

# New technologies and Cultural Policies

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Comparative Analysis between two  
EU and two non-EU countries:  
Sweden, Spain, Russia and Serbia.

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## I. Introduction:

Our society has undergone many changes and it is currently different from the society that existed a few years back. We are currently living in an information society in which the main characteristic is the transmission and dominion of information. This society is ruled by the new technologies, especially the ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) which have transformed the way we communicate on a daily basis.

We can define new information and communications technologies as any application that transfers information via technological techniques, such as computers, digital devices and data networks. Since most of this type of technology is interactive it can be used locally and globally. This has resulted in a new global business model because now people can be in contact even if they are in different locations.

New technologies have aided in bridging people from all cultures around the world, allowing the rapid flow of information to reach far regions that would otherwise take a long time.

Leu and Kinzer (2000) mentioned that because governments are aware of the consequences of economic competition, they have implemented public policies to increase the technological literacy to better prepare the new generations. They have also been providing ICT resources to schools. These steps show the trend that the information and communication will follow in the next years.

The main objective of this paper is to analyze and compare the usage of new technologies in culture in four different countries: Sweden, Spain, Russia and Serbia.

I chose these four countries because I wanted to analyze countries from different locations that could have more differences among themselves due to their type of governments, the personality of their citizens, etc. Sweden is part of the Northern European block and has always been a representative of an "ideal" country regarding development. I chose Spain as the representative of the Western European block because of its focus in culture and my relation to this country as a Hispanic person. I wanted to analyze Russia since it has a different type of government from the other countries and I will try to see if this affects the usage of new technologies in culture.

Finally, I chose Serbia to represent Eastern Europe because it is the country where I am currently living and I would like to know more about the cultural field in this country. The general cultural policy overview as well as the new technologies field of each country will be explained in each country's section.

After doing the comparison and the analysis I will give my recommendations to Serbian policy makers. I want to write recommendations for Serbia because I am foreseeing that being a developing country it still has a long way to go regarding the new technologies and its relation with the cultural field. I believe that by analyzing the other countries, Serbia can get ideas on how to deal with this issue.

The methodology used for this analysis consisted in the gathering and comparing information from the cultural policies of Sweden, Spain, Russia and Serbia and their current and future usage of the new technologies to boost their culture nationally and internationally. Most of the information was gathered from the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, but other sites, books and journals were used to select the indicators and analyze the information. A complete reference list can be found at the end of the document in the Bibliography chapter.

## **II. Presentation of the Situation:**

### *a) SWEDEN*

#### *General Overview*

Sweden's cultural policy main objectives were reformed in 2009. The government wanted to impulse a closer relationship between the state and the cultural actors of civil society. The Cultural Policy Commission also concluded that the donations for cultural purposes would increase if they became tax deductible.

As part of the reformation, three new commissions were created to ensure the proper development of these reforms: a new agency responsible for analysis and evaluation, the Portfolio Model, which changed its name to Model for Cultural Cooperation, and the administrative organization responsible for music.

The main priorities of Sweden's current cultural policy are the right of the younger generations to access cultural experiences, the preservation and exhibition of Swedish cultural heritage and the improvement of the overall situation of artists and creators.

The Model for Cultural Cooperation is being implemented in five regions: West Sweden, Skåne, Norrbotten, Gotland and Halland. In this new model, the agreements between national and regional governments will be regulated. Its main concern will be the funding for cultural policy that the national government gives to the regional one. Little by little, this model will be used in the whole country.

To improve the evaluation of cultural policies, a new agency was created in 2011. This agency gathers cultural and artistic information and then analyses and evaluates Swedish cultural policy.

The current collection of statistics on cultural policy is not very often updated, so there are plans to give this responsibility to the Government Agency for Cultural Analysis.

One of the central areas of the Swedish cultural policy is artists, the fine arts and the grants that they receive. Most of the current debates are related to the economic situation of artists and the gender equality.

