

A Visual Narrative: Leveraging Digital Comics To Preserve And Promote Traditional Arts

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Abstrak

Media digital dan alat teknologi yang muncul semakin memperluas jangkauan berbagai praktik, termasuk seni, yang semakin mengambil bentuk abstrak, visual, atau musik. Transformasi ini telah menyebabkan keterasingan yang semakin besar dari bentuk seni tradisional, yang berkontribusi pada berkurangnya daya tariknya. Selain itu, institusi budaya regional, seperti galeri seni, sering kali kesulitan untuk mempromosikan seni tradisional secara efektif, yang memperburuk tantangan dalam melestarikan dan menghidupkan kembali ekspresi budaya ini di tengah perubahan sosial yang cepat. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pertemuan inovatif antara komik digital dan seni tradisional sebagai sarana pelestarian dan promosi budaya. Penelitian ini menyelidiki bagaimana kekuatan bercerita dalam komik, dengan visual yang menarik dan struktur naratifnya, dapat dimanfaatkan untuk mengkomunikasikan kekayaan bentuk seni tradisional kepada audiens yang lebih luas dan beragam. Dengan mengintegrasikan elemen budaya tradisional ke dalam format komik digital, studi ini bertujuan untuk menjembatani kesenjangan generasi dan budaya, memastikan bahwa makna budaya dari seni tradisional tidak hanya dilestarikan, tetapi juga relevan di dunia yang berfokus pada digital saat ini. Penelitian ini menekankan bagaimana media hibrida ini dapat berfungsi sebagai platform yang dapat diakses untuk pendidikan, keterlibatan, dan pertukaran budaya, memberikan cara interaktif untuk memamerkan teknik seni tradisional, sejarah, dan simbolisme. Selain itu, studi ini mengkaji potensi komik digital untuk memperluas jangkauan dan visibilitas seni tradisional, terutama di kalangan generasi muda yang mungkin kurang terlibat dengan bentuk seni konvensional. Melalui analisis studi kasus dan pengembangan proyek prototipe komik digital, penelitian ini menyoroti efektivitas menggabungkan alat digital modern dengan daya tarik abadi dari bercerita visual. Studi ini menyarankan bahwa dengan memanfaatkan popularitas komik dan novel grafis, seni tradisional dapat diperkenalkan dengan cara yang segar dan dinamis, mendorong apresiasi dan pemahaman yang lebih besar. Penelitian ini akhirnya mengusulkan model baru untuk melestarikan warisan budaya, yang memadukan kreativitas, teknologi, dan tradisi untuk menciptakan narasi yang menarik yang dapat beresonansi dengan audiens kontemporer.

Kata kunci: pelestarian budaya, komik digital, seni tradisional

Abstract

Digital media and emerging technological tools are expanding the reach of various practices, including art, which increasingly takes abstract, visual, or musical forms. This transformation has led to a growing detachment from traditional art forms, contributing to their diminishing appeal. Furthermore, regional cultural institutions, such as art galleries, often struggle to effectively promote traditional arts, exacerbating the challenges of preserving and revitalizing these cultural expressions in the face of rapid societal change. This research explores the innovative intersection of digital comics and traditional arts as a means of cultural preservation and promotion. This research investigates how the storytelling power of comics, with its engaging visuals and narrative structure, can be harnessed to communicate the richness of traditional art forms to a broader, more diverse audience. By integrating elements of traditional culture into digital comic formats, the study seeks to bridge generational and cultural gaps, ensuring that the cultural significance of traditional arts is not only preserved but also made relevant in today's digital-centric world. The research emphasizes how this hybrid medium can serve as an accessible platform for education, engagement, and cultural exchange, providing an interactive way to showcase traditional art techniques, history, and symbolism. Furthermore, the study examines the potential of digital comics to expand the reach and visibility of traditional art, particularly among younger generations who may be less engaged with conventional art forms. Through an analysis of case studies and the development of prototype digital comic projects, the research highlights the effectiveness of combining modern digital tools with the timeless appeal of visual storytelling. The study suggests that by leveraging the popularity of comics and graphic novels, traditional art can be introduced in a fresh, dynamic way, fostering greater appreciation and understanding. This research ultimately proposes a new model for preserving cultural heritage, blending creativity, technology, and tradition to create compelling narratives that resonate with a contemporary audience.

