



MUSEUMS AND INFLUENCERS AS CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS: DIGITAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Digital Communication Strategies in the Shaping of Creative and Innovative Cities

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has prompted museums to rethink their communication strategies and their relationship with audiences within virtual environments. This study analyses how some of Spain's leading museums use social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to enhance visibility, foster engagement, and reach diverse audiences, particularly young people. It examines the discursive, visual, and narrative strategies employed in social media posts, as well as the role of influencers as cultural mediators who facilitate new forms of interaction and co-creation of value. The findings indicate that adapting to platform-specific codes, tone, and modes of user interaction strengthens the social relevance of museums and amplifies their role as innovative and accessible spaces. In this context, digital museum communication emerges as a strategic element that contributes to the consolidation of creative cities in the 21st century.

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1. Managing Museum Communication on Social Media

The digital age has radically transformed the ways in which organisations relate to society (Castells, 2013; Yus, 2021). Authors such as Tsoukala *et al.* (2025) identify technologies including augmented reality, virtual reality, mobile applications, websites, and, in particular, social media as catalysts enabling cultural institutions to offer audiences new, more dynamic, and interactive experiences that transcend physical spaces. The digital environments adopted by cultural organisations facilitate hybrid, dynamic, and immersive experiences that challenge the spatial and symbolic boundaries of traditional venues (Alabau *et al.*, 2024).

For museums, as heirs to forms of discourse historically disseminated through conventional channels and media, this emerging landscape presents an attractive yet complex set of possibilities for audience interaction (Mylona *et al.*, 2024; Sallaku *et al.*, 2025), prompting a reconfiguration of communication management strategies (Tsoukala *et al.*, 2025). Social media platforms have brought museums and citizens into closer contact (Martínez-Sanz and Solano Santos, 2025), a dynamic that was rapidly accelerated in response to the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic, as cultural institutions sought to ensure organisational viability (Besana *et al.*, 2024; Mylona *et al.*, 2024; Sallaku *et al.*, 2025). As a result, digital museum tours proliferated, alongside the promotion of podcasts, virtual exhibitions, and social media campaigns designed to foster public participation and sustain institutional continuity (Nikolaou, 2024).

Studies indicate that the digital expansion has not been uniform across all cultural institutions, as factors such as budgetary constraints and limited technical training meant that the recovery of face-to-face activities often took precedence over digital investment (Besana *et al.*, 2024). Nevertheless, during and after the pandemic, the economic losses experienced by museums underscored the need to open new channels of dialogue with society, particularly with younger generations. In this regard, several authors (Cesário and Nisi, 2023; Martínez-Sanz and Solano Santos, 2024) highlight a progressive decline in interest among these groups in the traditional cultural offerings of museum institutions. As Martínez-Sanz and Solano Santos (2024) and Sallaku *et al.* (2025) argue, in order to define and reaffirm their position within society, museums must adopt digital strategies, tools, and platforms that encourage more “free and participatory” proposals capable of stimulating public cultural interest.

Within the evolving discourse between museums and society, the use of social media platforms such as Instagram (Hu and Kidd, 2024) and TikTok (Martínez and López, 2024) requires adaptation to new communicative dynamics and strategic planning processes, as well as the allocation of appropriate resources, in order to achieve effective digital transformation aligned with institutional objectives (Tsoukala *et al.*, 2025). Aware of the potential of social media to foster connections with broader social contexts, museums have progressively matured their communication strategies (Besana and Esposito, 2025), whether by adapting to platform-specific narrative codes (Martínez and López, 2024) or by actively participating in the social dialogues that these digital environments facilitate.

Within this renewed framework of communication management, museums are reassessing their competencies by considering both in person and virtual visitors (Rodríguez-Vera *et al.*, 2024), as well as users who engage with content shared by others and those who interact directly through social media. The capacity of digital technologies within the cultural industries to collect data on the perceptions and behaviours of actual or potential consumers of museum activities contributes to the optimisation of communication management processes (Wang, 2025). Beyond the role of social media as amplifiers of institutional discourse, these platforms also reinforce trust, institutional transparency and emotional bonds with audiences (Rodríguez Vera *et al.*, 2024), as they enable the expression of social perspectives and the generation of participatory content through the multidirectionality of communication.

Research conducted by Cabezuelo Lorenzo and Quintana Gómez (2024) demonstrates that a museum’s presence on social media positively influences the frequency of visits. As these authors

note, one of the principal advantages of these channels lies in their capacity to encourage visitors to plan cultural activities and enhance engagement with museums, linking digital interaction to the overall perception of the visitor experience (Cabezuelo Lorenzo and Quintana Gómez, 2024). Similarly, social media platforms improve accessibility and facilitate access to digital heritage through digital dissemination practices, thereby contributing to the transmission and preservation of culture (Caso Barreto *et al.*, 2023; Jacqueline Kiwa *et al.*, 2023).