#### *New technologies in Sweden:*

Sweden is one of the countries that has the highest Internet usage in the world. 95% of Swedes between 13 and 25 years have listened to music or watched videos over the Internet. 27% of them write on the Internet and 54% publish images.

In 2007, 14% of the population stated their usage of file-sharing programs at least once a week. These figures indicate challenges to the new modes of communication to cultural policy.

The government's main priority is the education at all levels. Therefore, special funding has been given for equipment and new projects have been launched in schools, museums and other cultural institutions. The new technologies have become a part of the daily activities of institutions, for example, digitalization of catalogues, online library loans, registration of museum collections, usage of digital equipment for performances, etc. IT has also played a major role in the networking and creative expressions among artists in cross-cultural projects.

The National Heritage Board deals with the digitalization of cultural heritage. The Royal Library is in charge of preserving the works published on the Internet. The latter one has been described as slow and with limited funding.

The government has stated new measures against illegal sharing and downloading of copyrighted material. There was a Swedish Internet company called The Pirate Bay,

which raise international interest when a lawsuit was done against them in the spring of 2009.

b) SPAIN

*General Overview:*

Spain's main cultural policy issues are the acknowledgement of cultural diversity, the strengthening of cooperation and the usage of culture for economic development and social cohesion.

A new Minister of Culture was appointed in 2009, which main objectives are to impulse culture as a right and economic engine, and to promote its culture abroad.

Due to this, there have been many reforms in the cultural sector. The Ministry and its institutions have gotten structural and procedural reforms, this means that the management of the main cultural institutions (the National Library, the Reina Sofia Museum, etc.) is undergoing important changes. The main idea of this project is to ensure sustainability in the cultural infrastructures.

A National Plan for Cultural Action Abroad has been started in 2011. This establishes a new framework for cooperation in the international promotion of Spanish Culture. The Ministry of Culture, Industry, Tourism and Trade is in charge of promoting Spain as a cultural destination according to their plan: "Plan for the International Promotion of Cultural Tourism 2010-2012. As part of these efforts, the portal España es Cultura, Spain is Culture, which includes all cultural expressions has been created.

Many new cultural institutions have been created in the past few years, such as the National Centre for the Visual Arts, the National Centre for the Performing Arts and Historical Music, the Museum of Circus, the National Centre of Flamenco, the International Resource Centre of European Cultures, the National Archive of Digital Preservation, etc.

The Ministerial Order regulates the final disposition of the Act on Sustainable Economy regulates the intellectual property rights on the Internet. The Ministry of Culture has also given special attention to the protection of intellectual property rights and to the online accessibility of cultural resources. In 2011, the government launched "Cultura en Positivo", an initiative to support legal supply of cultural content on the Internet. Also, the government has implemented measures to improve the access to culture for people with disabilities.

The main areas of cultural intervention in Spain are the performing arts, music and cultural heritage. The National Institute of Music and Performing Arts is establishing a

new management model that considers the territorial organization and that promotes decentralization.

To stimulate the artistic creation and consumption, the INAEM started in 2011 a new program called GPS – Turn by Halls, which provides artists access to concert tours beyond their regions. The National Dance Company and the National Theatre Company have set up their new objective which is the promotion of educational initiatives that can help facilitate the understanding of artistic programming and new campaigns to attract new audiences.

#### *New technologies in Spain:*

Due to the Spanish economic crisis, the government started a National Reform Program 2011. One of the projects that is under this program is the Plan Avanza 2, which targets the positioning of Spain as a leader in the development and use of ICT goods and services. The New Telecommunications Act is supposed to encourage a more efficient use of the radio spectrum and to improve the protection of users.

Out of the whole population, 63.9% of Spaniards have access to the Internet. Broadband Internet connections are available in 61.9% of homes. This represents an increase of 800,000 homes when compared to 2010. Madrid has 72.2% of houses with access to the Internet and Barcelona has 71%. Frequent users (at least one a week) are 92.1% of the total Internet users.

