

Digital Media Evolution, Cinematic Storytelling, and Audience Engagement: An Interdisciplinary Study of Contemporary Film, Communication, and Performing Arts Practices

Dr. Saurabh Sood¹, Ms. Hari Priya B K², Dr. Aswini Chithra S³, Chithra Lekshmi K S⁴, Madhulika⁵, Dr. Naneetha R⁶, Hirak Gupta⁷

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Specialization in MJMC, M.Phil, Ph.D SV Govt. College Ghumarwin (Bilaspur), Himachal Pradesh, 174021, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/888-901-888-901>, Email ID: ssoodjmc@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Communication, Specialization in Advertising, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Ramapuram Campus, Email ID: pri10686@gmail.com

³Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Communication, Specialization in Film Studies, Media and Society, Digital Media, Gender Studies, Vels Institute of Science and Technology, Advanced Studies, ORCID ID: 888-901-888-901, Email ID: sundar.aswini@gmail.com

⁴Research Scholar, Department of Communication, Specialization in New Media, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, Pin code: 641014, Email ID: chithra.masscomm@gmail.com
ORCID: 888-901-888-901

⁵Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts, Chandigarh University, Email id-Madhu21101991@gmail.com
Orchid id-<https://orcid.org/888-901-888-901>

⁶Associate Professor, Department of Visual Communication and Animation, Saveetha Institute of Media and Communication Studies (SIMAC),(SCAD) Specialization in Development Communication, Media and Society, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS), Saveetha University, Thandalam, Email ID: naneravi@gmail.com ORCID ID: 888-901-888-901

⁷Assistant Professor, Department of BSHU (HU), Specialization in Gender Studies & Marginality, Asansol, Engineering College, West Bengal, ORCID ID: 888-901-888-901, Email ID: hirak.hu@aecwb.edu.in

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Aswini Chithra S, Chithra
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Naneetha R, Hirak Gupta
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ABSTRACT:

The changing nature of digital media has transformed the creative, communicative and performative aspects of today's art. The present article explores the connections and interactions among digital media, film narration, audience participation, communication and performing arts practices. The article explores the impact of digital platforms, streaming environments, social media, virtual performances, and hybrid works of art on the production, circulation and reception of visual and performing arts through a qualitative, interdisciplinary and interpretative lens. The focus of the discussion is on the overall impact of cinematic storytelling beyond the film itself, encompassing promotional materials, internet discussion, reactions from viewers, and the circulation in the film's platform. Audience engagement has also moved from what can be described as passive spectatorship to active participation, as viewers contribute to meaning-making through their reviewing, commenting, sharing, remixing and digital interaction. The article also suggests that the current digital technologies for performing arts are more and more characterized by digital mediation, virtual staging, screen-based presentation, and interactive spectatorship. These developments have made a clear distinction between film, communication and performance more difficult, and established an interdisciplinary realm of artistic practice. The article concludes by arguing that digital media is

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BY) more than just a technology; it's a cultural and aesthetic force that is influencing the way people tell stories, perform, and experience them today.
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1. Introduction

The digital revolution has altered the present-day situation of film, communication and performing arts by changing how creative works are created, distributed, consumed and engaged with. In previous art contexts, cinema and performance were connected with certain fixed locations like theatres, auditoriums, cinema halls, galleries, and festival sites. With the advent of digital platforms, streaming services, social media networks, virtual production systems, and online performance spaces, however, the conditions in which artists can express themselves have increased. This revolution has changed the way audiences can manipulate or interact with content, and it has shifted the interaction between creators and audiences to be more immediate, interactive and platform-dependent. Digital Engagement has thus become an important aspect of current artistic practice, particularly when audiences find themselves in a mediated, networked and participatory environment in which they encounter art works (Harding et al., 2019).

Modern film-telling no longer is confined within the frame of the film text. Stories can now be spread from trailers and teasers, posters, interviews, social media campaigns, fan

discussion, short videos, reaction content, and digital reviews. These "surrounding materials" set the audience's expectations prior to the viewing and continue to affect interpretation post-viewing. This way, storytelling is no longer limited to one established form, and is now a culture spread out and unfixed. The emotional and promotional aspect of artistic products has become more relevant, with the younger generations engaging in the creation of meaning through comments, sharing, self-expression and digital affiliation on social media platforms (Doherty, 2020). This means that film storytelling needs to be studied not only as a story, yet additionally as a tool of interaction that circumnavigates and keeps it.

