the audience agency

November 2021

A Model for an informed Cultural Democracy

Case study investigating a regions potential for adopting a collective understanding of the relationship between the citizens and the cultural offerings, both in terms of reach and depth of engagement as well as increased diversity and inclusion.

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AN INFORMED CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

We believe equal access to cultural activities is a matter of social justice and is important in building a fairer society, stronger communities, equitable regeneration, and positive civic change.

Our mission is to inform and nurture the behaviours that cultural and creative organizations need to become democratic and relevant, such as using robust evidence and data ethically and with confidence, taking a people-centred approach, being able to innovate and co-operate.

The Audience Agency model derives from two basic tenets. The first being that the more a cultural organization understands who their audience are – their lifestyle preferences, their needs, their cultural habits – the better they can meaningfully engage with relevant audience groups. The second is that by sharing insights with other organizations the individual organisation and the sector, learns, grows and builds resilience. Together this forms the foundation for all cultural organizations ability to formulate and communicate their artistic, social, and financial goals.

The Audience Agency ethos and mission is supporting the development of cultural democracy, by which we mean making culture available and relevant to greatest and broadest range of citizens.

Excellent research and data which questions current assumptions about who engages, how and why is in their view critical to its realisation. The Audience Agency have demonstrated that by standardising, aggregating, and combining data, it is possible to identify and qualify inequalities in cultural reach. Further their organisational model also enables them to understand and address the causes of such inequality, through further specialist analysis, practice research applied through on-the-ground support for organizations and contributions to policy development.

A better tracking and understanding of how culture is consumed can provide insight and understanding on which policymakers and cultural organizations can develop better strategies that support their artistic, social and economic goals.

The goal is to provide answers to these types of questions:

For Cultural Organizations	For Policymakers
• Who are our loyal visitors, and can we find more people like them? • Who is rarely engaged and what do they do? What might increase their engagement? • Who us "missing" and what strategies might we employ to engage them? • Why do people buy from us? Why don't they? • What do they think of us? And our products/services – or their experience? • Where do they live? How far are they travelling? • What are our sales patterns? How long time before do they book? • How do you turn one-off visitors into regulars/evangelists? • How many tickets should I expect to sell? How much can I charge?	• What is the visitor trend across the cultural offerings? • What is the visitor spend across the sector? • Which participation rate across the region or the city? • What are the socio demographic profile of visitors across the sector? • Which social groups are active and which are not?

Assessing audience data maturity

Design thinking, customer-centricity and experience-led design methods underpinned the audience data maturity project. Over six months we engaged with members of the arts community through a variety of different channels we gained a rich, multifaceted insight into how audiences engage – or don't – with data as part of their work in the cultural sector. We:

- Conducted ethnographic context studies of users on-site within their organisations, observing the range of their work with data across multiple systems.
- Collated a survey of over 600 respondents across the sector to broadly understand their use of data, systems and the challenges they faced.
- Developed user personas and user journey mapping based on survey data, client knowledge and a workshop session with representative users.
- Ran six user testing sessions with 30 attendees, presenting them with a series of challenges and scenarios inspired by lean canvas hypotheses.

- Conducted interviews with funders and senior stakeholders to understand and develop the value proposition of the solution.

The Outcomes

What became most strikingly apparent through the course of the project was that, whilst the research verified a general low level of skills and confidence around using data, enthusiasm was actually encouragingly high. Rather than being averse to using data or needing more of it (or more analytics, or more sophisticated tools), what users really needed to understand was what questions they even could or should be asking of their data.

What's the most important thing you would like to know about your visitors?

The motivation to come – why do they want to visit? This is important in respect to content creation – and how we communicate the exhibitions. We just don't know.

Do cultural professionals have the same language and understanding about audiences?

Not really – there's a very broad range of focus on audiences – the whole term "audience development" is problematic, and perhaps we should focus instead on cultural organisations development!

What is your relationship to data – what does it mean to you and your organization?

We need it to help us choose the direction we want to go, and to help optimize processes and roles. We need to make inoperative data operative

In the rest of the document, we present a case study conducted using the audience data maturity model, which is a combination of survey data, workshops and our evaluation framework.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

A key challenge all cultural organizations face is a traditional and deep-rooted anxiety about using data. In a report conducted in 2018 by The Audience Agency titled ***Services for Data Haters*** found that based on a sample of 1300 cultural practitioners (managers):

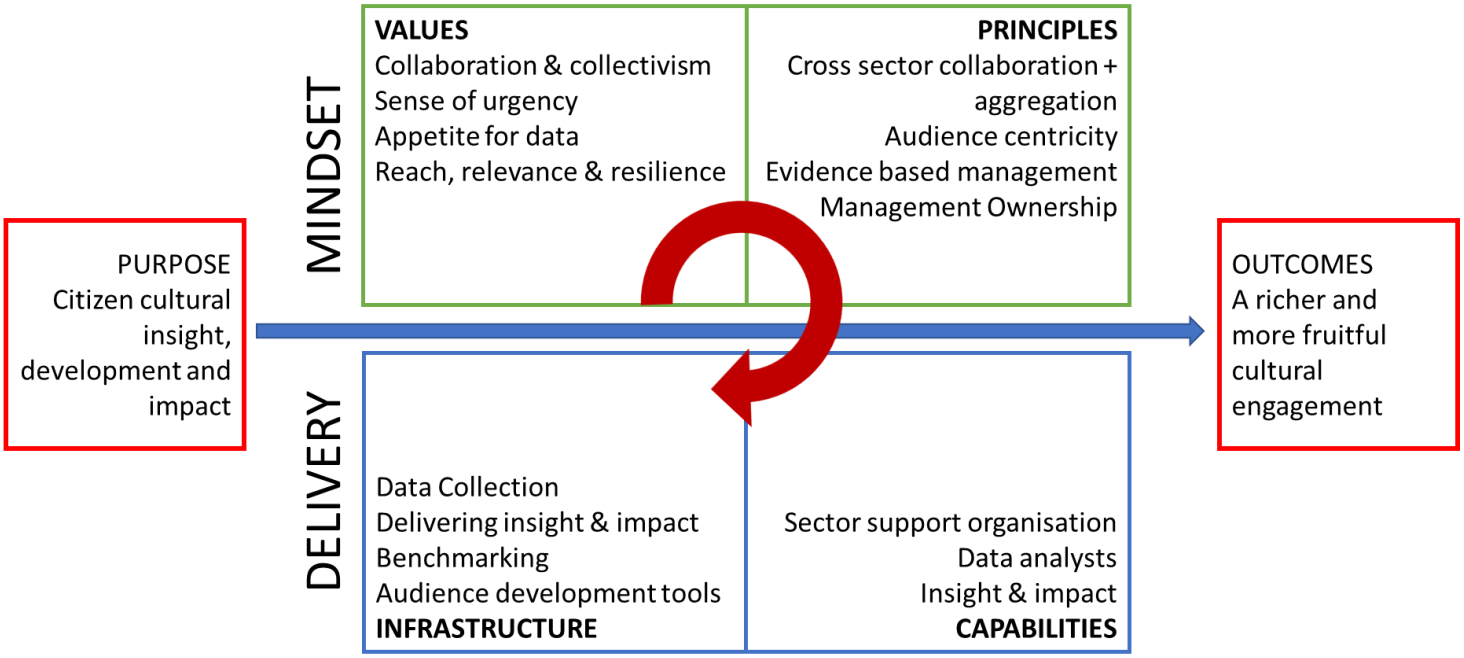
- 98% have access to data about actual/ potential audiences
- 93% thought that data could bring positive benefits to the arts
- 85% lacked skills and confidence to realise those benefits

The key conclusion was that cultural professionals did not know what question/s to ask, and not knowing what data can serve what purpose. This is an important issue that needs to be addressed in the feasibility study, and where the questionnaire and workshop provided guidelines for how we address the challenge.

Replicating the Audience Agency model involves looking at both the prevailing mindset as well as the capability to implement and deliver the services envisaged. In our assessment we looked both at the general values regards data and collaboration as well as the degree to which the cultural organizations share the principles of cross-sector collaboration, and the value of adopting a more evidenced-based approach to management.

Having the right mindset is, like good intentions, not enough. We also need to look at the potential to deliver in the form of capabilities and infrastructure, so we also evaluated on the cultural organizations current ability to assimilate and applicate the data.