Keywords: *cultural preservation, digital comics, traditional art*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of this definition, art refers to a type of aesthetics or beauty that emanates from within humans and gives life to the works of art that are created [1]. Emphasizes that complex culture is also reflected in various aspects of life, one of which is in works of art. Works of art become real from local values, stories and wisdom that are enriched from generation to generation. Art is something that always around us and carried from generation to generation, so this problem can be said to be important thing to deal with considering if the next generation of young people starts to forget traditional art. The urgency of dealing with this complex issue comes from the stark reality that traditional culture in Indonesia is on the edge of extinction, owing primarily to a lack of accessible and vibrant creative public spaces. This multifaceted challenge, exacerbated by the irresistible pull of a rapidly modernizing lifestyle embraced by the younger generation, highlights the critical need to actively propagate and nurture creative platforms that can resonate with and engage the broader community [2]. This need becomes even more

pressing when one considers that Indonesia, a culturally diverse country, is experiencing a profound identity crisis, emphasizing the gravity of the situation [3]. The urgency of this topic is because there is a complex problem of the fact that this traditional art is starting to fade and there is a lack of infrastructure and facilities for them to distributing or promoting their works of art to public.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Traditional Culture

Traditional culture is a tradition or method carried out by a group of local people over a long period of time, often centuries, and passed down from one generation to the next [4]. Within the scope of society, culture is continuously shaped by various elements including religion, customs, language and works of art. This culture is also often closely related to local society because society is a subject that is formed and regulated by this culture [5]. Every activity in the context of society always involves cultural aspects such as religion, art, and many other elements that are an inseparable part of everyday life [6]. In the view

of Melville J. Herskovits and Bronislaw Malinowski, culture plays an important role in shaping the identity and behavior patterns of local communities [7].

Soerjono Soekanto emphasizes that complex culture is also reflected in various aspects of life, one of which is in works of art. Works of art become real from local values, stories and wisdom that are enriched from generation to generation [8]. These works of art are not just creative expressions but are also an important means for people to better understand and appreciate the cultural heritage of their ancestors. Thus, works of art are not only the result of individual creativity, but also a window that opens up opportunities for people to connect with their cultural roots and keep that cultural heritage alive. Maintaining the integrity of the specifications.

B. Art

In the context of this definition, art refers to a type of aesthetics or beauty that emanates from within humans and gives life to the works of art that are created [9]. This beauty is the result of the inner expression that gives birth to works of art, enabling them to be more than just tangible things but also a medium that communicates profound feelings, thoughts, and values. Humans, with their extraordinary creative abilities, are capable of producing works of art with extremely high monetary value due to their visuality and complex aesthetics. Humans are able to combine techniques and a deep understanding of their own culture, history, and identity when creating art.

The beginnings of attention to art often emerge in the context of ethnographic research, where observers closely examine traditional artistic activities [10]. In this context, ethnographic research has provided in-depth insight into how objects such as statues, carvings or paintings become symbols of techniques for creating works of art. This research also reveals that traditional arts have an important role in maintaining cultural identity and perpetuating stories passed down from generation to generation. Thus, art is not just an object, but also a means of preserving history, values and rich cultural heritage in a society.

C. Art Gallery

The meaning of an art gallery is a container or installation space specifically designed to exhibit various works of art in various types of shapes and styles. An art gallery is a place that connects artists with audiences, creating an environment where works of art can be appreciated, interpreted and used as material for reflection by the public [11]. In general, an art gallery can be seen as a 'place of encounter' between art and its observers, where works of art speak a unique and profound visual language.