It has also become a major topic of discussion in

the field of art today, with the digital transformation of the performing arts. Camera, streaming, telepresence, virtual staging, and digital scenography are increasingly weaved into the interactions between theatre, dance, music and live performance. These developments have posed threats to the notions of liveness, presence, embodiment, and spectatorship. This shift in practice of performance into online and hybrid

environments was particularly evident during the pandemic, when the digitization of performance was made necessary as spaces for creative continuity and audience connection (Sermon et al., 2022). Concurrently, the digital performance has sparked more consideration of the potential for meaningful shared experiences to emerge between performers and audiences in the context of mediated presence (Radak, 2023). The questions themselves are relevant to the visual and performing arts as they demonstrate the impact of technology on access as well as artistic meaning.

Another key aspect of the evolution of digital media is audience involvement. Today, viewers are not silent as they view movies and interpretations; rather they are active, responding, assessing, disseminating, remixing, recommending, and debating the art that they see digitally. So live-streaming concerts, online performances and platform-based fan cultures illustrate the audience's capacity to recreate a collective experience in absence of a physical togetherness (Upham et al., 2024). The performing arts are interwoven arts, too, in which music, movement, image, narration, and body expression are all deployed to make meaning in a variety of sensory and cultural registers (Brown, 2024). Audience engagement should thus be considered as an active, emotional, participatory and digital cultural process.

This development of digital platforms has also affected the broader context of the distribution and circulation of films and culture. With the

platforms now connecting content around user behaviour, interaction, visibility and accessibility (Pérez-Seijo & Silva-Rodríguez, 2024), audience-centred approaches are now ubiquitous in digital media innovation. Digital platforms are also among the factors that have shaped transnational cinema, as movies can be circulated across geographical, linguistic and cultural barriers faster than ever (Balan & Jiang, 2025). These developments show the film industry today is being played out in a globalized, digital environment where it thinks in terms of circulation, identity, and cultural exchange now more and more mediated by platforms.

Meanwhile, digital culture has ushered in new forms of participatory spectatorship. More and more audiences are now acting out their reactions in the form of memes, rituals, digital discussion, fan practices and group digital behaviour (Madsen, 2025). In addition, OTT platforms have significantly impacted the economic and cultural framework of the film industry by reshaping viewing patterns, distribution channels, and audience expectations (Zhongyu & Hashim, 2025). Furthermore, virtual production and digital scenographic processes have extended the vocabulary of the performance and art of the screen, increasingly blurring the distinctions between screen, stage and virtual space (Beak, 2026). Hence, the aim of this study is to consider the evolution of digital media, cinematic storytelling and audience engagement as related components that drive the current practices of film, communication and performing arts.

While a wealth of research has emerged on aspects of digital media, film platforms, virtual performance and audience participation, scholarship frequently focuses on each of these separately. The need for an interdisciplinary discussion on the relationship between cinematic storytelling and communication practice, between audience engagement and performing arts and in one analytical framework. So, in this article, I will look into the impact of the digital media evolution on the current film and performance practices: its influence on the form of the narrative, on the involvement of the viewer, on the communication that happens in the platforms, and on the hybrid form of artistic expression.

The aim of the study is to:

- To explore the changing nature of digital media, and its impact on film and performing arts storytelling, communication and engagement.

- To discuss selected case-based examples as illustrations of the connection between digital platforms, participatory spectator, mediated performance and the hybrid contemporary arts practice.

2. Literature Review

The critical literature on visualization, film narration and audience participation reveals that the current visual and performing arts are being influenced by platform communication, participatory viewers and mixed art forms. Most studies on cinema and performance were approached as spectators who would receive the finished product, however, recent work has focused on the modification of the viewing situation by digital environments. New tools like online viewing platforms, streaming interfaces, virtual stages, mobile screens and immersive technologies have revolutionised how creative content is produced, distributed and consumed. This change is particularly apparent in the fields of film and live performance, where the narrative journey spills over into different media environments and where viewers' reactions contribute to a cultural life of the work. This study examines time-synchronous commentaries during online movie experience, which reveals how movie audiences interact synchronously as a group while watching a movie (Ni & Coupé 2022).