Putting these two aspects together, the key criteria by which our study is designed to determine regions *Audience Development Maturity* are listed in the illustration below:



Successfully deploying the Audience Agency community model predicates a clear recognition and understanding of the issues involved.

When we collate the qualitative and quantitative responses from the survey, workshop and interviews we get an overall picture of how Region's cultural organizations perceive and practise audience development, showing us where there are strengths and shortfalls.

The 3 separate activities were:

- A questionnaire designed to provide an understanding of how the cultural organizations use data and data-driven tools to help understand, communicate with or engage with the general public and their audience, visitors or participants. Both in terms of data skills, data tools and current practices.
- A workshop where we engaged with 12 organizations, in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges they perceive they have today in terms of who their audiences are, what they would like to understand better and wishes for the future.
- Online interviews with key organisations to assess current practices in the context of implementing an Audience Agency model in the region.

CASE STUDY

Cultural organizations increasingly want and need to know more about their audiences. Where they come from, their motivation for coming, their preferences and wishes and reasons for why they do not attend, to name a few. For the cultural organizations themselves understanding who their audiences are is critical to how they develop their programs, their marketing plans and their budgets. An aggregated insight into the relationship between audiences and cultural organizations, provides a stronger foundation for predicting and acting on how best to engage with all citizens irrespective of whether they are cultural consumers or not.

In this case study we looked at 67 cultural organizations from across the cultural spectrum. The goal was to evaluate their ability and potential for collecting, analysing and acting on evidence and insights of how the citizens of the region are engaging with its cultural organizations.

The cultural organizations are composed of a broad range of artforms from across the region:

- Art and Design institutions/museums
- Exhibition sites/organizers
- Film and computer-games festivals
- Culture and heritage museums
- Literature organization + many libraries
- Theatre, dance and music organizations

A questionnaire was designed and sent to all of the cultural organizations, after which a workshop was held with 12 cultural organizations and a further 6 were interviewed in depth on-line.

The conclusions were overall encouraging and confirmed that a majority of the organizations who participated have a sophisticated and strong understanding of the need for evidence based audience development going forward. The key conclusions were:

- 60%+ thought they would or probably would benefit from using data and insight more effectively.
- 35% thought that there's a very strong and 40% moderately strong culture of using data to help understand, communicate with or engage their audience or market.

- Over half the respondents agreed that data and insight is used to inform decision making, planning, and drive practical actions in their organizations
- 86% of respondents enjoy or are comfortable using data, and 43% would like to use data more.

In general, the overall conclusion is that 2/3rd of respondents understand the value and application of audience data, with lack of resources and time quoted as the most significant barriers to using data more when making informed decisions.

Benchmarking the answers with British results indicate that there seems not to have been the same drive or incentive for initiating audience development strategies in most of regions cultural organizations, and consequently there is very little evidence of a systematic and ongoing collection of data – what we would term a relatively low Audience development maturity in the region.

As highlighted elsewhere in the report, based upon our experiences in Berlin, Quebec, Ireland, Denmark and Norway our expectations are that this would be the same across most of the Nordics.

Another key question asked, was to what extent the cultural organizations felt they had the knowledge and tools to collect, analyse and applicate audience data in-house or whether this was better handled communally?

The preference was clearly for a collective approach as they also highlighted the benefit of sharing data – especially and not surprisingly from the medium and smaller sized organizations.

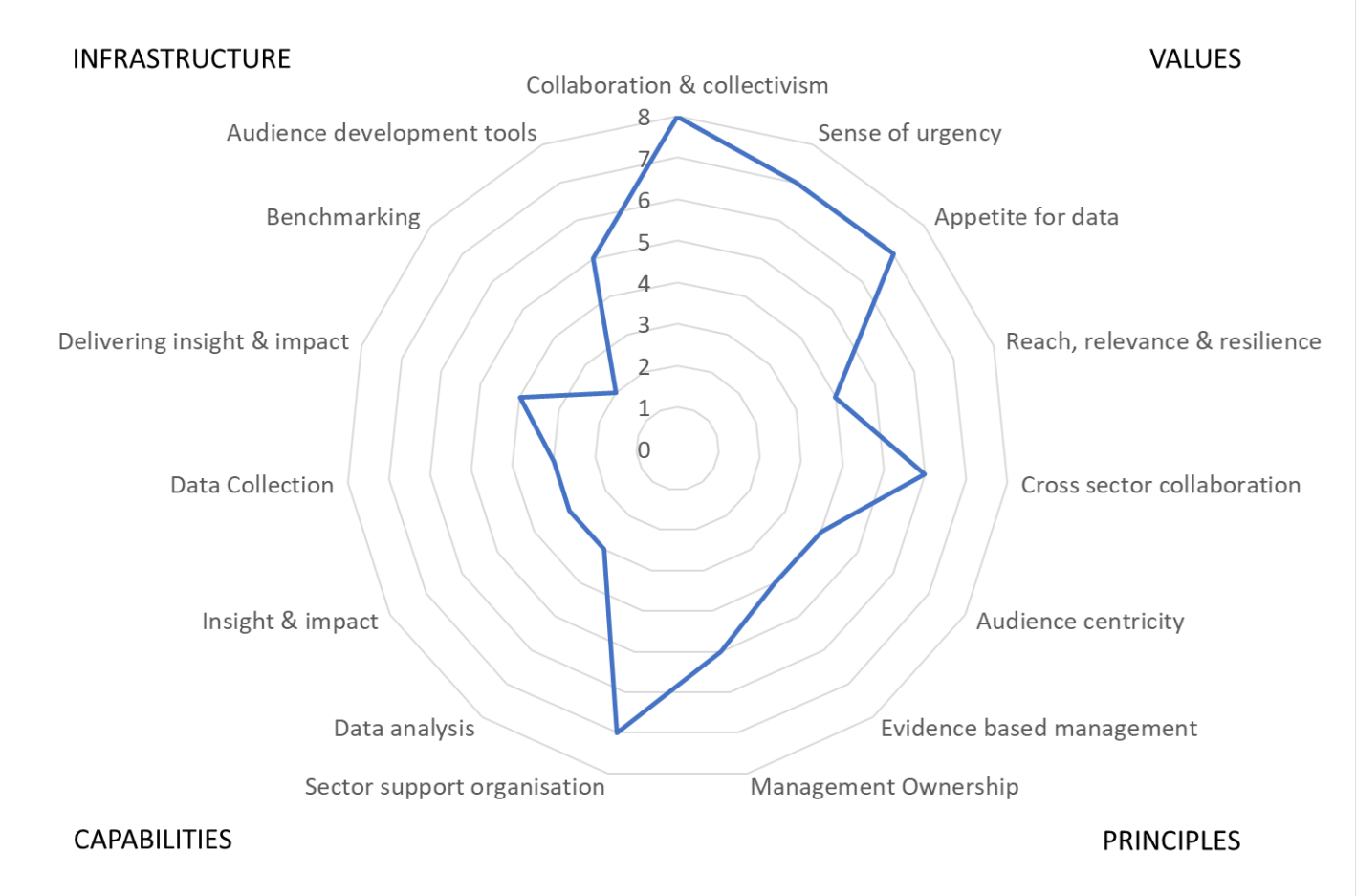
The conclusion is that the cultural organizations in the region support a collective approach, which will greatly facilitate the deployment of a common collective solution.

Conclusions

The model below illustrates the relationship to the values, principles, capabilities and infrastructure that together are the preconditions for successfully deploying a communal sector-wide approach to collecting and applying audience data.

We classified the answers and survey data in to the four areas and subdivided these in to 15 specific categories, that together provide a holistic overview of where the cultural organizations are strong and where extra work is needed.

Values	Collaboration & collectivism Sense of urgency Appetite for data Reach, relevance & resilience	Capabilities	Sector support organisation Data analysts Insight & impact Data Collection
Principles	Data sharing Audience centric Evidence based management Ownership	Infrastructure	Delivering insight & impact Benchmarking Audience development tools



The illustration highlights:

- In terms of Values and Principles regions cultural organizations score high. The understanding of the benefits and willingness to collaborate across sectors was clear and does not pose an adoption problem.

- In terms of Capabilities and Infrastructure regions cultural organizations have little (except for the largest organizations) or non-existent processes or application of audience data except anecdotal. On a positive note, there was a clear understanding of the potential benefits, but as stated little clear understanding of how. This was further made clear as very few of the organizations had a clear management and organisational process and ownership for using audience data.