Despite all these, some changes need to be done, like the geographical balance for development, the increment of the cultural content and the improvement of coordination between national strategies and regional community programs.

The digitalization of cultural content is one of the main objectives of the Ministry of Culture's Plan for the Promotion of the Cultural and Creative Industries.

The Label "Cultura en Positivo" aims to identify companies in the art fields and video games that provide digital content that respect intellectual property rights. This is part of an anti-piracy campaign in Spain.

Some important programs and projects for artists that deal with new technologies have been created.

The Canarias Mediafest is an International Arts and Digital Culture Festival that aims to highlight the relationship between artistic creation and new technologies. ArtFutura, the Festival of Culture and Cultural Creativity, is an important Spanish festival that offers a vast program of activities in museums and cultural centres in more than twelve cities in Spain.

It presents the most outstanding international projects in digital art, interactive design, computer animation and video games.

The KRTU (Culture, Research, Technology Universal) in Catalonia aims to become an observatory for new cultural forms and stimulate creation and research within these new trends.

The Ministry of Culture is also promoting the realization of audiovisual works with the usage of new technologies and its dissemination by means like the Internet, mobile phones or e-books.

There are also two good initiatives that support the usage of new technologies. Hangar is a centre for arts production that provides facilities for artists and designers and offers services according to artistic production needs. This initiative is mainly supported by the Catalan Government. LABoral, Centre for Art and Industrial Creation, located in Asturias, is an exhibition centre for art, science, technology and advanced visual industries. It also promotes artistic and technological production and the dissemination of new art forms.

### c) RUSSIA

#### *General Overview:*

Cultural policies have been present in Russia for a long time. However, these have always been regarded as the least politically important. Therefore, the way of persuading the government about the importance of the cultural sector is to make evident the importance of culture in general social, economic and technological progress.

The trends in cultural policy priorities include technological advancement within the cultural sector, the reformation and reduction of public cultural institutions and the decrease of state budget in culture.

In 2008, the Russian government stated that it will double the public cultural budget in the course of three years. However, this was changed in 2009 due to the economic crisis. Currently, the budget of the Ministry of Culture is 30% less this year than it was in 2009.

The Ministry of Culture's main objectives are to embrace the freedom of all forms of creativity to support and preserve the best of the Russian Arts, to promote arts education, to support artists and their unions, to protect author's rights and to integrate Russian arts globally.

Some of the main ways the Ministry plans to achieve its goals is by expanding social partnerships, developing technical facilities and equipment of the arts institutions, sustaining artistic competitions at international levels and giving grants to artists. They also support the tours of local and foreign music and theatre companies. Lately, they have also been supporting contemporary innovative arts.

*New technologies in Russia:*

The Culture and Media sectors have been revolutionized with the digitalization, development of new media, growth of the Russian Internet, etc. The main usages of these new technologies are to improve the cultural landscape, to facilitate the delivery of cultural goods and services and to standardize cultural access across the country. Nowadays, these technologies are believed to be crucial for the regular cultural development in small villages in Russia.

Even though the government aims to build an information society, the infrastructure and cost is not enough for the regular citizens. Only 24% of families had an Internet connection in and only 31% of the citizens used the Internet in 2008.

In November 2009, the usage of the Cyrillic domain .RU started to overcome language barriers. Providers believe that it will replace the .RU domain at least at the national level.

The government has created a program called E-Russia, which main objectives are the development of the telecommunications and to connect cultural institutions to the web. Museums are the most involved in digitalization and they are looking to develop national networks and electronic projects. Online catalogues are produced by some libraries with the support of the E-Russia program. One billion RUB of the cultural budget of 2011 was designated for the development of national e-libraries and the digitalization of contemporary scientific and literary publications.

The Federal Agency for Print and Mass Communications supports the web-portal on author's rights, the "Russian language" web-sites, the "Music for All" and "Our Heritage" e-magazines, the internet virtual museum of broadcasting, among others.

