin of the dismantled royal Yacht *Amélia* and of the *Boa Esperança* (Good Hope) caravel replica in Lisbon and of the *Nau Quinhentista*, a replica of a sixteenth century ship moored in Vila do Conde and part of the city’s museum.

Two books were published: “Transformação Digital em Museus – a Experiência de Visitante e o Alcance do Brand” (Digital Transformation in museums – Visitor Experience and Brand reach), that includes articles in English, and “Práticas de Comunicação Digital e de Branding em Museus de Mar de Portugal” (Digital Communication and Branding Practices in Sea Museums of Portugal) which is a collection articles by museums’ staff members (Ed. Torres, 2019). Both books are available as PDFs at muSEAum.pt. The article “Portuguese Sea Museums and the Communication of Maritime Heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” by the muSEAum team members (Grácio et al. 2022) was published in the volume “Maritime Spaces and Society” (Eds. Kolodziej-Durnas et al. 2022). Articles by team members were published in several indexed scientific journals and in the mainstream press.

This dossier also includes the article “‘Tá uma nortada!’-- Alteridades e confluências na implantação de um projeto de gestão museológica em Portugal’ (“‘What a norther!’ Othernesses and confluences in the establishment of a museological management project in Portugal” by Nicole Costa, the Brazilian director of three museums in the Leiria area.

In July 2022 the project ended. A lot of groundwork was done, and a lot is to be done. A muSEAum follow up would have to consider the following questions:

- How to communicate and affirm the muSEAum brand? To design and develop a digital communications collaborative practice to establish the muSEAum brand as a relevant multilingual media outlet with wide reach, and as a support tool for the individual museums’ brand communications ([www.museum.pt](http://www.museum.pt)).
- How to develop citizen engagement through collaborative finance communication? To research, evaluate the procedural, legal and technical feasibility of a muSEAum branded collaborative finance platform to promote citizen and community engagement with heritage institutions.
- How to use the muSEAum website for knowledge sharing and communication? To leverage the potential of the muSEAum website, supported by a collaborative structure to publish more articles, news, increased periodicity, amplified reach.
- Is a sea themed art open-access database feasible and necessary? To research the feasibility of a common thematic open-access database of sea-related collections in museums as a communication, scholarly and community research tool.
- muSEAum – what kind of permanent structure if any? To research, evaluate, design, discuss and propose the establishment of a formal muSEAum structure, conceived as an academia/museum communications research and media centre.

#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Design of muSEAum logo by team member Rute Muchacho on an idea of Nuno Cintra Torres. Design of the website by Lusófona web designer Valter Matos on an idea of Nuno Cintra Torres.
- <sup>2</sup> The DGPC had recently conducted surveys exclusively in national museums and monuments.
- <sup>3</sup> Survey results and analysis can be found in English in the volume *Transformação Digital em Museus and in Maritime Spaces and Society* (vide bibliography). Both studies were designed and conducted by Rita Grácio and Nuno Cintra Torres.

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