One of the main bodies of literature addresses the impact of digital platforms on the audiovisual sector and the reconfiguration of circulation. Streaming services and online platforms have disrupted the traditional approach to the cinema distribution, making the content more accessible, personal, and algorithmic. These shifts are not only reflected in the way audiences experience movies, but also in the way filmmakers think, design, and market a film story. Platform-based cinema has generated new conditions of independent production, transnational circulation and segmentation of audiences. Meanwhile, it has sparked concerns over creative autonomy, market control and cultural footprint of digital

intermediaries. Research into new digital cinema brings attention to the fact that platforms are not neutral channels but active forces which influence the production, circulation and reception of audiovisual content (Capalbi et al., 2021).

In addition, the literature shows that audience engagement has also turned to be more immersive and participatory via digital performance environments. Virtual stages, mixed-reality environments and immersive performance formats give audiences a fresh experience of the artworks, unlike the traditional theatre and traditional cinema. These can be artistic, storytelling, physical and technological. The story to be told is important, but so is the spatial, sensory, and interactive aspects of the digital environment to engage the audience. The studies on immersive performance on virtual stages indicate that the audience's presence, attention, emotional response and interactions in digitally created performance space can be measured (Kraj et al., 2019).

Another significant research concept is related to the shift in the relationship between actors and audiences in virtual performance. Traditional theatre requires the co-presence of the performer, the space, and the spectator, and relies on physicality to a great degree. Digital performance alters this relationship, with the addition of screens, cameras, streaming platforms and mediated interaction. This can limit some of you can have in the bedroom but it can also open up new possibilities of becoming accessible, trying out something new and reaching your audience. With the emergence of virtual performance, the actor-audience interaction is no longer confined to a physical space, but can be recreated with digital tools and mediated presence (Wang, 2021).

Theatre studies also reveal that digital technologies are not simply crisis-management solutions for theatre performances, but can also be used as creative tools for artistic adaptations. Digital immersive technologies give theatre practitioners the opportunity to reimagine rehearsals, staging, design, audience positioning and the delivery of the narrative. This has opened the door for new modes of cooperation between "old" and "new" performance techniques and technological experimentation. The virtual theatre can preserve

some of the characteristics of a live artistic process, but can also open up new opportunities for spatial design and interaction with the audience. Adopting traditional theatre processes in the context of digital immersive technologies

demonstrates that performance practice can be revitalised when creatively connected with the virtual environment (Simpson, 2021).

Further scholarship in the field of virtual concerts adds to the understanding of digital audience engagement in the performing arts. Virtual concerts are an amalgamation of music, visual performance, platform engagement, and mediated presence, blending the live and digital experience. Immersion, accessibility, emotional involvement, social interaction and perceived authenticity are factors that influence audience attitudes towards such events. The findings are relevant to the current article because of the view that digital engagement is a technical, emotional and cultural process. Research on virtual concerts shows that the acceptance of virtual concerts depends on the virtual performance's ability to involve, connect and provide experiential value to the audience (Deng & Pan, 2023).

Digital storytelling studies also show that mobile and interactive digital storytelling have broadened the scope of the storytelling experience. Cultural and artistic applications of mobile storytelling enable viewers to experience storytelling in space, in motion, in image, in sound and in interaction. These practices relate to the connection between stories and involvement, memory, and bodily engagement. It's important for film and performing arts, as it means that narrative no longer has to be located in an actual screen or stage. Mobile digital storytelling for cultural heritage shows the potential of digital technologies in the development of participatory digital storytelling experiences, involving media, space, and the audience (Vrettakis et al., 2019).

Immersive video research also reinforces the notion that digital media can heighten viewer engagement, moving them around in the narrative environment. The 360-degree video format immerses the viewer in the scene and makes them feel more present and involved in the visual world, as opposed to traditional video content. The

implications for cinematic story and for the performing arts are particularly relevant as it breaks the traditional dichotomy between viewer and representation. The technology points to a possible future where storytelling is more spatial, experiential, and audience-driven. According to experimental studies, immersive media can make the audience feel more engaged, more present and more emotionally connected to the content of 360-degree videos (Shin et al., 2018).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Nature of the Study

The study is of the qualitative and interpretive research design, and it attempts to analyze the relationship between the evolution of digital media, cinematic storytelling, audience engagement, communication and performing arts practices. This type of design is suitable since it deals with meanings, cultural changes, artistic changes, and the experiences of audiences, not with numerical measurement or experimental testing. The study is analytical, descriptive and conceptual in character, and it explores the contemporary film, digital media and performance as interrelated cultural fields. The research brings together insights from film studies, communication studies, digital media studies, and performance studies to examine the impact of digital platforms on creative production, approaches to storytelling, presentation of performance, circulation and audience participation.

