

Keynote: 15 blunders on the road to digital integration – *and how to avoid them*
Jonathan Drori, Thoughtsmith



Introduction by Jo Taylor

We're going to be thinking today about how we can link across the whole organisation and digital can help us galvanise our organisation. I'm very pleased to introduce our keynote speaker Jonathan Drori. Jonathan is a found partner of Thoughtsmith which is an organisation working with public institutions and charities to develop integrated business, creative and digital strategies. Johnathan has experience from a wide range of different aspects of arts, cultural and charity organisations. He has been a producer, a commissioner, looked after large, national projects and is also on the board of directors for several large public organisations. As such, Jonathan has been party to many of the opportunities of becoming a digital organisation as well as bearing witness to some of the horrible blunders that can be made.

Keynote: Jonathan Drori

This presentation is about the most common blunders that I've come across with my colleagues. Quite a few of them I've made myself and while I'm not proud of that, we do learn from our mistakes. I'm going to start by asking; 'why digital?' And I don't think it's that you don't know the answers to that but it is always useful to recap on the terminology and the words to describe it to other people.



The first thing is that you can **connect people to content**

- Widen your footprint – connections with objects or experiences
- Personal – person/location-aware marketing
- Location-based services
 - Digital graffiti
 - Geo-cacheing
 - Find amazing stories
- Customised communications – alerts, emails, texts, tweets, Facebook etc....

You can **connect people to each other**

An advantage of being a 'connector', especially in an arts context where people are emotionally engaged rather than intellectually engaged is very important. If you think about your own personal relationships and how you entered into those relationships, some of you will have met your partner through someone else or you will have been at a party or someone will have introduced you. How do you feel about the person who introduced you? Probably positive – if you are still in the relationship!

People will love you for it if you can introduce them to people who are of like mind or like emotion. And of course you can get people to talk about you – because there's no better salesman than a mate of yours.

- Be a hub, a connector
 - Find others with similar interests
 - Find local friends
 - Belong
 - People will love you for it
- Get people to talk about you
 - (Twitter, Facebook, Vine etc.)

There's also an **opportunity to make the chain**

Advertisers and educators often think about a chain between 'stimulating interest' at one end to 'creating or doing something' at the other.

Stimulate interest

⇒ Engage

⇒ Guide

⇒ Communicate

⇒ Create or do something

In between you've got the possibility to engage people or the need to engage people to guide them to resources and to enable people to communicate because it is when people really communicate about things that it gets settled in their minds. That's why, if you are a teacher, you get kids to do a presentation about something. In the same way, by me, doing this, it consolidates it in *my* mind. You want to get people to communicate things as well as to create or do something. The advantage of the digital technologies is that you can enable each stage there in a seamless and easy way – lower the barriers between each of the stages. And you can help to create virtuous circles of content. For example; when I was in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), we commissioned something called *Mad for Arts* along with SANE and MIND and other mental health charities. The idea was that people who were in the mental health system – a surprisingly large percentage of the population – would learn digital skills by becoming critics of art, architecture and music etc. In order to do that, our great institutions would open up their doors and provide a video box on which people could give their critique on art works from the particular point of view of their mental health issue. Those people would then get some training in turning that into web content and the best material would appear before and after the main evening news on Channel Five with a call to action for more people to go back to the website and go to the gallery etc. We had around 800,000 people take part in that which was a good hit. If you think of that as an example, what happened there is that there was integration between what people were doing in the digital world, one that was marketed to them and what they were doing in the real world.

The other bit of this is that you can **help to run the business**.