The general conclusion was that the cultural organizations in region have a good common grasp of the benefits for a more evidence-based approach to audience development, and is summarised in the following three problem statements:

We do not know enough about who our audiences are, what motivates them and just as importantly which citizen groups do not engage and why.

We need a common language for how we internally and across the sector discuss and evaluate our relationship with the people of the region.

We do not for the most part have the skills or tools to collect, analyze and generate the relevant insights needed to make informed decisions about how we better engage with the population.

In general, the good news is that the cultural organizations current understanding and aspirations are clear and well aligned with the intentions and goals of Agency - that more data driven insight has a broad-based value for delivering better and more relevant cultural engagement with the existing audiences and reaching new citizen groups.

There was a good understanding and willingness by the cultural organizations in adopting a collective approach to aggregating audience data.

Areas which would require additional resource and focus would be in the areas of data collection (predominantly surveys) and how audience data once collected and analyzed can be operationalized in terms of programming, audience engagement and dialogue and building a more resilient organisation.

Management challenges

Addressing the three pain-points above requires a great deal of coordination and choreographing of the many participants. Key phases to look at are:

- Testing data sources, a manual evaluation of the base data available from ticketing systems and conducting a standardises survey
- Capacity building in terms of cultural professionals' ability to comprehend and applicate audience data in to:
    - **Strategic** plans that reflect the cultural organizations artistic, social and financial goals
    - **Tactical** plans whereby management guidelines are formulated, key metrics are defined and results are reflected on by the whole organisation.
    - **Operational** plans for the collection, analysis, and presentation of relevant audience data

Following the maturity model, before evaluating the necessary tools and infrastructure, a programme focused on developing the cultural organization's ability to understand and apply audience data in strategic and practical terms would be the next step.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ANALYSIS

In the table below are listed some of the benefits we have encountered in the UK using the model. Note that in the UK audience development is also a key element in building financial resilience.

THE CHALLENGES	THE BENEFITS
For cultural organizations	
Generating new sources of income	A clearer understanding of the cultural consumption habits of the chosen audience groups, across artforms provides clues and information about what additional services they are willing to pay for.
The need to conduct and finance surveys	Implementing a real-time consistent reporting on audience/citizen engagement across all artforms, significantly reduces the need for the need for ad hoc surveys, which by their nature are costly, time-consuming and limited to a specific time period.
Which media and communications channels should I be using?	A detailed geographic and psychometric describes the media habits for the chosen audience segments, whether they be printed or social media.
What motivated my visitors to our venue?	Based on survey data and cross referenced to our audience database key decision making parameters can be calculated – allowing cultural organizations with similar cultural offerings to share and build on their experiences.
What population groups are we not attracting who would traditionally attend our type of cultural offering?	The audience database contains in depth knowledge of all household data and by mapping existing audiences, we can identify geographic areas and audience segments who are not attending and based on your cultural offering would otherwise do so,

Reporting to the authorities	An issue raised throughout the feasibility study is the time taken to report to the authorities. With Audience Finder annual reports are automatically generated and include year-to-year changes.
Audience development planning	Standard templates for audience development plans help cultural organizations determine which audience segments they wish to attract and set targets which provides valuable benchmarking insights.
For Policymakers	
Satellite Accounting for the cultural sector	Because the data is continually updated and the dashboard provides an aggregated view of audience engagement across the whole region and across all artforms, there is no need to continually fund new reports or surveys.
Sector Support Organisation	By concentrating data collection, analysis and presentation in to one specialised unit individual cultural organizations can concentrate on doing what they do best – producing culture. This will ensure considerable savings in respect to each cultural organizations having to invest in these skills.
Qualifying and quantifying the relationship between citizens and cultural organizations.	Current data sources are often estimates and there is a difficulty in distinguishing visits and visitors (for example we have only a rough estimation as to how many of the museum are repeat visitors). By gathering data across all artforms and benchmarking behaviour with the international database we can

	document to what degree which social segments and geographic areas are over and under-represented.
Culture and the creative industries	European countries and the European Union is funding a great deal of research in understanding the relationship and impact of the creative cultural sector (CCI) on the overall economies. Audience data provides valuable data and modelling potential for measuring the correlation between audience groups and their relationship to the creative sector, such as fashion, gaming, films, architecture and more.
Generating new income sources	A growing source of income for cultural organisations is consultancy, analysis and reporting. These services are sold to government, academia and the commercial sector.

APPENDIX 1: AUDIENCE DATA MATURITY ASSESSMENT

Audience development is best viewed as a formulation of policy that needs to be manifested through a clear management acknowledgement and willingness to act on it and embed within the daily operational day-to-day management.

Through a combination of a questionnaire, workshop, and online interviews we explored all aspects of current audience development practices both in terms of what works, what doesn't and what would the way forward look like.

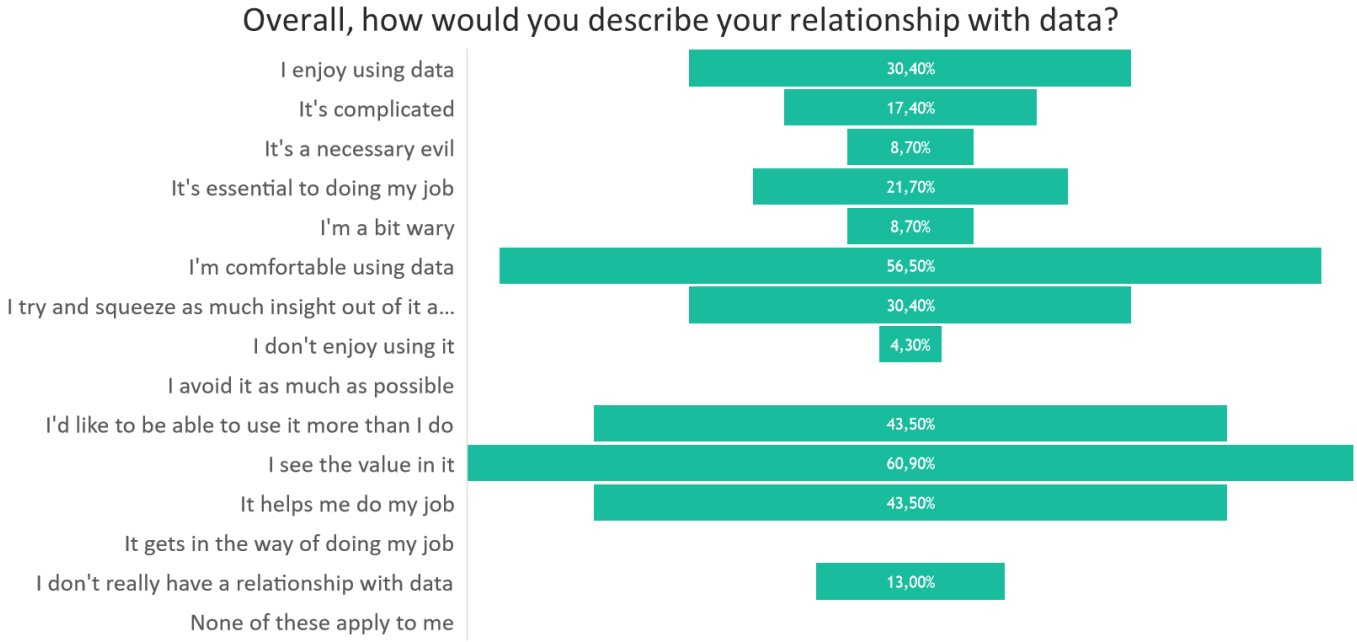
In the following section we have chosen some of the key findings and analysis.