3.2 Sources of Data

The study is grounded in secondary and publicly available sources related to the field of digital media, cinema, communication and performing arts. These can encompass books, Journal articles, research papers, critical essays, film studies literature, communication studies, performance studies, and selected digital examples. Publicly-available material, such as film trailers, promotional material, online performance footage, audience reviews, interviews, social media conversations and online cultural commentary, may also be taken into account. They offer a wide base to study the impact of digital media on film storytelling, audience engagement and modern performance arts through various platforms.

3.3 Sampling Method

The research is purposive sampling to select relevant examples, texts and digital materials. This approach is suitable because the research is not an examination of all films or performances or digital platforms but only of those that are clearly reflective of the themes of the title. Selected examples should illustrate digital transformation, cinematic story telling, engaging with an audience, communications and/or hybrid performing arts practices. The sampling method emphasizes relevance to contemporary times, public availability, artistic value, and linkages with the visual and performing arts. This helps the study to stay focused and maintain interdisciplinary nature of the research topic.

3.4 Case Study Selection and Analytical Rationale

Three case-based examples were purposefully selected to enhance the qualitative and interpretive basis of the study. The chosen cases are: Interactive documentary *New Life*, digital performance live-stream concert audience interaction for BTS, digital performance *To Be a Machine (Version 1.0)* by Dead Centre. The cases selected aimed at presenting three major aspects of the article: cinematic storytelling, mediation of performing arts and digital audiences. *New Life* demonstrates the potential of the digital platforms to turn documentary storytelling into participative and interactive media. *To Be a Machine (Version 1.0)* is a theatre and performance work that explores the field of theatre and its negotiation of presence, liveness and spectatorship in a digitally mediated environment. The live-stream concert of BTS is an example of how an audience collaborates together by engaging in social media, communication and online culture.

The choice of these cases is timely as they relate directly to the main title of the article. The first case is a digital cinematic storytelling, the second one is a contemporary performing arts practice, and the third one is an audience engagement through digital communication. As a combination they enable the study to look at the process of digital media evolution in various but interrelated artistic areas. In the cases presented the statistical dimension is not a comparison, but rather a dimension for illustration and analysis, which is to

support the thematic results of the study. These aim to illustrate the new ways in which digital media transform the experience of narration, the relationship between performer and audience, circulation and participatory spectatorship in contemporary culture.

3.5 Methods of Analysis

The study is conducted themed, texted and interpreted. Recurring ideas were identified using a thematic analysis approach, including themes of digital transformation, participatory spectatorship, platform-based storytelling, hybrid performance and audience interaction. It uses textual analysis to analyse the narrative structure, visual presentation, cinematic language, performance elements and symbolic meanings. The observations are then drawn into a wider cultural and communication context through interpretative analysis. These approaches enable the study of the meaning, reception, circulation and participation of audience with the analysis of what is conveyed in current film and performing arts, as well as how digital media shapes these processes.

3.6 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of the study is developed in the relationship between the evolution of digital media, the transformation of storytelling, communication practices and audience engagement. Digital media is presented as the more powerful cultural and technological phenomenon, shaping the making, moving and receiving of films and performances. The form of cinematic storytelling, style, acting and platform extension are explored. Analyse Communication by promoting it, circulating it, and publicising it. The study of audience engagement is an active process of interpretation, sharing, response and participation. This has been designed to facilitate a holistic approach to the visual and performing arts of the modern world.

3.7 Ethical Considerations and Methodological Limitations

The study is conducted in an ethical manner and with publicly accessed scholarly and digital resources. Avoids revealing personal information and treats public opinion and comments in a general and respectful way due to

audience reactions, reviews, comments and social media posts. Academic sources, works of art and digital sources used for analysis are acknowledged correctly. Limited by the methodology that the study is qualitative and interpretative and not survey-based or statistical. The results are based on the sources that have been selected, on case examples, and on a thematic interpretation and therefore may not reflect all current practices of film, communication and performing arts.

4. Results

4.1 Digital Media as a Transformative Force in Contemporary Arts

The analysis suggests that digital media is central role in the present-day film, communication and performing arts practices as a transformative force. It has transformed the technical paradigm of production and the means by which works of art are circulated, accessed and interpreted. Digital platforms have opened up the possibilities of creativity beyond theatres, cinema halls, galleries and performance venues. This change demonstrates that digital media is used as a creative instrument and a cultural environment for the exchange of contemporary art.