The media is gradually migrating to the Internet as well. The Orpheus radio station was created by the state and it has been streaming classical music since 2007. Books are among the goods leading the daily visits of related sites and in number of orders made. In 2008, the market of on-line games grew 80%.

#### d) SERBIA

##### *General Overview:*

Serbia has been undergoing constant changes and reformations in its cultural policies. In 2006, the National Investment Plan had seven areas of priority: education, modernization of the health care system and environment protection, transportation infrastructure, economic development (employment, entrepreneurship, energy, waterpower engineering, science and tourism), building, improvement in living standards (sport, culture and social care) and advancement of government management.

At the end of that year, 80 cultural projects were selected. The budget of 18.7 million EUR was supposed to be used to support cultural institutions on the state level, 4.1 million EUR for provincial institutions and 73,950 EUR was allocated in cultural institutions in Kosovo. However, these budgets were never fully used as established and the motives remain unclear.

The investments have been slowing down or stopping due to the economic crisis. However, the new strategy for cultural development should be approved by the Serbian Parliament in 2012 and should last 10 years.

2007 was an important year for memory and remembrance, as it was when the government started focusing on the preservation of cultural heritage through actions like cultural practices (festivals and events) and policy actions (monuments, renaming streets).

Since 2009, the Ministry focused more in programs that contribute mainly to systematic changes in the cultural field, such as the creation of new laws and regulations and the support of professional education that would facilitate the participation of Serbian projects in European and international competitions. The Cultural Contact Point was created as a systemic training centre for international projects.

The Ministry of Culture agreed that the cultural policy focus should be on excellence and quality because of the economic crisis. They also agreed that a new way of policy-making should be implemented. The policy of responsibility transfer, was supposed to stimulate cities and municipalities to promote local artistic production. They also created platforms for the creation of new artistic and cultural projects.

The Ministry has also been using the "Year of" to promote a specific art field throughout a year. For example, the Year of the Books and Literature focused on writers, publishers, language, etc.

This project has the month of World Literature in Serbia, in which Serbian ex-patriate writers will present their writings in Serbian and in the language of their choice. An interesting aspect of this project is that it will have a 24 hour live streaming literary marathon so that the countries where the writers live can see the event on the Internet.

*New technologies in Serbia:*

In the new technologies, the Minister of Culture supports the digitalization of cultural policy information, such as the Internet publication of a GeoCultural Map of Serbia. Also, HEREIN focuses in the digitalization of tangible heritage. The National Library has digitalized 500,000 items out of 2 million books since 2007.

Even though communication through the Internet is becoming very important, there is still a lack of computer equipment in most public cultural institutions. However, 2910 schools have received 30,000 computers from the Ministry of Culture through the project "Digital school".

The overuse of telephone lines is another big problem, as it arises even if an institution is technically well equipped.

Lastly, a new systemic telecommunication policy needs to be set so that new technologies can be used in cultural policy debates. The national change to digital broadcasting from analogue should be made in June 2015.

### III. Comparison of the four countries in the new technologies field:

The following table will be used as the main tool to compare the information that has been given in the previous chapter among the countries that were chosen.

The indicators chosen are the ones that are of utter importance if the governments want to properly utilize the new technologies in their cultural policies.

Indicator / Countries	Sweden	Spain	Russia	Serbia
Statistical information	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Targeted in Cultural Policies	No	No	Yes	No
Digitalization	High	High	High	High
Education	High	Medium	Low	Low
Proper equipment	High	Medium	Low	Low
Cultural Projects	Low	High	High	Low
International Networking	Low	High	Low	Low
Protection against piracy	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

The first indicator “Statistical information” is very important in order for the countries to know if they have been doing progress with the changes they have been doing regarding the new technologies and their application on the daily life of the citizens.