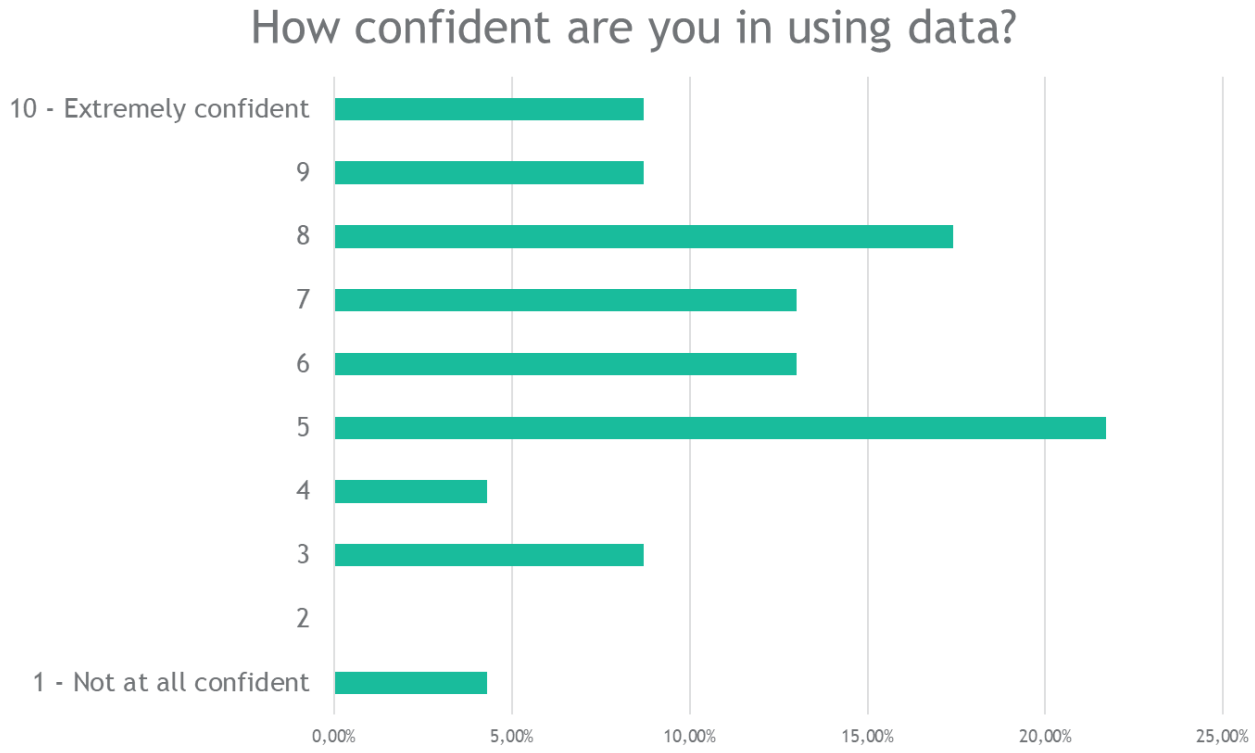
Questionnaire Survey

The cultural organizations responded to the survey represented a good cross section of artforms and regional placement.

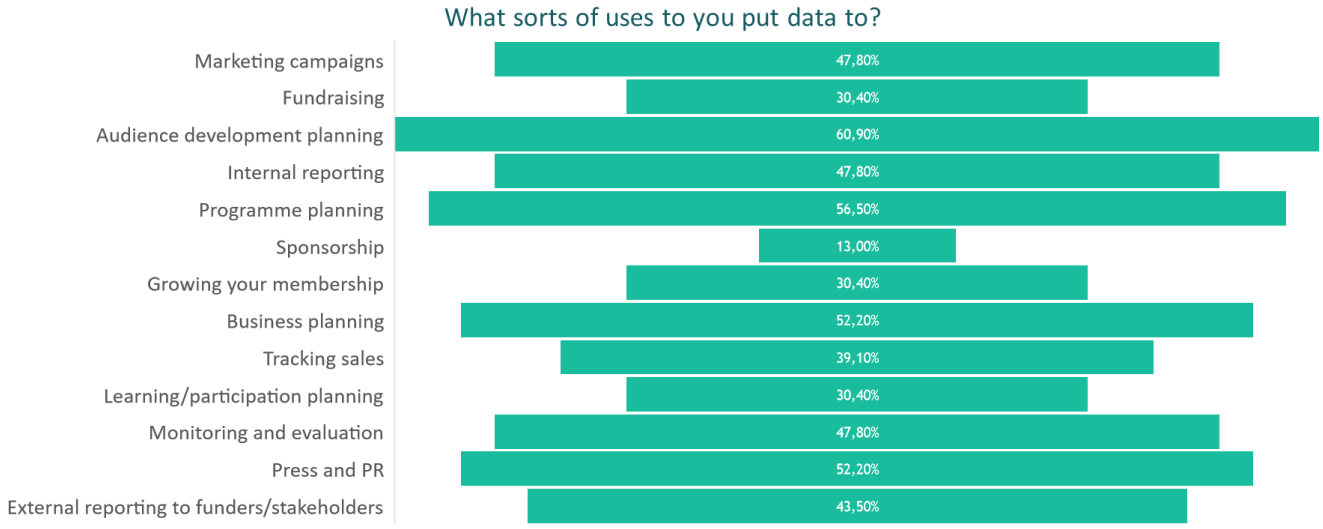
The survey was developed by The Audience Agency in response to Art Council England's need to understand the capability of British cultural organizations to understand and work with data – to assess their overall data maturity. With over 1500 respondents we have been able to benchmark the UK results with the region.

In this section we have extracted a series of core questions that looks at the management perception, attitude, and practical application of audience data, by starting with a general question about their confidence in using data:

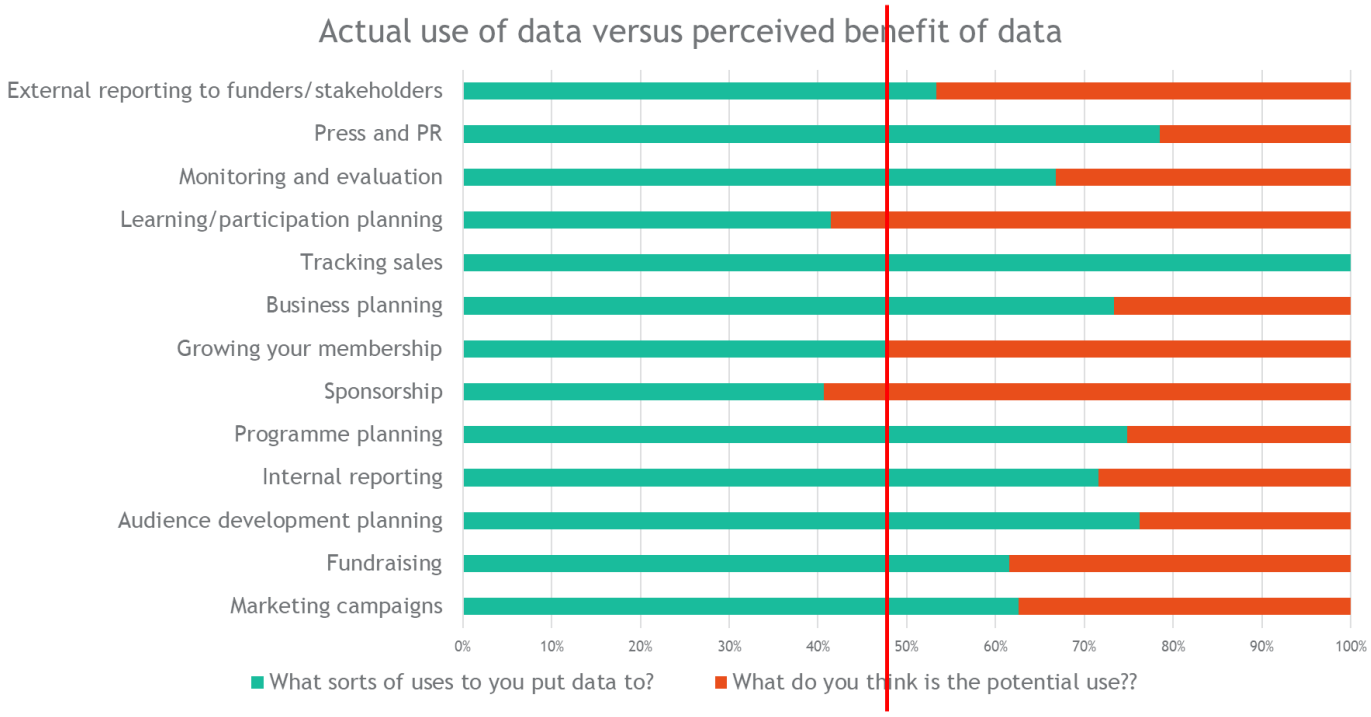




Going on from here it is important to ascertain whether the cultural organizations understand the correlation between data and how it can be potentially applied.