4.2 Expansion of Cinematic Storytelling Beyond Traditional Narratives

The study reveals that film narration has transcended traditional linear stories and one-screen-per-day experience. The modern storytelling process is a multi-layered process that unfolds via trailers, teaser projections, cast interviews, posters, 'behind the scenes' videos, social media posts and audience-generated comments. These elements build upon the meaning of the film; they take up the story through digital circulation and public interaction. In this result, the cinematic narrative is becoming more fluid, interactive, fragmented, and oriented towards platforms in the digital media environment.

4.3 Audience Engagement as Active Participation

Based on the results, it is shown that the audience has gone from passive to active viewing. In the present day, audiences aren't just viewing something like a film or a performance; they are reacting to it, reviewing it, sharing it, interpreting

it, criticising it, remixing it and circulating it over digital platforms. This encounter generates a participatory culture where the viewer becomes a part of the public meaning of works of art. Hence, an engagement with the audience becomes a cultural process through which meaning is jointly constructed in interaction, in visibility, and in digital communication.

4.4 Communication as a Continuous Process of Meaning-Making

The analysis uncovers a communication which is no longer confined to publicity or promotion in the contemporary film and performing arts. Audiences' perceptions and interpretations are formed and influenced by digital campaigns, interviews, trailers, hashtags, reviews, and social media discussions before and after viewing. Communication is now enabling creators, performers, critics, platforms, and audiences to engage in an ongoing conversation about culture. The result indicates that the communication practices are part of the unending life of the artwork and affect the way in which artistic content is introduced, understood, remembered and circulated.

4.5 Hybridization of Film and Performing Arts

The analysis shows an increasing blurredness of the distinction between the cinema and performing arts practices. Cinema continues to borrow from gesture, movement, voice, staging, rhythm, and embodied expression, and the use of digital recording, camera framing, editing, projection and online streaming is becoming increasingly common in theatre, dance, music and live performance. This dynamic has muddled the waters of screen-based art and on-stage performance. The result is that contemporary artistic practice can sometimes take a hybrid form, with the elements of cinema and performance seeming to combine.

4.6 Platform Culture and Changing Viewing Practices

The results suggest that platform culture has completely reshaped audience viewing habits.

Streaming services, social media, smartphones, and short videos have transformed the way, when, and where people view movies and live entertainment. Viewing has gotten more personal, flexible, mobile, and fractured. Platform-based viewing fosters repeated viewing, selective viewing, quick response, and ongoing interaction, with the spectator being more active than previous, albeit more diffuse.

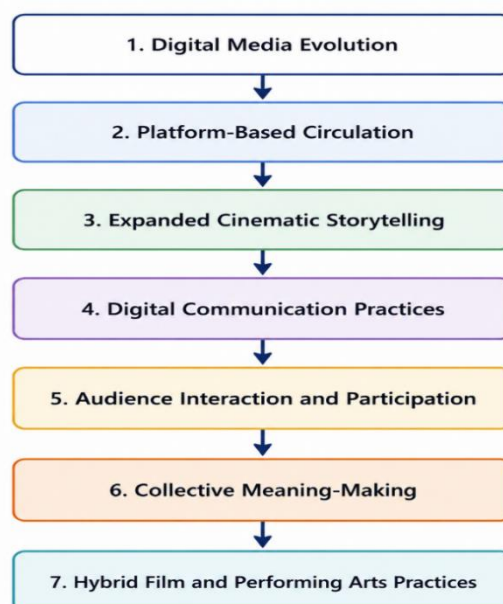


Figure 1. Conceptual flow showing how digital media evolution influences storytelling, communication, audience engagement, and hybrid artistic practice.

4.7 Digital Audience Metrics and Cultural Reception

The findings indicate that digital audience

engagement can be measured through various metrics, including views, likes, shares, comments,

ratings, subscriptions, and watch time. While these metrics offer tangible evidence of audience activity, they don't capture the full sense of engagement – its emotional, artistic, or cultural impact. An audience of great size might not give deep interpretation to a very popular film or performance; but a small audience might give meaningful discussion. So audience engagement needs to be measured in both quantitative cultural metrics and digital metrics.