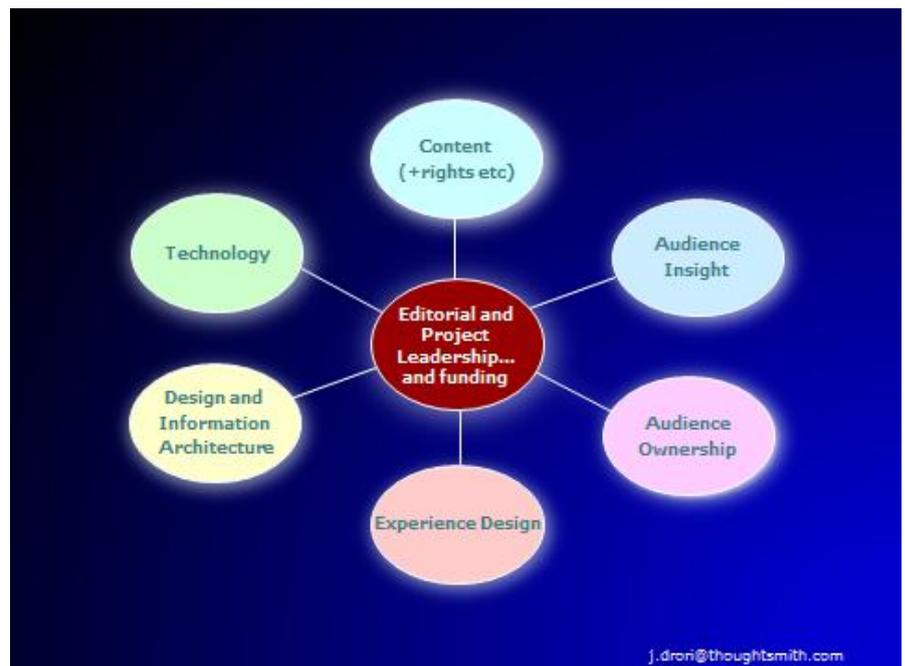
- Enable feedback – not only internally but find out more about audiences/ users
- Enable people to
 - Recruit others – making it cheaper for you to acquire audiences
 - Add value for you by giving you feedback about what you do, maybe donate money
 - Add value for each other – everyone who comes to a website or a service can help the whole thing to grow value. One of the measures that you might want to use is; Can everyone who visits, whether it's on Facebook, interacts through Twitter or comes to a website add value for other people with one click? Can they add value just by being there? You can infer information about what's valuable to people just by their behaviour through a digital service, or by observing people in the gallery. You can derive value from that if you analyse the data in the right way. You don't always have to get them to write a whole review on Amazon to be valuable...
- Cheaper transactions
- You can do things faster
- Better collaboration – create more flexible teams internally

Why is it important to integrate?

You want to be in a situation where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. You can use technology as an enabler of many processes and I think that, just as electricity is part of everything that we do and we take for granted, I think that digital will be as well. I think that the word 'digital' will just go the way of 'Turbo' – it just becomes part of everything. And, from a marketing point of view, enable us to be faster and more coherent, targeted and timely.



From the digital side, one is trying to integrate these things and then trying to integrate these aspects of operating a digital service into your whole operation. There are two levels of integration happening. The one that most people misunderstand at the beginning is the difference between having audience insight and having someone who 'owns' the audience. You need to go to the organisations or develop relationships with people who own audiences. That might not always be yourself for every audience that you want to get to in every way.



Fifteen blunders

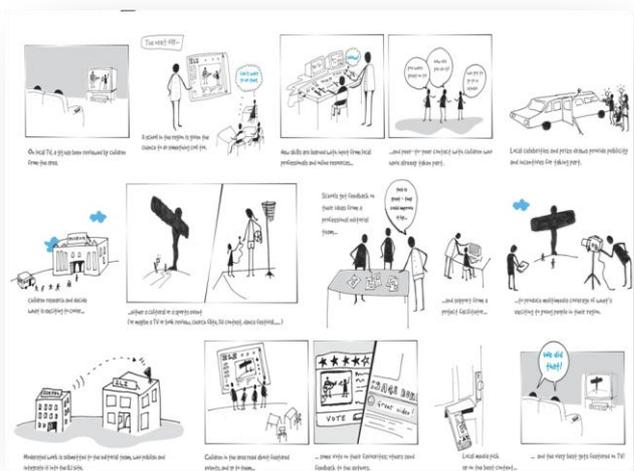
I've split this up into three groups:

- **Audiences and users**
- **Technology and processes**
- **Bad management and bad leadership**

To begin the countdown, number 15 on my list of common blunders is ***not considering the user experience holistically***.