In the realm of art galleries, there are two main types that are often encountered. Firstly, there are galleries for traditional art, which often adopt a layout in the form of long hallways that provide the experience of walking through art history. Second, there is a type of modern art gallery that places more emphasis on simple and efficient placement, creating a space that allows viewers to interact more intensely with innovative and experimental works of modern art

In accordance with the mandate of Law No. 9 of 1990, which places a premium on the imperative of culture promotion for the preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage against the ravages of time [12]. the Malang tourism office sheds light on the vibrant yet endangered landscape of cultural activism. Within the city, one can find at least 44 arts activist organizations, nurturing a total of 660 artists, among whom 100 are individuals of a more mature age bracket [13]. Ki Sholeh, an indefatigable artist activist, points out a disheartening fact: a substantial 141 Malang wayang puppets have languished in anonymity, never having been invited to grace the stage once again. He underscores the futility of having a plethora of art galleries in Malang when the infrastructure for promoting traditional arts remains woefully inadequate. The paradox lies in the existence of several fine arts centers, while art activists grapple with the twin dilemmas of ideation and accessibility in their mission to champion traditional arts. In fact, it remains a distinct possibility that many senior art activists remain oblivious to the existence of numerous galleries and venues

within Malang's urban landscape that could potentially serve as platforms for their work, further exacerbated by a lack of knowledge about how to effectively navigate the intricacies of promoting their art within modern art galleries.

Compounding this issue is the marked disconnect between the seasoned artists and the younger generation forging their paths within the burgeoning arts industry [14]. The urgency of dealing with this complex issue comes from the stark reality that traditional culture in Indonesia is on the edge of extinction, owing primarily to a lack of accessible and vibrant creative public spaces. This multifaceted challenge, exacerbated by the irresistible pull of a rapidly modernizing lifestyle embraced by the younger generation, highlights the critical need to actively propagate and nurture creative platforms that can resonate with and engage the broader community. This need becomes even more pressing when one considers that Indonesia, a culturally diverse country, is experiencing a profound identity crisis, emphasizing the gravity of the situation. Additionally, the obvious decline in traditional artistic performances, such as wayang, traditional music and mask dance has resulted in a troubling lack of interest and knowledge among the younger generation, who are supposed to be the role models responsible for preserving and passing along these essential cultural values to future generations [15].

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Design Thinking is a human-centered, iterative process that emphasizes creative problem-solving by understanding the user's needs and challenges. This research using Design Thinking ensures that the solution (digital comics) is effectively designed to preserve traditional arts and engage modern audiences. The process is structured into five key stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test [16].



Fig. 1. Design Thinking Methods (Source: Author's Document)

A. Empathize

The first stage of design thinking in this research emphasizes the importance of understanding the experiences and challenges faced by key stakeholders in the traditional art world, such as artists, gallery owners, and the audience. This stage involves immersing oneself in the lives of these groups to gain insight into their needs, preferences, and frustrations regarding the promotion of traditional art in the digital age. By conducting interviews, surveys, and observing behaviors, the researchers seek to develop a deep empathy for the people impacted by the digital divide, recognizing that solutions must be rooted in the real-world context of these individuals' lives.

B. Define

In the Define stage, the researchers analyze the findings from the Empathize phase to clearly articulate the primary challenges facing traditional art promotion. Key issues identified include the underrepresentation of traditional art in digital spaces, the generational gap in art consumption, and the limited ability of art galleries to adapt to digital marketing strategies. By synthesizing the data, the researchers refine the problem statement and frame it in a way that highlights the urgency of bridging the digital divide. This clear definition of the problem lays the foundation for the next phase, ensuring that the solutions developed will be relevant and impactful.

C. Ideate

During the Ideate phase, the focus shifts to brainstorming creative and innovative solutions to address the challenges defined

in the previous stage. The goal is to generate a broad range of ideas that can potentially bridge the gap between traditional art and digital platforms. This might include exploring new digital tools, such as virtual galleries, augmented reality experiences, or online platforms tailored for traditional art exhibitions. The researchers encourage divergent thinking, promoting an open-minded approach to problem-solving while considering the feasibility, accessibility, and effectiveness of each proposed idea. The ideation process fosters collaboration among diverse stakeholders, ensuring that the solutions are inclusive and practical.