4.8 Redefinition of Liveness and Presence in Performing Arts

The study reveals the impact of digital mediation on the concept of liveness in the performing arts. Historically, live performance has required that the performer and audience be physically present in a common area. This is no longer the case with digital platforms that deliver live, recorded and hybrid performances. The use of digital formats offers possibilities for greater access and reach, but also changes immediacy, bodily presence, and audience response. Liveness can then take place when people watch live performances, watch the performer interact with the audience, and participate in the performance through digital technologies.

4.9 Challenges of Digital Transformation in Artistic Practices

The analysis pinpoints some challenges arising

from digital transformation. Digital media brings increased opportunities for access and visibility, but can lead to artistic fragmentation, short attention spans, reliance on algorithms, commercial pressures and superficial engagement. The intimate and embodied nature of performing arts can be lost in the media of the screen, and storytelling through cinema can be influenced by platform requirements and numerical ratings. The challenges indicate that digital media offers new opportunities, but also poses questions regarding depth, authenticity, visibility and artistic value.

4.10 Interdisciplinary Nature of Contemporary Creative Practice

The results verify that film, communication and performing arts practices in the present cannot be investigated apart from each other. The digital media has established powerful cross-over connections between storytelling, performance, promotion, circulation, and audience involvement. Today, Film is connected via communication channels and performing arts are gradually becoming cinematic and

digital. This discovery confirms the interdisciplinary character of the research as a whole, demonstrating that the current practices of art are influenced by overlapping connections between the media technologies, narrative form, performing traditions, communication strategies, and audience behaviour.

Table 1. Thematic Results of Digital Media Evolution in Contemporary Film, Communication, and Performing Arts

Result Theme	Core Finding	Relevance to Article
Digital media transformation	Digital media has changed artistic production, circulation, access, and interpretation.	Supports the article's argument that digital media functions as both a creative tool and cultural space.
Expanded cinematic storytelling	Film narratives now extend through trailers, teasers, social media posts, reviews, and audience-generated responses.	Shows that cinematic storytelling is no longer limited to the internal structure of the film.

Active audience engagement	Audiences review, share, remix, interpret, and circulate artistic content across digital platforms	Establishes audience engagement as participatory meaning-making.
Communication as meaning-making	Promotional and audience communication shape how films and performances are understood.	Connects communication practices with artistic reception.
Hybridization of film and performance	Cinema and performing arts increasingly merge through recording, streaming, staging, movement, and screen-based presentation.	Demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary creative practices.
Platform-based viewing	Streaming platforms, mobile screens, and social media have changed viewing habits.	Explains how spectatorship has become flexible, fragmented, and interactive.
Redefined liveness	Digital mediation has changed the relationship between performer, space, and audience.	Supports the discussion of virtual performance and mediated presence.
Digital challenges	Algorithmic visibility, attention fragmentation, commercial pressure, and superficial engagement remain concerns.	Balances the results by showing both benefits and limitations of digital transformation.

4.11 Case-Based Interpretation of Digital Storytelling and Audience Engagement

The interactive documentary *New Life* is a first as an example of how film-based narration can be transformed into an interactive digital experience. Interactive documentary formats enable audiences to select, navigate, interpret and respond to narrative content unlike in traditional documentary formats. The case demonstrates that the digital cinema medium is not just about moving film content online, but also recalibrating audience perception and creation of meaning. This is evidence that digital media changes the passive viewers into active producers of meaning (Podara et al., 2021).

To Be a Machine (Version 1.0) by Dead Centre is a case of performing arts digitally mediated. This case demonstrates that traditional theatre is highly reliant on space that is shared physically, but the performance may also generate new ways of co-presence through digital interfaces. The analysis suggests that digital performance is not just about the replacement of live theatre, but it is about the reconfiguration of liveness, presence, embodiment and connectiveness with the audience. The result

argues for the growing influence of screen-based presentation, virtual staging, mediated interaction, and hybrid audience experience on the case of the performing arts. (Radak, 2023).

BTS live-stream concert audience interaction is the third case where digital media is reshaping how audiences interact with the program, from interaction to collective communication. During live streamed performances, listeners are actively engaged in the concert through the comments, hashtags, fan discussions, emotional responses, social media and more. The case demonstrates how digital audience engagement is emotional, social, interactive and networked. It supports the contemporary description of spectatorship as beyond the direct view of the screen to incorporate online spectatorship and circulation, community formation, and public meaning making (Upham et al., 2024).