Out of the four countries, we found that Serbia was the only one that did not mention any statistical information regarding the number of people that uses Internet on a weekly

basis, the way the different regions are dealing with the new technologies, the way people include these technologies in their daily life, etc.

This issue is very important, not only because it is useful to get statistical information but also because it can be used as a starting point that can later be used to compare and show the progress (or lack of) that the country has had since the implementation of the new technologies in culture. By having no statistical information, the country is operating blindfolded without having a specific target (i.e. “50% of the population should have Internet access by the end of 2012) and therefore the aim is unclear and uncertain.

The second aspect, “Targeted in Cultural Policies” shows which countries have stated that they are targeting the improvement of the usage of new technologies as part of their cultural policies. In the information provided in the previous chapter, it is clear that only Russia has included this topic in their cultural policies:

*“The trends in cultural policy priorities include technological advancement within the cultural sector, the reformation and reduction of public cultural institutions and the decrease of state budget in culture.”*

Although the other countries are performing actions that relate to the improvement of new technologies in relation with culture, only one of these four countries is explicitly targeting this topic in their cultural policies.

The “Digitalization” in both of the EU countries is high, whereas in the analyzed non-EU countries is low in all of them. All four countries want to use digitalization to promote and preserve their cultural heritage. There is information about how many items have been digitalized in Serbia, but this information is missing in the other three countries, therefore a statistical comparison cannot be done. However, all countries mentioned digitalization in their main plans. All of them currently have many projects related to this aspect and progress in the digitalization has been constant.

“Education” is an indicator that is spoken about in all four countries. However, Sweden seems to be the best positioned in this. The Swedish government’s main priority is the education at all levels; therefore they have been focusing in the creation of programs and projects related to this. Since most of the people have Internet in this country, they are

already educated on the usage of new technologies and it is easier to keep this trend going in comparison with Russia and Serbia, in which people still need to be educated on these technologies. Serbia even mentions that there is an overuse of telephone lines even if the institution is well equipped. On the other hand, Spain needs to balance its country. It has two main spots that are highly educated in the new technologies: Madrid and Catalonia, but it needs to educate the rest of the country.

Of course this indicator relates to the following one “Proper Equipment”. Sweden has been working longer on the education of these new technologies; therefore it is better prepared than the other three. Spain, again, needs to provide with the proper equipment to the rest of the country. It has proper equipment in the main two regions, but it needs to provide the rest with the right equipment as well. Serbia mentions that there is a lack of computer equipment in most cultural institutions. Even though the project “Digital school” is providing schools with computers, the process has been slow and it still has a long way to go. In Russia, the infrastructure and cost is not enough for the regular citizen.

The “Cultural Projects” matter is high in Spain and Russia. This means that these two countries have created cultural projects in which the new technologies are used. As an example we can mention the “Canarias Mediafest” and “ArtFutura” from Spain, and the “Music for All” and “Our Heritage” e-magazines from Russia. Even though Sweden is very familiar with the new technologies, it does not have any cultural projects that stress the importance of the new media. Serbia lacks these type of projects as well.

“International Networking” relates to the usage of the new technologies to network culturally with other countries. In this rubric, only Spain has created a few projects that correlate culture, new technologies and other countries. Serbia’s “World Literature” project was a good start, but it needs to create more projects like this to raise its international networking level. Sweden and Russia do not currently have any projects that include all these three aspects.

One of the most important issues that relate to the new technologies is the “Protection against piracy”. All the analyzed countries except Serbia, mention that they have set measures that aim to stop piracy and protect intellectual property rights. These rights are important in every field, but they gain an added value when they are related to culture and

creativity. In order to promote the creation of new projects, the government needs to be able to guarantee the protection of ideas and their authors.

#### **IV. Scope of the Problems in Serbia:**

After doing the comparison, the main areas of opportunities that we can see in Serbia are the lack of proper equipment and the lack of cultural policies that guarantee the protection of intellectual property rights.