The evolution of museum communication management adds cultural value in both virtual and physical environments within the cities in which museums are located, due to increased visibility and, consequently, higher visitor numbers (Koizumi, 2024; Sallaku *et al.*, 2025). As innovative entities that enter the market with business models heavily reliant on new technologies for their survival (Fernández Torres *et al.*, 2025, p. 26), museums, despite their long-standing traditions and spatial rootedness, constitute cultural assets of significant relevance to the formation of a creative city. This concept refers to an urban context in which the promotion of cultural creativity is recognised as a strategic factor for development (UNESCO, 2013).

In this regard, Tepeli Türel and Demires Özkul (2022) identify initiatives grounded in global urban culture as valuable resources for fostering creativity at the city level, while Zhao and Kim (2025) emphasise that cultural and creative industries, beyond gaining increased recognition in recent years, function as effective instruments for urban promotion and revitalisation.

2. Museums and Influencers as Cultural Entrepreneurs

In their pursuit of openness and closer relationships with society, organisations increasingly seek approaches that enable them to empathise with large and diverse groups of individuals (Rodríguez Vera *et al.*, 2024). In this context, institutional discourse is progressively oriented towards influencers, understood as real individuals or digitally generated entities created through artificial intelligence who maintain large virtual communities of followers. These figures are increasingly positioned as institutional entrepreneurs within the social media environment (Borges Gómez and Serrano Pascual, 2023; Mortari and Almeida, 2025).

Contrary to earlier perspectives that emphasised the greater difficulty inherent in online interactions with complex audiences due to their scale and heterogeneity (Vear, 2020), the role of influencers within competitive entrepreneurial processes has gained prominence. This shift reflects organisations' increasing recognition of the authority and influence that influencers hold over specific social groups (Carges, 2024), thereby reinforcing their role as strategic communication intermediaries.

For museums, one of the principal advantages of incorporating influencers into their communication strategies lies in the opportunity to gain deeper knowledge of, interact with and better understand actual or potential users. Internet users engage with influencers, conceived as institutional entrepreneurs, as if they were collaborating with an "entrepreneurial friend" (Da Fonseca *et al.*, 2023, p. 1) with whom they share tastes, experiences, expectations and cultural needs. This form of interaction is often perceived as more appealing than engaging directly with a museum manager, spokesperson or communication officer. Influencers who operate as institutional entrepreneurs thus function as "displayers of social identities" (Mortari and Almeida, 2025, p. 63) and, in certain contexts, assume the role of cultural references (Seras, 2022).

A review of the scientific literature reveals a distinction between several forms of museum engagement with influencers. These include initiatives that position influencers as disseminators and prescribers of institutional communication (Martínez Sanz and Solano Santos, 2025), their prominence within digital narratives and debates on social media (Gussmann, 2023; Sallaku *et al.*, 2025, p. 527), and spaces oriented towards the co creation of value within the cultural industry through content linked to museum institutions. The visibility and influence that these cultural entrepreneurs exert within the field of museum activity constitute a significant asset for institutional communication strategies, as they enhance digital presence while fostering effective participation among social media users (Sallaku *et al.*, 2025; Vear, 2020).

In their efforts to generate digital content and expand their presence on social media, museums increasingly collaborate with influencers on these platforms, particularly those specialising in the arts, with the aim of drawing on their expertise to strengthen institutional branding (Europe (EVE), 2023). This is the case of one of the museums selected for the present study, the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, which has been recognised by *National Geographic* as the best museum in Spain (Adamuz, 2025). In this instance, the influencer Sara Rubayo, an art historian with more than 829,000 followers as of 21 September 2025, is not only highly active on Instagram, where she produces content related to the museum, but has also developed an audio guide for the institution. The museum is likewise very active on TikTok, where it celebrated its “1,000 live streams” in collaboration with influencers in June 2025 (Naredo, 2025).

A further example concerns TikTok and its integration as a communication channel within the digital strategies of cultural institutions, particularly museums, through short form videos featuring narrative structures adapted to the platform (Martínez and López, 2024). The trend commonly identified through the hashtag “#museumtok” has transformed the ways in which museums communicate with their audiences, especially younger users, who constitute the most frequent demographic on this social network (Digital 2025 We Are Social Spain, 2025). This phenomenon is characterised by collaboration between museums and influencers to produce content and encourage public participation, thereby fostering active digital communities around cultural institutions.

