

AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE DAY - 5 MAY 202

Webinar on Youth and digital technologies for the promotion and safeguarding of African Heritage

Digital developments are happening at a remarkable pace in Africa. But despite the increasing role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in people's daily lives, only few Heritage institutions are harnessing the opportunities they provide. UNESCO and the African World Heritage Fund are therefore taking the lead in proposing a webinar to highlight the successes already achieved in the use of new technologies on World Heritage, and give voice to the youth, site managers, and stakeholders of these new technologies. The webinar will allow us to address the demands and needs of heritage practitioners, to gather the aspirations of youth regarding their heritage, and enable us to work jointly with experts in new technologies and find solutions to the challenges faced.

The digital revolution is a phenomenon that is unfolding on the African continent with unprecedented speed and vigour, and in singular ways, sometimes even skipping stages essential to its harnessing.

In addition, the rapid spread of ICTs in Africa and their use show that African countries are following a path, in many ways distinct from that of other parts of the world. Indeed, ICT solutions may enable African states to bypass certain stages and thus potentially reach their development objectives more rapidly. Some sectors, for example the banking sector in Africa, have benefitted from this advance proving that the digital revolution can also contribute to the economic and social transformation of countries, as the digital environment is conducive to innovation and business development.

However, for the impact of ICTs on development processes to be confirmed and amplified, several challenges remain. The digital revolution, through its pace and technicality, carries with it the risk of spatial fragmentation, particularly between cities and the countryside, and social fragmentation, linked to age, gender, income inequality and level of education. The digital revolution cannot bear fruit without major efforts in education, training and capacity building.

Threats to cultural heritage are numerous: global warming, armed conflict and uncontrolled urban development, etc... From the intentional destruction of the Timbuktu mausoleums of saints (Mali) to the flood in Grand-Bassam, these signals should alert us of the threat faced by our common UNESCO World Heritage.

While long-term participatory management remains the best solution for the effective protection of cultural heritage, this management will inevitably occur under urgent conditions due to the risks that heritage faces. In this context, new technologies can prove to be a valuable and rapid tool for safeguarding and preservation. Nevertheless, digitising historical heritage in this emergency context raises technical challenges and ethical issues that we will address during this conference through concrete and varied examples.

Programme:

Digitisation of heritage sites: challenges and opportunities

By **Bastien Varoutsikos**, ICONEM & **Mohamed ALHASSANE**, Director of the IMANE-ATARIKH association

World heritage is in danger. Pillage, urbanisation, armed conflict and climate change are damaging and destroying irreplaceable sites that bear witness to the cultures that have emerged and the civilisations that have flourished within them. These heritage sites embody the incredible cultural diversity of humankind, hence the importance of their documentation and preservation. This presentation will aim to present the possibilities offered by digitisation, large-scale scanning, the use of drones and the photorealism of 3D to ensure their transmission to future generations and their defence today.

The Use of emergent technology for documentation, monitoring and promotion of heritage

By **Abubakar Diwani Kakari**, Senior Lecturer, School of Computing Communication and Media Studies, The State University of Zanzibar

Heritage provides us with a window into the past. Its study and awareness allow to develop one's own cultural identity, to understand one's present and plan for one's future. However, African heritage sites are often unwell documented, and many face threats of damage or destruction. As such, digital collections of the tangible archaeological, cultural and anthropological information contained in our UNESCO World Heritage sites have become particularly relevant.

Through the example of Zanzibar, this presentation will enable us to understand the scope of possibilities when it comes to using new technologies to conserve our cultural heritage and will highlight the opportunities and challenges that such an initiative brings.

Use of drones and robots in Heritage conservation at Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary

By **Mallé GUEYE**, National Trainer and Teacher-Researcher at the University of Thies

Digitising is the way forward for a revolutionary approach in knowing, analysing, continuously monitoring, and preserving natural heritage. Natural heritage requires the most performant means and techniques to acquire information, and drones, robots and associated technologies could be the best tools for this purpose in terms of operating costs, data and accuracy.