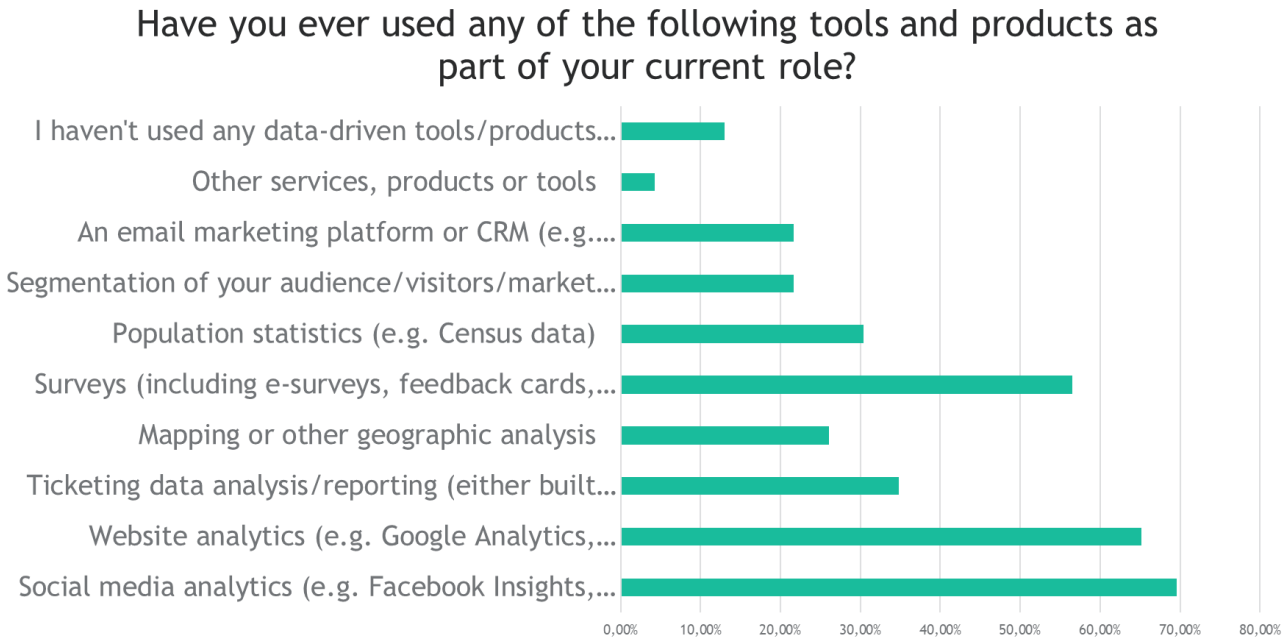


The conclusions here is that there exists good balanced distribution of how audience data has practical applications in running a cultural organization.

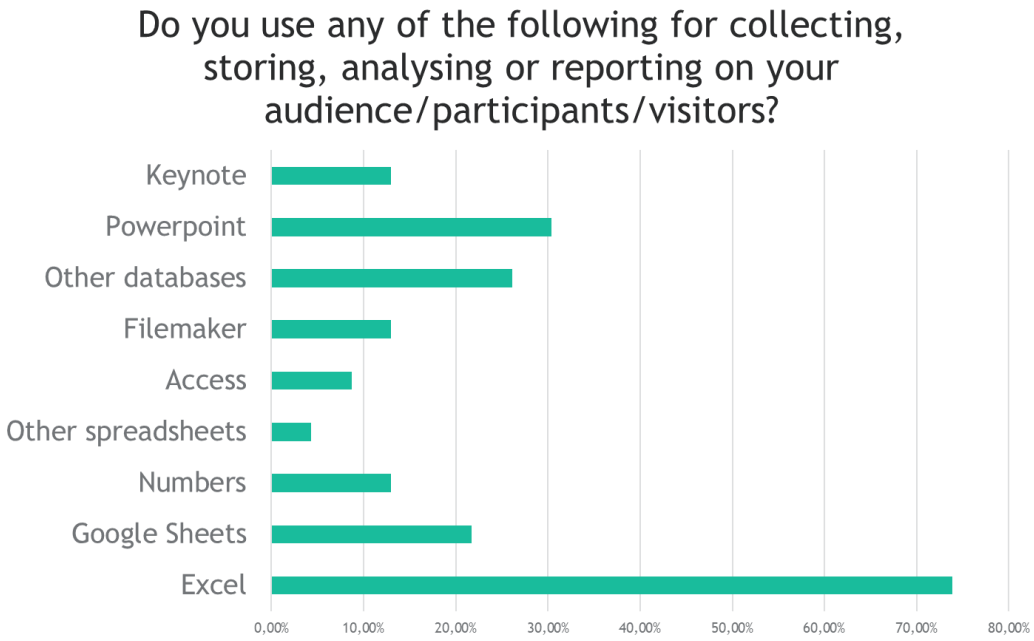


This question tests the validity of the previous question, by looking at the discrepancy between actual and perceived use of data reveals where they would like to see a better utilisation of data than what is currently the case e.g. Learning/planning, Sponsorship, Membership. There is

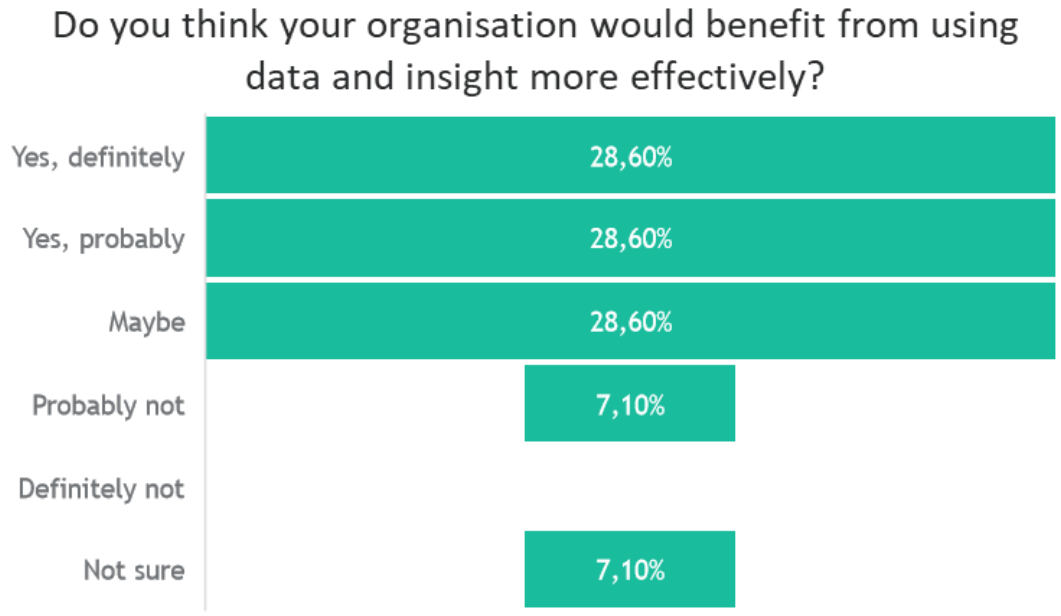
a lower recognition for the value of data in respect to Press/PR, programming, internal reporting and audience development. This should be further explored.