Within this context, authors who underline the importance of influencer activity (Gussmann, 2023) also emphasise the responsibility of museums to safeguard their corporate values and cultural heritage through the careful management of content disseminated on social media, while simultaneously encouraging user participation in institutional narratives. The combination of heritage preservation and collaboration with third parties in content creation requires specific communication management practices, including the establishment of clear agreements between the actors involved. Such measures are essential to protect intellectual property and copyright and to ensure responsible representation that avoids cultural bias or discrimination (González Liendo and Gómez Nieto, 2024). In this sense, communication management extends beyond the measurement of likes or follower counts, demanding that museum institutions possess adequate human and material resources to address social media activity, audience interaction, loyalty and attitudinal expressions, among other dimensions (Rodríguez Vera *et al.*, 2024).

Gussmann (2023, p. 116) emphasises the capacity of museums to reinvent themselves and evolve in order to achieve success, stating that:

Ultimately, museums’ success in creating a sense of community and connection with visitors and followers requires their ability to adapt and evolve by embracing collaborative and participatory strategies. Although many museums have already incorporated such approaches into their everyday practices, these strategies have not yet been fully integrated into their online presence.

In this context, the main objective of this research is to analyse the ways in which Spanish museums use social media and establish relationships with influencers understood as cultural entrepreneurs, with the aim of strengthening digital communication, increasing audience engagement, and contributing to the development of creative cities in the contexts in which they operate.

From this general objective, the following specific objectives are derived:

- The first is to examine the discursive, visual and narrative strategies implemented by museums on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.
- The second is to evaluate the impact of museum digital communication in terms of visibility, engagement and the relationship established with audiences.
- The third is to relate digital cultural strategies to the promotion and consolidation of innovative and dynamic cultural environments that are characteristic of creative cities.

3. Methodology

To achieve the proposed objectives, this study adopts a mixed exploratory and descriptive approach, structured around a methodology divided into two complementary phases. The first phase consists of a quantitative and comparative analysis of museum activity on social media, while the second phase focuses on a qualitative case study of a cultural influencer.

The first phase involved a quantitative analysis based on data collected using the Fanpage Karma tool, which specialises in social media monitoring and has been employed in previous research on museum communication (Rodríguez Vera *et al.*, 2024). The sample comprised the twenty best museums in Spain according to *National Geographic*, as reported by several national media outlets (Gutiérrez, 2024; Manzano Cortés, 2024). These institutions, listed in Table 1, include state, regional and local museums and are characterised by their significant heritage value and geographical diversity.

The indicators analysed included the number of publications, content formats, community size, levels of engagement, and the times and days of publication associated with the highest performance. This analysis enabled a comparative examination of museum behaviour on Instagram and TikTok over an observation period extending from September 2024 to September 2025, inclusive. The data were represented using scatter plots and bar charts in order to facilitate interpretation and comparison of results.

The second phase of the study employed a qualitative methodology centred on the analysis of the profile of a relevant content creator, Sara Rubayo (@salarubayo), an art historian and communicator with established links to the Museo Nacional del Prado. This profile was selected due to its prominence within the digital environment, its direct collaboration with museum institutions, and its capacity to translate specialised knowledge into accessible content for a broad audience.

The qualitative analysis was based on a systematic review of posts published on her Instagram account, with particular attention paid to narrative strategies, including tone, style and communicative approach. The analysis also considered her collaborations with museum institutions, such as the production of audio guides and participation in specific campaigns, as well as the degree of interaction generated within the online community.

This methodological approach enabled a more in depth understanding of the role of the influencer as a strategic intermediary within the digital museum environment, thereby providing a complementary perspective to the analysis of institutional museum accounts.

4. Results

4.1. Overall Data

The analysis of the digital profiles of the selected museums reveals a consolidated presence on Instagram, a platform on which 100% of the institutions maintain an active account, as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1. By contrast, their presence on TikTok remains limited, with only 40% of the museums having an active profile on this platform. These findings indicate an institutional preference for Instagram, which is a more established channel within museum communication strategies, while TikTok represents a largely underexploited opportunity, particularly with regard to younger audiences.

Table 1. Museums analysed

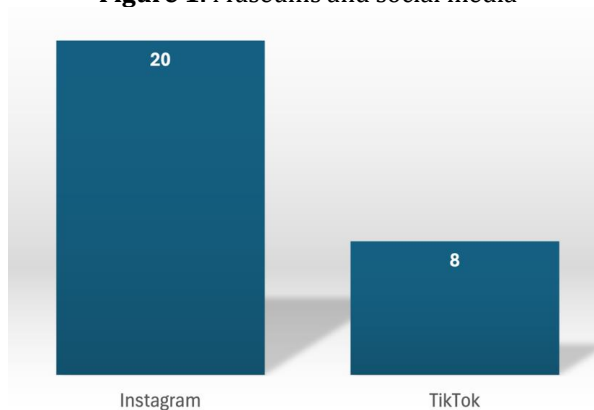
	Instagram	TikTok
Prado Museum (Madrid)	Yes	Yes
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao	Yes	Yes
Botín Centre (Santander)	Yes	No