D. Prototype

The Prototype stage is where the ideas generated in the Ideate phase are turned into tangible forms. In the context of the research, this involves creating digital prototypes or pilot programs that allow for testing and refinement of the proposed solutions. These prototypes might include website designs, mobile apps, or virtual art exhibitions aimed at enhancing the visibility and accessibility of traditional art. By building prototypes, the researchers can explore how these solutions might work in real-world settings, allowing stakeholders to interact with them and provide feedback. The goal is to quickly build and test low-cost models to see which concepts show the most promise before investing in larger-scale implementations.

E. Test

The final stage, Test, involves evaluating the prototypes developed in the previous phase through feedback loops and iterative improvements. Researchers assess the effectiveness of the solutions by gathering input from artists, gallery owners, and art consumers who engage with the prototypes. This stage provides critical insights into how well the digital solutions meet the needs of traditional art promotion, and whether they help bridge the gap between conventional art forms and modern digital platforms. Based on the feedback, the prototypes are refined

and tested again, ensuring that the final solutions are both practical and impactful. This iterative process allows for continuous improvement, ultimately leading to more sustainable and innovative ways to promote traditional art in the digital age.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the data that has been obtained, some people tend to prefer a problem solving idea that is more unique, modern and easy to use. Therefore, three solutions were formed in the form of digital comics namely Traits (Traditional Arts Journey) and supporting media.

A. Visual Concept

Reading comics may be a habit for most people. Comics can attract most people to provide information to the public. This comic in AR form certainly contains information about various types of traditional art in art galleries. Illustrated visual art with a light 4 panel story about a city boy who rarely goes to the gallery. This comic is packaged in QR code form to be accessed and installed in every art gallery. New episodes are added once a month.

B. How It Works

Sers will install the application to be able to create comics that are in art galleries that work with us to place QR codes. Users will only be able to unlock it if they go to the art gallery and attend each specific event for each special episode.

C. Color-Palette

The colors of this comic tend to use soft light colors to provide colors that are not too painful for the eyes. The first color is mushroom, this color here can symbolize natural color and the meaning of traditional art. Meanwhile, the character uses the Blue Haze color in his clothes to give the impression of modern youth and advanced technology. Sweet corn color as a color that gives a bright effect to give the impression of enthusiasm,

D. Comic Visualization

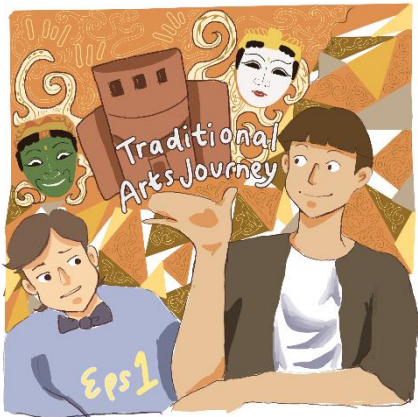


Fig. 2. The main cover of the comic (Source: Author's Document)

This comic cover shows the two main characters in the story with dark tones. The purpose of using these muted colors is to convey a sense of traditionalism and simplicity while also strongly symbolizing the richness of culture through a range of intense brownish tones.



Fig. 3. The scene from the comic (Source: Author's Document)

This comic which tells the story of Peter, an average city guy who visits a nearby art gallery for the first time. The story will focus on Peter's experience journey, which will be led by gallery guide Tama, who expects to change Peter's viewpoint on traditional art.

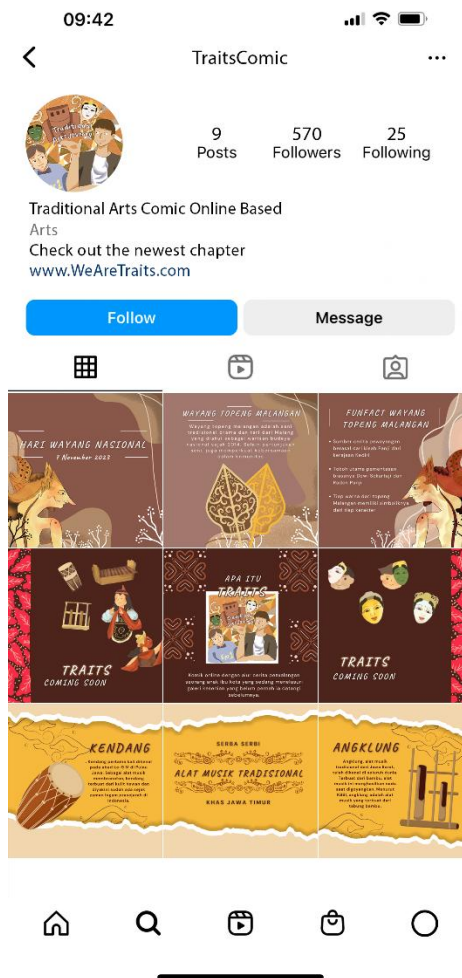


Fig. 4. Social Media (Source: Author's Document)