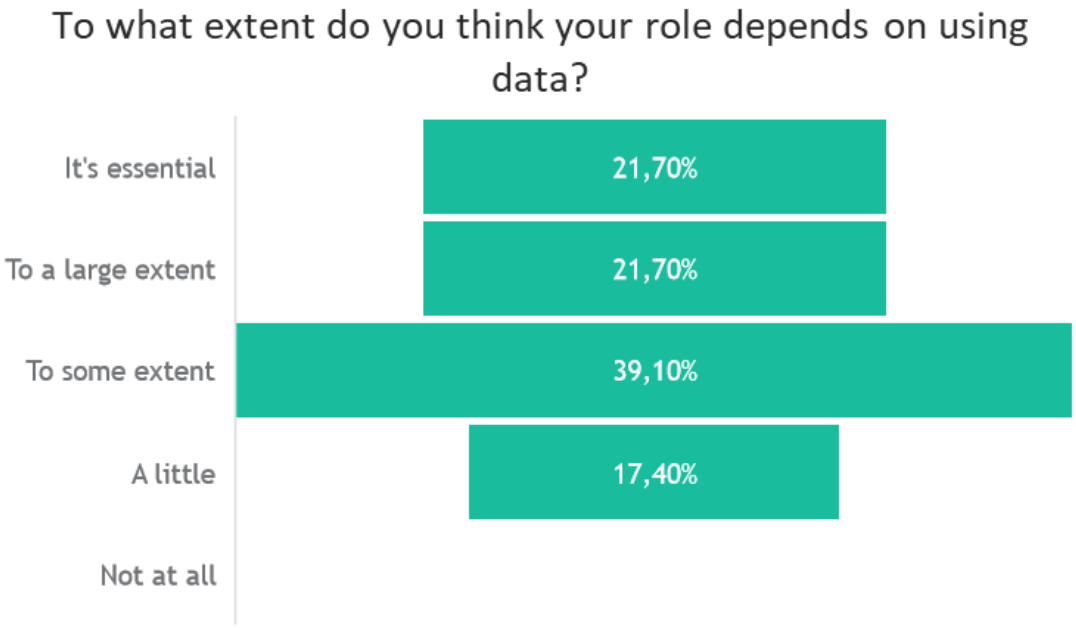


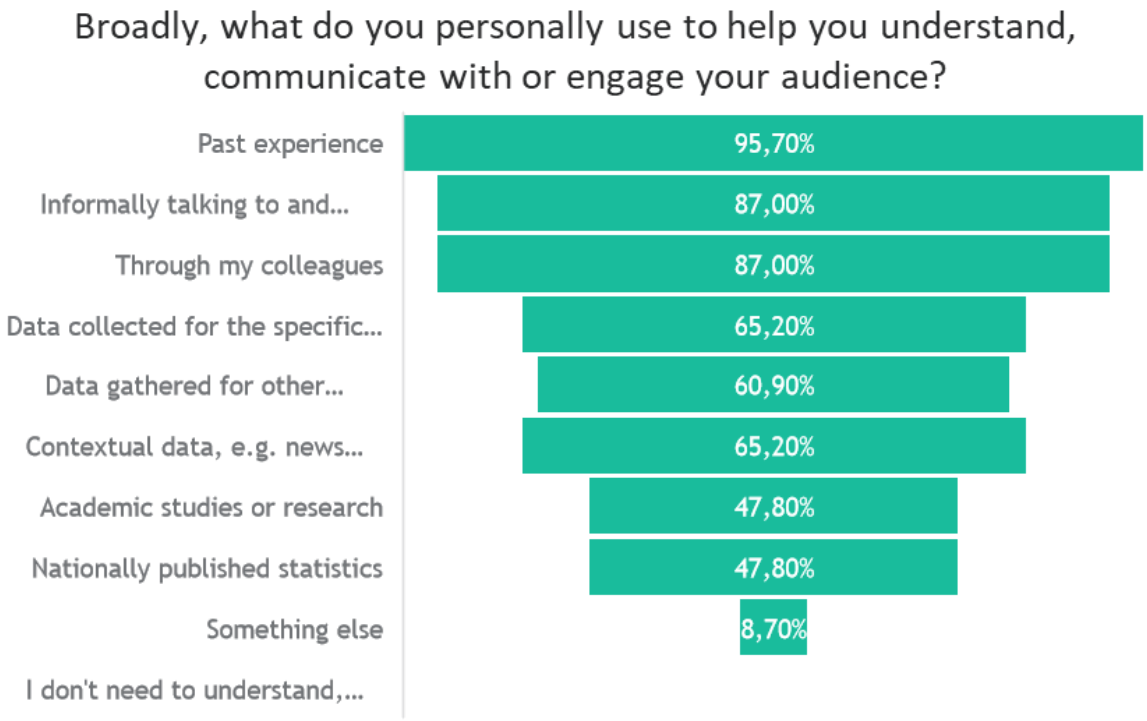
Social media and web analytics feature strongly throughout the questionnaire. A healthy 55% conduct surveys but the data is not shared. The survey feature of Audience Finder will be a useful feature so that the survey conducted will be more structured and longitudinal.

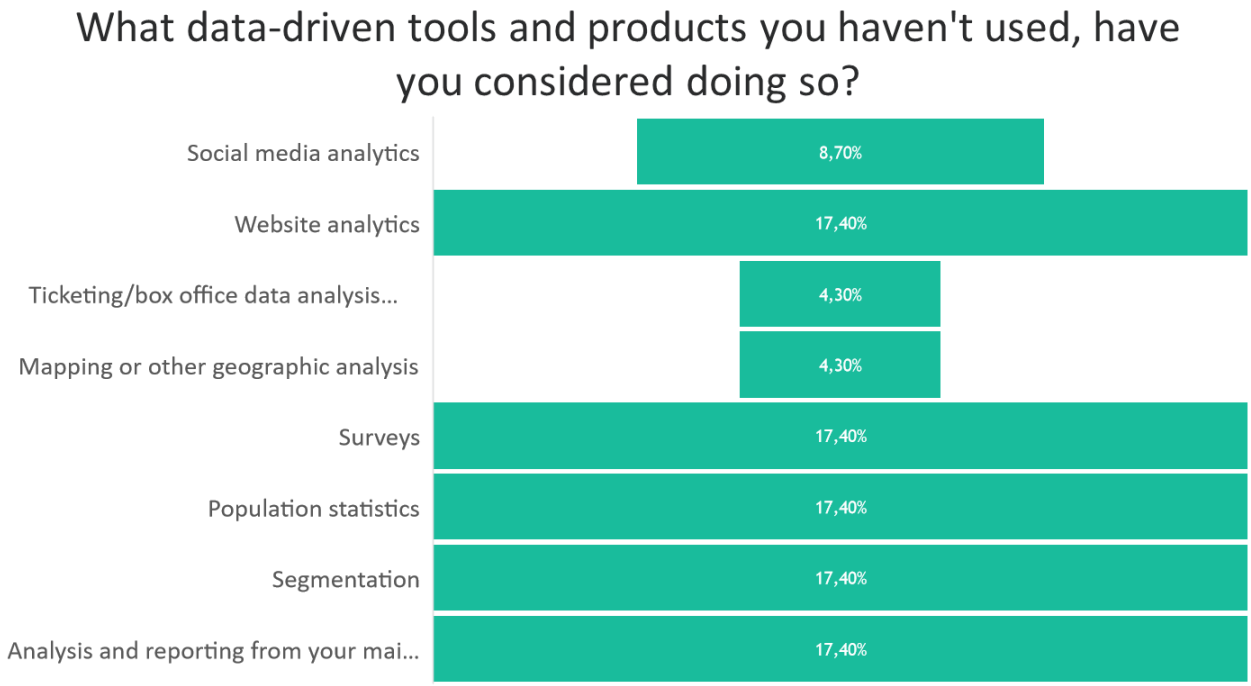


This question addresses the maturity of data collection tools and speaks clearly to the fact that nearly all data is currently collected and manipulated manually.









In general, only a quarter of the respondents showed interest in investigating new aspects of audience development.

We also collected a series of quotes on key questions:

Quote from Survey	Comments
How does your organisation use data and insight to make decisions, plan, and/or drive practical actions?	
We target performances for different age groups and other target groups. And we measure age and gender in our audience, plus origin and self identification of artists.	In line with the specific questions of the survey the comments we see here show that there is a broad concensus for the cultural organizations who are more mature that audience data has an important role to play predominantly when it comes to marketing and communications.
We use the audience data to make decisions in planning, in budgeting, in marketing strategy. We take the insights into evaluation in Managing- and Production groups. To a small extent also into repertoire planning.	
following the feeds over the year we plan program and program costs = minor project during low season (spring) and major more costly once for high season = bigger audience = more ticket sales.	
Customer insights via surveys, statistics, customer surveys are partly the basis for decision-making regarding programming, pricing, etc.	
As a learning tool mainly, too see if our messaging is translating to the audience, etc. to see who is attending, applying to our things. Is there an age gap? Are we only reaching people in larger cities? Based on the findings we adapt and tweek our plans.	
Above all, we use experience of being out in the activities and meeting our target groups	

Quote from Survey	Comments
How do you think your organisation could benefit from using data and insight more effectively?	
we need to gather data, track and analyze it to understand the visitors needs travelling and service wise (not content wise).	Strong audience centric service management perspective.
In defining who our visitors are, what they are interested in, and how we can reach them.	A recognised need to better profile existing audiences and tailor the communications to these
Vi har strategi och verktygen på plats, men saknar att implementera 100% inom organisationen.	The traditional gap between audience and organisational development. Shows recognition of a deep rooted problem.
A better understanding of our audience could result in more targeted communication but also in programming and opening times.	A strong recognition for the need to develop a digital dialogue.
With better customer surveys, we can optimize the visitor experience and improve marketing. It will also be possible to make better economic calculations.	A good well-balanced view recognising the correlation between marketing and financial resilience.
We could understand our target groups much better. Bring informed decisions and tailor events to the interests of our target groups. Maybe even reach groups that don't visit us today.	Clear recognition that a better understanding of existing and new audiences is needed in order to tailor and differentiate marketing strategies.