The lack of proper equipment in cultural and educational institutions triggers other factors such as the lack of education and the slow digitalization of cultural heritage. Serbia mentions that it does not have enough computers in its cultural institutions. It also states that people are still using the phone lines instead of the new technologies. This is mainly because there are still many people that do not have access to the Internet, especially in the provincial areas and therefore they do not know how to utilize these technological resources.

Digitalization has become very important in the past years and needs to be addressed in every country as it has become part of a new strategy called i2010. This strategy was set by the EU Commission to promote the development of the information society across Europe. Its main goal is to create a common European information space, regardless of their country of origin. Since Serbia is looking to be part of the European Union, working on the digitalization of its heritage and cultural documents can aid in the decision from the European countries to allow Serbia to join them. If this country shows that it is following the rules and trends that the Union is setting, it will be easier for them to let Serbia in.

Serbia needs to improve its policies regarding the protection of intellectual property rights because when the governments assure the exclusive rights of their creations to their authors and give them the ability to control and be compensated for their works, they make worth their while to be creative. "Creators should maintain sufficient control over new markets to keep the copyright incentive meaningful, but not so much as to stifle the spread of the new technologies of dissemination." (Ginsburg, 2001: 1613)

## **V. Conclusion and Recommendations for Serbia:**

The countries that were analyzed have been working in the implementation of new technologies to enhance their cultural institutions and promote their countries globally. However, there are differences regarding how much they have been doing and how much will be done in the future regarding this issue.

As expected, the EU countries show a more stabilized development of the new technologies in their countries. Nevertheless I was impressed to see that Spain had many projects and programs that relate the new technologies to culture. Before doing this research, I thought that Sweden would have more projects than Spain, but it seems like Spain is focusing more on this trendy topic. Sweden has a better infrastructure of new technologies but Spain relates these more to the promotion of its culture. Spain has always been more cultural than Sweden and therefore it promotes its own culture using all the tools it has. Russia is still far away in the usage of these technologies in comparison with the EU countries but it has many future projects that if they succeed will position this country in an interesting place that will aid them. Russia has been giving importance to this topic and this is why it has added it as one of its main cultural policy topics. Finally, Serbia is even further away than Russia from the EU countries as it just recently started applying these technologies and it still has a long way to go.

### *Recommendations for Serbia:*

Serbia should make a greater effort in the adoption of new technologies, not only because it will aid the cultural field but because it will be useful for the country's overall development. A nation's ability to adopt new technologies affects everything from the cost of producing capital goods to per capita income. Research has shown that countries that take longer to adapt to new technologies face a drop in per capita income. The variations in the speed of adoption are related to at least a quarter of the differences in per capita income among countries.

On the cultural field, the government should make a priority to provide the cultural institutions and schools with better equipment. By educating the future generations, the transition to this type of technology will be easier and smoothly. Training the current

professionals is also needed as most of the people that currently have jobs in the cultural institutions have a lot of knowledge but are very outdated in the technological field, blocking the progress. Cultural institutions should give a certain time for their employees to learn how to use these tools and if they are not able to learn or do not want to adapt to the changes in the institution they should be repositioned in a job were these technologies are not as used.

The Ministry of Culture should also focus in giving more importance to the intellectual property rights. Even though there are some measures that have been taken, not having it as part of the cultural policies can affect the authors' will to create innovative cultural expressions.

In order to get help from other countries, the Ministry of Culture and the government should create international projects and festivals such as the ones that are seen in Spain. This will give them a better look into how these technologies work and will help them promote the country as well.

Russian's idea of creating a Cyrillic domain to overcome the language barrier can be used as well during this transition stage. The older generations might find it difficult to use these tools since most of the information that can be found is in a language or a writing that is not their own. Forcing them to use tools that they are not familiar with and with an unfamiliar or hard language makes them more hesitant to change. Since they are used to writing and researching in Cyrillic this change can facilitate the transition. As the new generations grow old, the Cyrillic domain can be used less until the full transition is done.

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