I described an experience before; *Mad for Arts* which was a user journey and in order to get to that user journey and others that we develop we try to, on paper, create a storyboard that people can cluster around and comment. Some of the journey is digital and some of it isn't therefore reflecting what life is like. It's really important that this is done on paper because if you make it too nice with a fancy toolkit then people feel that they can't say what they really think as it can look too professional.

The higher up the organisation that this is going on the better – you want people to own the whole process of developing and being able to communicate on your behalf what is happening. It enables someone who's not highly qualified to ask 'not-so-dumb' questions. This example (above) was something that went to Tessa Jowell (Secretary of State at the time) in order to persuade her to fund a particular project and she could intelligently interrogate this in a way that would be difficult if it was just written up on paper.



Number 14 on my list is ***confusing project management with editorial leadership***

When the Millennium Dome was made (I think it was) Jacques Chirac who said: 'I think it is very nice but what is it for?' And nobody really knew at the time. It has since been applied to some good purpose. On the other hand, the Ferris wheel on the South Bank is quite clear in its purpose. In television we're used to having an Executive Producer who can go into a cutting room and on behalf of an audience say if something's not working and it should be changed. That is someone making a decision on behalf of an audience. Quite often, with large projects that involve technology in some way you don't have that person. There are lots of mid- and large-size projects going on at the moment where you have a steering group that thinks that as long as a project is on time and on budget they'll just 'let it go'. There isn't a person looking after it on behalf of an audience.

Then there's the ***Beta-Omega blunder (13)***

At the Beta stage there can be a kind of 'terror', a sort of stasis that happens when organisations are really worried about their reputation and don't want to release something that isn't perfect. You have to remember now that a lot of the audience have been educated to understand that something might be released in 'beta'. So long as you tell them that this is a bit of an experiment or something that you are trying out they will relaxed about it. There are certain kinds of risks that you don't want to take and I'll come to those later but the idea of launching something that doesn't quite work the way that you want it to, as long as you aren't over-claiming for it, is less of a worry in real life that it should be. People shouldn't be as worried about it as they are and I see lots of good things that could be launched quickly and get feedback from users to make it better and better rather than waiting until it's a thing of perfection. At the Omega end of the scale is not understanding that digital assets have a 'life' that may go beyond a television programme or a performance. You need to have a plan for what will happen to those digital assets and preferably commission them in such a way that they will have value that isn't connected to one particular event.



Number 12 on my list is ***forgetting the rules of virality***

In order to spread a virus there are three things that you have to do as quickly as possible. Whether it's flu that you are spreading or an idea via social media ... it's the same:

- What's the number of contacts?
- How contagious is it?
- What's the incubation period?

Think about your communications to other people and consider, for example, what Facebook has done – they've worked very hard on these three things. But, I'm constantly receiving messaging from arts organisations that isn't in a form that is easy for me to pass on or give me the motivation to do that. There also aren't the things that would encourage me to do it quickly ... there and then. If you want to run a viral campaign then these are the things that you need to work on.

Technology and processes

In the UK we are fabulously ***bad at piloting the right things (11)***

If you are a car manufacturer and you've made your car, you then find out if you can replicate it. Can you make this car over and over again in a clear and understood way? Can you scale up your car factory so that instead of making ten cars you can make 100 or 1,000 cars in a particular time scale? Can we do this in a sustainable way? We talk about these things but when we pilot stuff in the public sector we don't tend to pilot *those* things. Because in the public sector projects are funded mainly by politicians who like new things to announce. There is an incentive to announce new ideas which means that something new and shiny is created, the pilot is taken to the audience and they say; 'we love it!' So we see that as success. But what you haven't tested is whether you can replicate or scale it and if there's a working business model to be built around it. That is rarely part of that first pilot which is a big mistake.