Table 2 presents the case-based interpretation of three selected examples, highlighting how *New Life*, *To Be a Machine (Version 1.0)*, and BTS live-

stream concert interaction represent digital participatory audience engagement.
storytelling, mediated performance, and

Table 2. Case-Based Interpretation of Digital Storytelling and Audience Engagement

Case	Artistic Field	Digital Feature	Audience Engagement Pattern	Result-Based Interpretation
New Life	Interactive documentary / cinematic storytelling	Interactive documentary format and digital narrative access	Audience engages through selection, navigation, interpretation, and response.	Demonstrates how cinematic storytelling becomes participatory and audience-centred.
To Be a Machine (Version 1.0)	Digital theatre / performing arts	Postdigital performance, mediated presence, and screen-based co-presence	Audience experiences performance through technologically mediated liveness.	Shows how digital performance redefines presence, embodiment, and performer-audience relations.
BTS live-stream concert audience interaction	Music performance / digital fan culture	Live-streamed performance and social media interaction	Audience participates through comments, hashtags, fan discussions, and emotional responses.	Reveals how audience engagement becomes collective, networked, and communicative.

The comparison of the three cases indicates that there are differing but interconnected ways in which digital media evolution impacts film, communication, and performing arts. New Life, a video of interactive cinematic storytelling, To Be a Machine (Version 1.0), a video of mediated theatrical presence, and BTS live-stream concerts,

an example of collective digital engagement. The cases together demonstrate an increasing hybrid, participatory and platform-based artistry in the present. They support the thesis of the article, which is that digital media is not only a technical innovation but a cultural and aesthetic phenomenon that is changing today's film, communication and performing arts approaches.

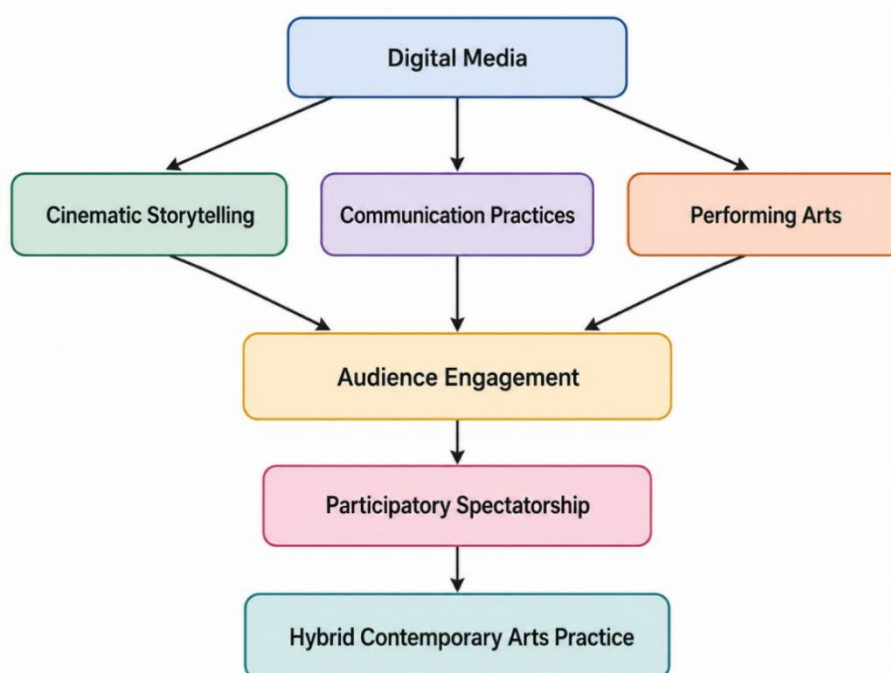


Figure 2. Interdisciplinary model showing the relationship between digital media, cinematic storytelling, communication practices, performing arts, and audience engagement.

5. Discussion

The results from this research suggest that the evolution of digital media has greatly changed the communication pattern, audience response, cinematic storytelling, and performing arts. The findings demonstrate that digital media is not just a technological extension of an established artistic process but a culture-driven environment which reframes the process of story production, circulation, interpretation and experience. The film text has come to be supplemented by a host

of other forms of cinematic storytelling, such as trailers, teaser posters, interviews, social media posts, audience reactions, and digital discussion. Likewise, audience members have moved from being passive recipients of information to active actors who are critics, promoters, interpreters and makers of public meaning. In this regard, the confluence of cinema and performing arts also indicates that modern creative work is no longer limited to predefined disciplinary boundaries. Digital theatre, live-streaming, filmed dance and platform-based visual culture demonstrate a fluid relationship between screen-based narration and embodied performance. The outcomes of this work illustrate how film, communication and

performing arts are now in concert within a digital matrix.