Through the concrete example of the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary's experience, this presentation will present the main assets of the use of drones in the field of natural heritage analysing their usability, cost-effectiveness.

Digitisation and management of heritage sites

By **Primož Kovačič**, Founder & Managing Director of Spatial Collective

The involvement of communities in heritage conservation is regarded by experts as a key element of a people-centered approach. This approach is thought to bring proven benefits to heritage and to the communities and it is therefore important not to exclude local communities and youth from our reflection and support them on how to adapt available technologies to collect important data to take appropriate development solutions.

Spatial Collective is a Nairobi-based, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and technology consulting company founded in 2012 that has trained hundreds of individuals on mapping, open

data, and GIS; mapped dozens of communities across the continent and provided support to numerous national and international organizations through research and data visualization. The goal of this presentation is to present the benefit, and the best practices of training communities on the use of affordable new technologies and methods, and how new technologies can be assets for job creation, to collect valuable data and conduct research for a better management and therefore a better conservation of heritage.

Digitisation, cultural heritage and smart tourism

By **Richard Hayes**, Africa Business Group, Director of Hofstra's Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The traditional and classical approach to cultural practices and heritage sites is being profoundly disrupted these days. The COVID-19 Pandemic and massive tourism has furthermore forced us to rethink our approach to heritage tourism by using new concepts that are more interactive and immersive. In this particular context, we must demonstrate creativity and originality, even if it means overturning their traditional practice when it comes to tourism strategies. While the integration of digital technologies makes it possible to enhance the visitor experience and, above all, to attract others, there are also some precautions to be taken. This presentation will specifically address the tourism-related risks that heritage may face and consider new technologies as an interesting tool to prevail.

Youth. digital and heritage: empower and involve youth over the next 50 years.

Primos presentation

Moderated by **Feven Tewolde Egbamichael**, Lalibela Project Manager, Expertise France

The proportion of young people in the African population is increasing. The challenge is already there, and it is urgent to respond to it. It is also a development opportunity for the continent, particularly in terms of innovation and social transformation. It becomes then important to be able to connect and inspire young Africans through the perspectives offered by the development new technology coupled with their rich heritage. This second part of the webinar will therefore aim to engage youth and let them debate on the different themes discussed above. In turn, young people, join by heritage practitioners and young technologies experts, will take the floor and express their views on the subject and on their vision for the next 50 years.

The webinar will take place on 5 May at 11 am (Paris Time) on the zoom Platform.

Agenda:

Time		
11h00	Welcoming of participants by Moderator, Fatma Twahir , site manager of Fort Jesus, Mombasa	
11h05	<u>Opening address</u>	<p>By:</p> <p>Lazare Eloundou Assomo, World Heritage Director</p> <p>H.E. Mr Souleymane Jules Diop, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegate of Senegal to UNESCO, Chairperson of the Africa group</p> <p>Souayibou Varissou, Executive Director, African World Heritage Fund</p>
	Photo Session	
11h20	Digitisation of heritage sites: challenges and opportunities (10min)	By Bastien Varoutsikos , ICONEM
11h30	The Use of Emergent technology for documentation, monitoring and promotion of Heritage (10min)	By Abubakar Diwani Kakari , Senior Lecturer, School of Computing Communication and Media Studies, The State University of Zanzibar
11h40	Use of drones and robots in Heritage conservation at Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary (10min)	By Mallé GUEYE , National Trainer and Teacher-Researcher at the University of Thies
11h50	Digitisation and management of heritage site (10 min)	By Primož Kovačič , Founder & Managing Director of Spatial Collective
12h00	Digitisation, Cultural Heritage and Smart Tourism (10min)	By Richard Hayes , Africa Business Group, Director of Hofstra's Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship
12h10	Youth. Digital. Heritage: empower and involve youth over the next 50 years. (30 min)	Moderated by Feven Tewolde Egbamichael , Lalibela Project Manager, Expertise France
12h40	<u>Closing remarks</u>	By Hadj Said Riadh , Site Manager of Medina of Sousse, President of the Interim Committee of the African Site Manager Network
12h45	End of the Webinar	