Number 10 – ***not involving technologists from the start***

There's a large, UK environmental charity that has repeated false starts with large digital-integration projects because they didn't involve technology from the start. There are reasons why people don't do that and one is that people find it hard to understand technology and technologists and there is an attitudinal factor in that the technology is seen as the 'oily-rag division' with a 'do-not-enter' sign on the door. One of the reasons that the BBC got ahead very quickly at the start of the digital game was because the Director General at the time had a background in engineering and I think it's no coincidence that he appointed a chief technologist to the board.



I'm not suggesting that you try to do all your technology in house but you need to have enough in-house understanding and be integrated with the rest of your board so that you can commission and procure it in a good way. There are very cheap services now, with pitfalls in using them in some instances, but there are also fantastic opportunities in centralised services where someone has said 'these are the kind of services that this sector will require and we're going to give you that service'. You can outsource to them ... all the digital integration stuff is in there and as long as you don't want something that's too different to what other people want there are great advantages in that because some of those services are really very cheap now but you need to have the technology embedded in your organisation in order to use them well.

Digital leadership

The partnership blunder (9)

People go into partnerships for all sorts of reasons but quite often in the arts and public sector because someone is telling them to. The pinnacle of this is the European Union (EU) where they make you do partnerships. Those kinds of forced partnerships can be a horrendous waste of money. The kinds of things that people are motivated by if you ask them will be big audiences, doing good for the world etc. But they also want political clout. They want power of some sort, they want limelight – a particularly important



thing in our business. And, of course, some of them want money. This will be difficult if you go into a partnership where everyone wants the same thing. There's the issue of large organisations, when partnering with small ones, perhaps being ruled by the size of their ego rather than what's best for the outcome of the project. Organisations are after some kind of reach, revenue and reputation. It's easy to forget that's what your prospective partner will want. If everyone in the partnership wants the same thing then unless you can somehow increase the size of the market it's a zero-sum game. What they get ... you won't get. You need to understand who is going to gain what and find complementary partners. Do you really have to lead on this project or can you facilitate and maybe take some income instead?

Another blunder that I see is, when you are setting up partnerships is to set them up at the highest lever or at the lowest level without trying to get all parts of the organisation really understanding each other.

Measuring the wrong things (8)

- Two digital usage examples
 - Page views – a lot of organisations still go to the board with a measurement of 'page views'. It's not a very useful measure so people started measuring 'user sessions' but again, is that a valuable measure of what your organisation is about?
 - Should we make our material available to others? If you measure things such as page views and that goes to your board you might be protective of your material so that it doesn't get pushed out to other organisations who might have larger audiences and gain you greater brand awareness or a greater audience. Where you put your material depends on how you are measured and many boards measure the wrong thing and therefore stop people sharing material where otherwise they could. A solution to this could be to make sure that you get back the statistics on where it's being shared and often material through programming interfaces allow you to get user data and information.
 - In return? What, how? (Credit, money?)
- Present value vs. future potential value

Blunder number 7 – *not appreciating different kinds of risks*

Organisations often don't understand that there's a difference between 'don't kill' and 'don't libel' which were the BBCs big things in my day. They didn't mind too much if you went a little bit over budget so long as you did something creative and interesting. There's a difference between each of these risks for organisations and the lawyers and the boards who control this stuff often don't understand those differences. Taking a risk of releasing something in Beta is not the same as taking a Health and Safety risk but they are often treated in the same way

<p>Financial Reputational Safety Opportunity</p>
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Chronic mismanagement of procurement – 6a

Procurement can be wasteful, there's a stubborn mis-interpretation of European procurement law which leads to a handy, one-size-fits-all procurement process in many organisations where, if you are procuring a bucket costing £1.50, you go through the same process as if you are procuring a big piece of machinery for a few million pounds.



As well as chronic mismanagement of procurement there's **acute mismanagement of procurement**. Quite often when people are procuring computers or technology tools, they don't know what it is they are procuring as they've never used it/done it before and it might even be a complete mystery to them. If you are going to have laser eye surgery ... would you rather go to someone who has done it before?