Previous studies concur with the findings here, and also offer recognition of digital media as a force that restructures form, audience participation and cultural circulation. The shift from traditional narrative forms to storytelling is in line with the studies that reveal the emergence of new creative processes and story structures in the current media practice (Sánchez-López et al., 2020). The discovery of audience engagement being cultivated in a collaborative and participatory way is in line with cultural heritage studies which have linked digital storytelling to collective audience engagement (Psomadaki et al., 2019). This is because the use of interactive and documentary digital storytelling which plays an important role in strengthening audience participation also in accordance with the present research in which the audience is increasingly involved in the process of making meaning. The concept of liveness in digital performance can be similarly compared to scholarship in pandemic-era performance, where presence became unstable, mediated, and technologically negotiated (Bay-Cheng, 2023). The rise of digital media technology on the theatre stage, as shown in the studies, also provides evidence for the changes in theatre

presentation brought about by digital tools (Zhang, 2023). The findings of this study on the reorganization of viewers' viewing habits are consistent with the findings of other studies on the audience-centred streaming strategies of various platforms like Netflix and Tencent Video (Tang & Wei, 2023). The discovery that interactive cinema increases audience's engagement also aligns with recent systematic studies on the development of interactive narration in movies (Hanapih & Nasir, 2024). Lastly, research that looks at streaming in the context of platform culture explains how platform culture affects visibility, circulation and access to the audience (Chalaby, 2024).

This study has implications for artists, film makers, performers, scholars of communication and visual and performing arts. The findings indicate that storytelling is not just the work of

script, shooting and editing; it also needs to address the circulation in digital form, interpretation by audiences and engagement via platforms. The study points to the importance of understanding digital mediation as a transformation of the notions of presence, embodiment, staging and spectatorship for performing artists. Communication practitioners will find the results to be illuminating in that they reveal that promotional content and online discussion and audience interaction are not separate from the process of reception of the artistic meaning. The study highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approaches for scholars, bridging the fields of film studies, communication studies, digital media studies, and performance studies. The results further indicate that digital literacy, platform awareness, and audience analysis are essential components of training in the future, as are hybrid performance techniques, which are also central topics in arts education. By doing so, the research can help to deepen the understanding of current arts as participatory, mediated and culture networked practices.

There are some limitations to the study that need to be acknowledged. The research methodology adopted is qualitative, interpretive and conceptual, meaning that there is no quantitative measurement of audience behaviour or empirical research based

on survey. These results reflect the thematic interpretation of current practice and secondary sources, as well as publicly-accessible digital resources and do not necessarily encompass all practices of film, communication and/or performing arts. Digital media is also an ever-changing industry and over time, preferences for platforms, audience engagement, and storytelling methods can shift rapidly. The study also does not take a particular national cinema, a performance tradition, a platform or a specific audience group as its focus, preventing a deeper level of contextual analysis. But the restrictions are in keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of the article. The aim of the study is not to provide generalizations, but to provide a critical framework for understanding the impact of digital media evolution on the cinematic story, communication, audience engagement and the practices of contemporary performing arts.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that the evolution of the digital media has substantially altered the landscape of modern film, communication and performing arts practices by changing how stories are produced, disseminated, experienced and understood. Cinematic storytelling is no longer limited to the interior of a movie; it is also brought to digital platforms, promotional materials, public discussion, social media communication and participatory culture. In the same way, audiences have moved from passive reception to active participation, with viewers responding, reviewing, sharing, remixing and talking about the work online.

The results also indicate that digital mediation and virtual presentation, hybrid staging and screen-based circulation are becoming increasingly relevant for contemporary performing arts. This has led to a degree of intermingling of the differences between cinema, communication and performance, and an interdisciplinary analysis is necessary to comprehend current artistic practices. While digital platforms have increased access and visibility, they have also created problems in the areas of algorithmic control, fractured attention, commercial pressure, and liveness.

In general, the study suggests that digital media is

not a mere technological device, but an artistic and cultural phenomenon. Specific films, platforms, audience groups, or regional performance

traditions could be explored more in the future to gain more empirical insights.

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