Quote from Survey	Comments
What, if anything, do you think is currently hindering your organisation's use of data or insight in understanding, communicating with or engaging your audience?	
Lack of staff.	Overwhelmingly the greatest hindrance to using more data is time and resources. The results can be seen as positive in some much as this can be seen as a recognition that this would be a useful exercise if only it were possible with the resources and time available. This is a fairly common situation within the cultural sector in UK, NL and Denmark. The challenge is one of management priorities, and there is a need of a better understanding between audience development and creating better relevance, reach and resilience.
Time and competence.	
Resources and time to do it. On the other hand, we have close contact with members and involve them in developing the organisation.	
Time - there is a cultural change that is underway.	
Lack of resources and not enough knowledge about how to use data and insight.	
We lack a good tool.	
Really nothing. Of course, resources are a challenge, but it would not be impossible to get resources for this. We currently lack competence, but it could be possible to bridge.	
It is mainly the resources that limit. We are not able to increase the intensity of communication within existing services.	

Workshop Assessment

The purpose of the workshop was to qualify the responses from the survey and reach a deeper understanding of the challenges and wishes of the cultural organizations.

Both large and medium-sized municipalities and institutions were represented at the workshop.

The workshop was structured in a way so that we better understand how:

- Audience development and audience-related data is worked with currently,
- What values are important for the cultural organizations relationship with the audience,
- What knowledge is already there and what is especially needed and what methods are used in the process.

In the following section we have condensed the output and provided a general transcript of the conversations and conclusions:

When asked what values characterize the relationship with the audience / users, it became clear that concepts such as Trust / Curiosity / Courage / Openness / Honesty / Sustainability / Cooperation / Clarity / Respect / Will / Joy / Knowledge exchange / Expectation / Quality / Breadth / Exclusivity / Commitment play a big role for the participants in the workshop.

The answers show that there is a need to be able to articulate and address the audience's perception of the institutions and culture, gain in-depth knowledge of their experience of the cultural offering, both in terms of content and programs, as well as the meeting with the audience, hosting and the ability to listen in and meet the audience where they are.

The participants in the workshop expressed that they would like to know more about building and deepening relations with different audiences more long-term and sustainable than is the case today. Confidence-building meetings with the audience were a phrase that resonated.

This perception was enforced by the answers to the question: what do you know about your respective audiences and users today? It was clear from this that, despite their institutional diversity and specificity, the participants are in many ways in a similar situation, where they know a lot about the users they already have, but far

from enough and almost nothing about why they actually visit the institution.

For those of the participants who use segmentation, the picture is that they know quite a lot about some segments, but practically nothing about other segmentation models.

Common to all participants was that the knowledge collected is largely based on demographically available basic data, which is not put into perspective in relation to programme offerings, cultural habits and preferences or conditions for participation.

Another common denominator is the absence of real knowledge about the potential audience, about the groups you do not reach today. There is great development potential locally and regionally. The need is to gain knowledge that can be used strategically in relation to reaching wider and new users and audiences. The need to meet different target groups through concrete meetings and formats was also highlighted.

The tools used today (Tessitura, Culture Segments, Activity Stream, surveys, visitor counters, cultural cards, observations in the business, spontaneous conversations with visitors, experience, etc.) is mostly used to strengthen communication and marketing, reporting to contributors and to adapt and shape formats for the groups that use the institutions today.

The knowledge generated is used to strengthen the relationship with the existing audience. Audience perspectives have a real impact on how to program and plan strategically today. Simply put, they make up the top of the potential audience, which otherwise is not covered at all. The institutions that participated in the workshop are already ready to tailor and shape the programme for different groups but lack real knowledge of what is demanded of the groups they do not reach.

Participants expressed that they would like to know more about why different groups of citizens seek cultural experiences, how they experience the meeting, what thresholds there are, what the audience thinks of the institutions, how they are perceived and viewed, what reasons people have not to visit the culture, how they choose, how often they go out for a cultural experience, under what conditions, if it is in the company of others, if it is a first visit or they have been there before, what needs they have, requests for programs, etc. In terms of what the participants in the workshop came up with, there is a need for aggregated knowledge about visitor

opportunities and reasons, frequencies, preferences, experiences, needs and wishes linked to demographic and social insight into different possible audiences.

All this is something that is not provided enough through the tools used today. Most of the participants mainly use ticket sales and visitor counters, surveys, informal conversations, business observations, focus groups and meetings as primary sources to gain knowledge about their users.

The largest ticket-selling institutions, especially in performing arts, also use tools such as Tessitura and Activity Stream to gain increased knowledge. To some extent, it provides a qualified knowledge of the groups you already reach and the tools are sufficiently diversified to gain a slightly more nuanced understanding of the users. But they only catch those who are already coming and they are not precise enough to provide deeper insight into motives and reasons for choosing a cultural experience on or off.

Several of the tools are also resource-heavy in operation and there is often no time for qualified analysis of available data. There are no tools to translate and understand the knowledge gathered in a more business-friendly way, both in relation to anchoring it internally to the program-producing colleagues and externally in relation to contributors and owners.

There was quite broad agreement at the workshop that there is a need to balance quantitative data with qualitative data, so that audience work can be both more reliable, more efficient and aimed at specific groups. Most of the tasks given to the institutions today are too general and therefore difficult to use strategically and operationally. This is particularly challenging when it comes to anchoring the collected knowledge in the organization.

As regards the need for help translating and implementing data in practice, it was pointed out that a possible regional solution must also provide knowledge of economic patterns. Frequency linked both to content and to possible thresholds in relation to ticket prices, sales in shops, etc. It is also desirable that the data received should be both comparable across subsectors and at the same time nuanced down to industry and institution/actor level.

The participants stressed that a common knowledge sharing and component would be desirable for the whole region. It could possibly. in the form of networks initiated as part of the operation reflecting the actual data collection in the region. A kind

of "safe space" for the further development work.

In the short term, it is a work that can be started immediately, but which must be spiced up with a phase in which there is a real structure in the data collection and dissemination to the individual institutions, which makes it possible to get an overall picture and work strategically and institutionally. The goal should be to develop a common structure for data collection and analysis in Agency.

In terms of what they have and what they would like to know about their audiences the feed-back in terms of experience and preferences (survey data) and data on how many first time and non-returning audiences. Indicating that the current survey data is not focused on these areas(?).

In terms of the concrete methods adopted today, there is a broad representation across ticketing systems, school statistics and an over dependency on informal forums and anecdotal evidence.

Generally, most of the comments in respects to the advantages and disadvantages using current data methods centre on the resources required (and not available).

In this exercise we focused on the data value-chain: the collection, development, translation and sharing. Key findings went along the lines of mapping audience behaviour/needs, how these insights could be applied in terms of for example pricing strategies and mapping to artistic and social goals, how this could be developed and experimented on in an organisationally open environment and the best way to share this through the development of a common audience development language. Most statements enforce the wish that an Audience Agency approach and sector-support-structure as a facilitator for addressing these wishes is what they would want.

The COCD model was the last exercise of the day with the purpose of pulling the strands together in to actioning ideas short and long term. Beginning with a desire for greater collaboration and data sharing in the NOW quadrant, with formalising structures in the WOW quadrant and finishing with defining data models and audience segments in the HOW quadrant.

APPENDIX 2: THE AUDIENCE AGENCY MODEL

In 2010 the Arts Council England asked the Audience Agency to develop a program that would support cultural organizations develop insights into who their audiences were and potential new ones as well as the capabilities need to translate these insights in to concrete plans and actions. Today we recognize more than ever that creating an audience centric strategy is also in exercise in organizational development, business strategies, service management as well as delivering artistic and cultural excellence. This made good sense especially in areas where most cultural organizations do not have the skills and resources needed!

Sector Support Organizations are funded by the Arts Council to act as independent non-profit bodies who could develop skills and support programs for the benefit of all cultural organizations across all artforms.

Audience development is a term that covers a wide range of activities usually associated with marketing in its broadest sense: communications, digital dialogue, artistic program development, services management etc. As a funded sector support organisation our mission is to support all cultural organizations across all artforms achieve a better understanding of who their audiences are, where they come from, what motivates them and how to better engage with existing and new audiences.