5 – managing contracts badly

Contracts are managed appallingly. We once commissioned a Local Authority who said that they would build something amazing and fantastic – which is why we were sceptical. Because of that we had a contract with them instead of giving them a grant. If they had told us that there was a 'dog in their back garden' we'd have believed them. But what they effectively told us was that there was a unicorn in their back garden. If someone says there's a unicorn in the back garden – you need better evidence. And the quality of evidence needs to be higher. We didn't have the quality of evidence so we entered into a very careful contract with them and when they built us the 'swimming pool instead of the jacuzzi' that we ordered we didn't have to pay them.

4 – forgetting that little digital projects can lead to structural upheaval

Digital integration busts boundaries

- Exposes silos and lack of co-operation
- Structural change often follows
- This can be a reason for prevarication

3 – failing to be strategic

Remember that ...

- 'Digital' is part of technology strategy and the Technology Strategy is part of *overall* strategy
- A neat idea, or even a group of neat ideas, is *not* a strategy
 - What's the purpose, and why?
 - What resources are needed?
 - The opportunity cost?

We often visit organisations that you would expect to have a really good strategy in place yet they don't. There's no harm in having a strategy which is simply a set of goals and how you are going to get there changes every now and then – you'd expect it to. These are things that don't have to be beautifully designed – they should be a working, living document for people to rally round.

- Will resources be budgeted in an honest way? Really?

Often in publicly-funded arts organisations you might find that the online shop is budgeted for in a particular way but they've forgotten to take into account all the people who might be needed to work on this in different parts of the organisation because they are already 'kind of' paid for.

3 – ***lack of experience on the board (s)***

The boards of our organisations are populated by people who are, by definition, senior, have excellent connections into money etc. and are generally capable of very wise decisions. But there's a lack of experience in things moving rapidly in terms of technology and that's damaging, not because you always want people who are going to say 'yes' or because you want people to agree with what you are doing, but they need to be someone who the rest of the board can look to and trust that those 'digital' decisions will be OK in the way that the rest of the board will look to a management consultant, marketing consultant or accountant. They should have the trust as a group that these things are being well looked after.

3 – ***training and development***

- Policy makers, governors trustees, executives need
 - Training
 - Peer learning
 - Mentoring
- Safe places to ask 'dumb' questions – maybe over small lunches or similar.
- Maybe set up a digital arts marketing academy?

2 – ***the failure to emulate digital leaders***

We did some work for the DCMS a little while ago about what things in common the organisations have that do this well. They are *ambitious*, they want to do this, they want to integrate and that means starting right from the top and they need to be *technophile*. They need to be a critical mass of people who 'fiddle' with technology or with new ways of getting to audiences – it's not all about the technology – just an interest in experimenting. You want an organisation which is not beholden to its *silos* – people will work in departments but you need to have good reasons for working across them. You want an organisation that is at least somewhat *audience led* which is a paradox because arts are led by artists as well as audiences so you need to balance these two things. There are certain aspects of what you need to do to be audience led. As Peter mentioned, you need to be able to use the *data*. You need to be *agile* – you need to be able to move quickly. It's not always to do with the size of the organisation. We need to be *experimental* ...have a feeling in your organisation that you are going to try things and that they might not work.

My final point is about ***being stuck in an unhelpful mind set***

This is an example of a launch at an art gallery (opposite). It looks like every other launch that you've ever been too but look more closely and you can see that around the wall they've put up a chalk board for people to write comments. It's the sort of thing that curators might worry about as people may write on the paintings or write rude or negative things. There couldn't be anything less digital about this – it's as lo-tech as you could get – but there's a mind set which is about involving the audience and having a relationship with people which is different. That's the thing that needs to change.

To sum up, if I were to say what were my top priority blunders it's the ***mind-set*** blunder, the ***board experience*** blunder, it's the ***attitude to technology*** blunder and the ***desire to working across departments*** blunder.