The plan will be carried out through promotions, with QR codes placed in every art gallery. The goal of this strategy is to bring public interest in going to art galleries. In addition, we intend to offer a website as an entertainment channel and an open promotional Instagram account in order to reach a larger audience.



Fig. 5. Sticker Pack
(Source: Author's Document)



Fig. 6. Enamel Pin Design
(Source: Author's Document)

We will be offering various rewards to readers who follow this story online or in person at the gallery. People at the gallery will receive pins and stickers featuring comic icons in addition to digital stickers that readers following the story online can use. In addition, we are thinking of rewarding people that accumulate points with pouch bags and other merchandise as part of our future plans. The larger the prize you receive, the more points you accrue.

G. Testing

To evaluate the existing prototype, a semantic differential survey was conducted online via Google Form, consisting of 10 sets of adjectives where user targets may share their views regarding the design between 10 sets of adjectives. Semantic differential itself is a method to process the findings which could be used to set the hierarchy of criteria pertaining to the advantages of engaging in professional activity [17]. Users' view on the design can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE I. ASSESSMENT RESULT OF COMIC AS THE SOLUTION

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Realism								Cartoonism
Traditional								Modern
Imaginative								Logical
Simple								Complicated
Colorful								Monotone
Fun								Boring
Fresh Idea								Old Idea
Entertaining								Educating
Unique								Common
Idealistic								Realistic

Using differential semantics as an evaluation method allows for a more in-depth examination of the user's perspective on the prototype. This method sharpens the focus on examining user opinions and responses to concepts, ideas, and the prototype's finalization stage. The purpose of this research is to evaluate and identify potential flaws in the developed comic prototype through the application of differential semantics. This evaluation's objective is to highlight the prototype's shortcomings and enhancements can be made to produce a better product that will respond better to user needs in the future.

In conclusion, respondent feedback decisively supports the comic's distinct visual style, which incorporates strong cartoon elements while blending traditional aspects into an educational story. The story is more imaginative than complex, and it is meant to be simple enough to make reading easier and increase reader engagement. The fact that participants enjoy reading confirms the growing acceptance of comics as a medium for information communication. The innovative idea appeals to both universal and specialized tastes by fusing

traditional art into a fun comic style. The financial sustainability of digital comics production and revenue generation through locked chapters appear promising. Positive reviews essentially indicate how well the comic may be able to adjust to shifting patterns in the consumption of media.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the research data, there are a number of issues that stem from the loss of traditional culture. These issues are compounded by the fact that most people agree on the issues at the moment and that art gallery administrators themselves proceed to be less productive and frequently struggle to use this creative space to promote traditional art. There is no doubt that many people are unhappy with the way the gallery system distributes traditional art, as evidenced by the lack of focus on ignored art galleries. All of these findings suggest that people also favor items that are more visually appealing and appealing. Therefore, it follows that an approach that emphasizes visuals, education, and recognition is needed to solve this issue. Following the creation and testing of three prototypes, it was determined that using digital comics could be the most effective method to introduce people to traditional art that involves art galleries.

The public's review of the digital comic Traits reveals that they are generally enthusiastic about the work because the audience has been effectively informed of the main points of the comic. The community's sense of satisfaction suggests that the target audience has responded positively to the messages being distributed. Concerning the comic's continuation, it might be worthwhile to think about creating one. It's likely that an update of some kind will be released via Instagram and other platforms once the main comic is completed. This method of storytelling should keep readers engaged and interested in the stories they have enjoyed, as well as preserve the flow of communication between them and the story that this comic has developed.

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