We do this by collecting, managing and presenting relevant data. The underlying technology is called Audience Finder and was developed as a free national audience data and development tool, enabling cultural organizations to understand, compare and apply audience insight.

Audience Finder brings together data on all UK households with data from over 800 cultural organizations: over 170 million tickets, 59 million transactions, approximately 750,000 surveys and web analytics from all the UK's major arts and cultural organizations.

[1]Underpinning the Audience Agency model is a collaborative approach to collecting, analyzing and presenting relevant insight and knowledge of a populations engagement with cultural organizations; and is a combination of choreographed processes and information technology, as illustrated in the model below.

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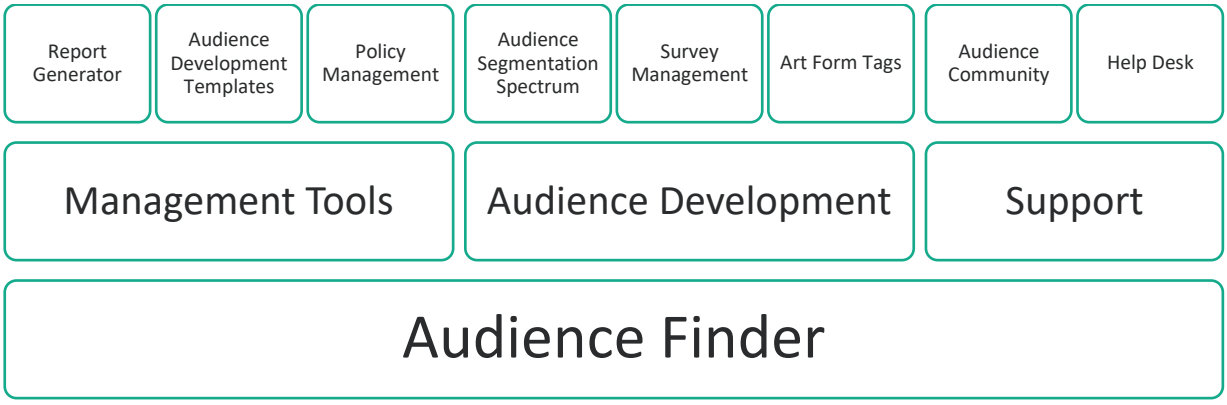
[1] Watch the Audience Finder platform in action here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2vSBVvsmx8&t=54s

The Audience Finder platform is currently transitioning to a version with significant developments in terms of making the platform as intuitive and actionable as possible for people working in cultural organizations.

It does this by providing answers to the most fundamental questions about audience characteristics and behaviours, which are delivered through insights. Each insight offers specific information based on the organisation's data, benchmarking information drawn from data of other cultural institutions and additional contextual information drawn from the census plus others to provide a whole market view. Uniquely, the "insights" in Audience Finder Answers provide a narrative summary of the analyses, together with suggestions of practical actions to take. Answers tells you the information you need and what to do with it.

The new platform will be ready for our international partners in the late spring timeframe, which will time well with the preparatory work required in terms of the data collection strategies and activities as well as clarifying legal and organisational aspects.

Deploying Audience Agency model in the region would include the following elements, which together form the Audience Finder platform:



Platform overview:

AUDIENCE FINDER Collecting, analyzing and acting on audience data is a key challenge facing all cultural organizations and policy makers.	AUDIENCE FINDER is an on-line dashboard available to all participating cultural organizations. AUDIENCE FINDER is designed to make audience analysis as intuitive and actionable as possible for people working in cultural organizations. It does this by providing answers to the most fundamental questions about audience characteristics and behaviours, which are delivered through insights. Each insight offers specific information based on the organisation's data, benchmarking information drawn from data of other cultural institutions and additional contextual information drawn from socio-demographic data and others, to provide a whole market view. Uniquely, the "insights" in Audience Finder Answers provide a narrative summary of the analyses, together with suggestions of practical actions to take. AUDIENCE FINDER gives you the information you need and what to do with it. Example of questions which AUDIENCE FINDER can answer are:

	• Where do my audiences come from? How far are they willing to travel? • What is the average price of tickets and how much has been spent in total? • What are the key motivations for different audience segments when choosing their cultural activity? • How does my audience differ from the national average? AUDIENCE FINDER provides a universal dashboard for all cultural organizations providing the individual insights and actions needed for a successful engagement with existing and new audiences.
AUDIENCE POLICY MANAGEMENT It is difficult to formulate investments and initiatives for the cultural sector if there isn't a detailed overall view of the relationship between citizens and all of the cultural offerings.	By aggregating data across the whole sector the AUDIENCE FINDER platform can generate a clear picture of: • What proportion of the population are currently engaged with which cultural activities • By Artform • The total number of visitors in terms of socio demographics and cultural segmentation • Current depth, breadth, reach and churn • Key catchment areas and areas of cultural deprivation • Overall income generation • Benchmarking – regional and international
AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION A key interest for cultural organizations is understanding the reason and motivations behind existing and potential audiences	Segmenting audiences by their psychographic, rather than the traditional socio demographic variables (such as age, sex, income, education etc.), gives a better and more nuanced understanding of a citizen's cultural motivations and needs. Our audience segmentation framework is called Audience Finder: Spectrum, and is a population segmentation

specific to their cultural offering. The big Why.	approach which is based on people's cultural engagement characteristics, behaviours and preferences. It describes a spectrum of cultural engagement from the highly culturally active, through occasional audiences, to harder to reach groups. The Audience Spectrum framework is built using the leading worldwide consumer segmentation framework (MOSAIC), and enables users to understand the profile of their own audiences, and to compare them to regional or artform benchmark profiles, or to the population at large.
SURVEY MANAGEMENT A structured long term survey management strategy is a crucial goal but often a challenging task for many cultural organizations. The field-worker survey application is a tool that simplifies and automates the field-data collection process.	The Field Worker Survey application, allows researchers out in the field to undertake surveys with audience members and visitors, using surveys configured in the Audience Finder Answers application, through a browser-based tablet application, whether connected to the internet or not. By using an internationally comparable question library users can compare and benchmark This allows cultural institutions to benefit from The Audience Agency knowledge of research best practice in survey design and collect results that are comparable to other UK cultural institutions and internationally.
ARTFORMS We recognize that culture is many things to many people. Good audience development is understanding the motivations and differences for audiences across a wide range of artforms.	The AUDIENCE FINDER platform allows us to tag and track of up to 15 categories and 131 artforms is important when cultural associations and policymakers want to be able to distinguish how citizens are motivated or react between for example jazz and country music.

REPORT GENERATOR **Reporting is often a tedious and time consuming tasks especially for the medium and small organizations.**	Included in Audience Finder is a one-click report generator, which summarizes the cultural organizations yearly audience engagement across audience segments and benchmarked against predetermined metrics.
AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLANS **A key challenge facing all cultural organizations is the ability to translate data in to insights and how to formulate these in to concrete artistic, social and financial goals.**	We encourage and help cultural organizations develop their own plans for how they engage with existing and potentially new audience groups, by providing a structured and well-tested template. The template provides an easy approach to how audience development goals can be formulated so that the artistic, social and financial goals can be well formulated and communicated to the entire organisation.
AUDIENCE FINDER COMMUNITY The strength of culture is its diversity and many manifestations, and so it's perhaps not surprising that most cultural organizations focus on what they do and forget the potential for sharing knowledge, insight and experiences.	The Audience Agency Community platform is a forum where all users of AUDIENCE FINDER meet, share and grow. Our very DNA is based on community spirit, whereby acting together, we can better harness our collective strength and potential. A place for everyone in arts, culture and heritage who's curious about their audiences and visitors. Whether you want to get to know your audiences better, identify new opportunities, or simply reach more people, we hope you'll find some inspiration and support here. **Knowledge Base** The new home of the Audience Finder Knowledge Base, consisting of everything you need to use the Audience finder Data Tools. **Chat** If you've something to share that doesn't fit into an existing category, share it here.

	Events Share your events with the community. **Audience Finder** For newbies or experienced users: discuss all things Audience Finder here. **Community feedback and ideas** Discussion about this site, its organisation, how it works, and how we can improve it.
SERVICES & SUPPORT	As part of our international partnership model apart from supporting the daily maintenance and trouble-shooting challenges, the team also supports the development of local learning programs, seminars and training programs for the cultural organizations own support staff.

the audience agency

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