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**SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY  
REVOLUTIONIZE OUR  
LIVES, BUT MEMORY,  
TRADITION AND  
MYTH FRAME OUR  
RESPONSE.**

**ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER**

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*juXtaped*

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**DIGITAL  
ASSIMILATION OF  
THE ARTS AND  
CULTURE:  
A JUXTAPOSED  
INTRODUCTION**

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**Abstract:**

The digital revolution, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0) and globalisation bring many changes to society. One aspect of society affected is the arts and culture. This article introduces the concept behind the digital assimilation of the arts and culture. Several examples of the concept are briefly discussed regarding museums, STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), and the creative economy. In addition, the articles in this collection that cover four central themes (i.e., New Technologies Redefining Art, Creative Practices in the Digital Era, Digitalizing and Sustaining Art and Cultural Heritage, and Emerging Art and Design Practices) are also discussed.

**Keywords:** Creative economy; digital media; museums; STREAM; the Fourth Industrial Revolution

**Introduction**

On 20th of July 2019, the world will commemorate the 50th anniversary of Neil Armstrong first setting foot on the moon. His famous quote, "One giant leap for mankind," said as he stepped on the moon, marks a technological achievement for space exploration. In addition, the 2nd of May 2019 will mark 500 years since the death of Leonardo da Vinci, the greatest polymath in history and artist known for futuristic and inspirational designs that were ahead of its time. Creative forms of art and literature can serve as great sources of inspiration for ideas. Many of Leonardo's design sketches inspire some of today's inventions. Some of these inventions are beginning to or have already materialised in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0). Some examples of product designs that are related to the IR4.0 are powered clothing, augmented reality surgery, and driverless cars. This revolution can be exciting, but it also creates uncertainties and anxiety in many aspects.

**The Digital Assimilation of Arts and Culture**

The focal idea of *juXtaped* (with an emphasis on the 'X') symbolises the amalgamations of arts and cultural experiences, knowledge exchange, and the unknown. The unknown is an interesting concept as it can symbolise the many possibilities and opportunities to explore and experiment when art and technology converged. The digital synthesis of arts and culture can establish a new elevation to the field of applied and creative arts. Cultures should not be static. A society's culture is assumed to be changeable because it can influence

and be influenced by other worldviews and expressive forms (UNESCO, 2017). Therefore, as we are now living in the twenty-first century, it is high time to embrace the convergence of digital technologies and cultures which produces innovative and transformative ideas that can benefit society.

A good example to begin this conversation is by reinventing museums for the current generation: the Millennials. The Brooklyn Museum and the British Museum, according to Penn Museum Director Julian Siggers (K@W, 2018), aspire to present themselves as 'classrooms to the world'. The museum provides high-quality teaching resources such as lecture videos on YouTube and informative downloadable documents for virtual and physical visitors to access and learn. In order to achieve this, "The British Museum works in collaboration with an extensive partnership of organisations across the UK to ensure its collection and knowledge are shared with the broadest audience" (TBM, 2017). MORI Building Digital Art Museum, on the other hand, embraces and celebrates digital exhibits. The museum features immersive and interactive exhibits such as *Borderless World*, *the Athletics Forest*, *the Future Park*, *Forest of Lamps*, and more. It is hoped that the newly renovated Sarawak Museum can emulate the Brooklyn Museum (New York, USA), British Museum (England), and MORI Building Digital Art Museum (Japan) and strategize its programmes and activities in ways that consider the needs and interests of the Millennials so that the public educational space can be more enriching, fun, and informative. Therefore, one possible way is to collaborate with other museums, universities, and local communities and, at the same time, augment the collaboration by incorporating effective use of digital technologies.

Regarding the creative economy, Globalisation 4.0 has opened many doors for the creative industries to flourish. Global tech companies such as Amazon, Facebook, and Google are leaders in their respective markets. Besides, there is the proliferation of entertainment industry players such as Disney, Apple, and Netflix. For example, Disney has acquired rights to produce and release Marvel and Star Wars movies, and the company is actively churning out superhero movies annually. There are concerns of Western cultural dominance that comes with globalisation and digitalisation, which could result in the gradual homogenization of cultures. "While this phenomenon promotes the integration of societies, it may also bring with it a loss of uniqueness of local culture, which in turn can lead to loss of identity, exclusion, and even conflict" (UNESCO, 2017). Nevertheless, global culture can be influenced through various cultural identities and values via digital media. Korean artists who mainly sing in the Korean language such as Psy and BTS, and the Puerto Rican singer of the Spanish song *Despacito* (2017), Luis Fonsi, are good examples in this case. Furthermore, widely popular anime and manga such as Pokémon anime (1997 to present), Naruto manga (1999 to 2014), and One Piece manga (1997 to present) proudly instil Japanese cultural values and contents in their storytelling. By doing so, the popularity of these creative works helps preserve and introduce Japanese values and cultures on a global scale. In 2018, films that highlighted the growing acceptance of cultural diversity in Hollywood cinema, such as *The Black Panther* (2018) and *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018), featured a primarily African American and Asian casts respectively, and garnered recognition and box office success in the United States. These successes can serve as hopeful indicators that cultures from outside the United States can have a chance to flourish in the United States and global film market.