Ivam. Valencian Institute of Modern Art.	Yes	Yes
National Museum of Roman Art (Mérida)	Yes	No
El Greco House Museum (Toledo)	Yes	No
Mnac, Barcelona	Yes	No
Centre Pompidou, Malaga	Yes	Yes
Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum	Yes	Yes
National Archaeological Museum (Madrid)	Yes	No
Museum of Human Evolution (Burgos)	Yes	Yes
Seville Museum of Fine Arts	Yes	No
Reina Sofía National Museum, Madrid	Yes	No
Bilbao Fine Arts Museum	Yes	No
Helga de Alvear Museum of Contemporary Art	Yes	Yes
National Sculpture Museum (Valladolid)	Yes	No
Macba, Barcelona	Yes	No
Musac (León)	Yes	No
Dalí Theatre-Museum (Figueras, Girona)	Yes	No
Picasso Museum, Málaga	Yes	Yes

Source(s): Gutiérrez, 2024.

Figure 1: 100% of the museums analysed have Instagram and 60% of them do not have TikTok.

Figure 1. Museums and social media



Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

4.2. Instagram

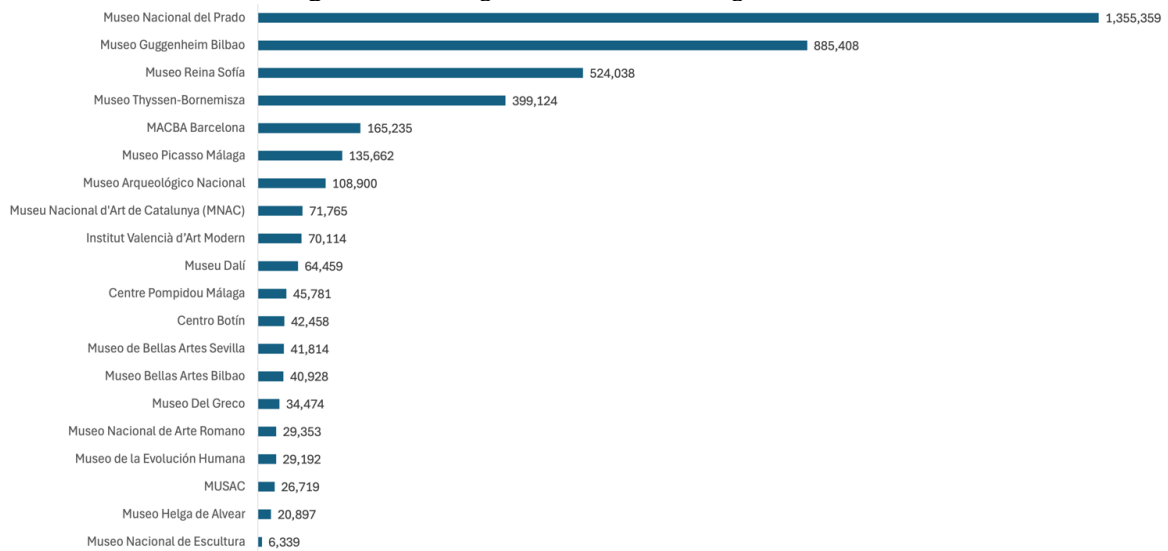
The data indicate that the Museo Nacional del Prado leads the ranking of Instagram followers by a considerable margin, with more than 1.3 million followers. It is followed by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, with almost 900,000 followers, and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina

Sofía, with more than 500,000. As shown in Figure 2, these three institutions constitute the group of museums with the strongest digital presence on Instagram, reflecting a marked capacity to attract and engage large scale audiences.

A second group, characterised by intermediate follower figures, includes museums such as the Thyssen Bornemisza Museum, MACBA, the Museo Picasso Málaga and the National Archaeological Museum. Although these institutions have comparatively smaller online communities, they nonetheless maintain a significant digital presence and demonstrate potential for further growth. At the lower end of the ranking are museums with more limited follower bases, such as the National Sculpture Museum, with just over 6,000 followers, and the Helga de Alvear Museum, with more than 20,000. These differences may be associated with factors such as thematic specialisation, institutional scale or more limited investment in digital communication strategies.

Overall, Figure 2 highlights a strong concentration of followers among three major museums, alongside a substantial gap in relation to the remaining institutions. This imbalance points to unequal levels of digital visibility and underscores the need for differentiated communication strategies tailored to the capacities and objectives of medium sized and smaller museums.

Figure 2. Ranking of followers on Instagram

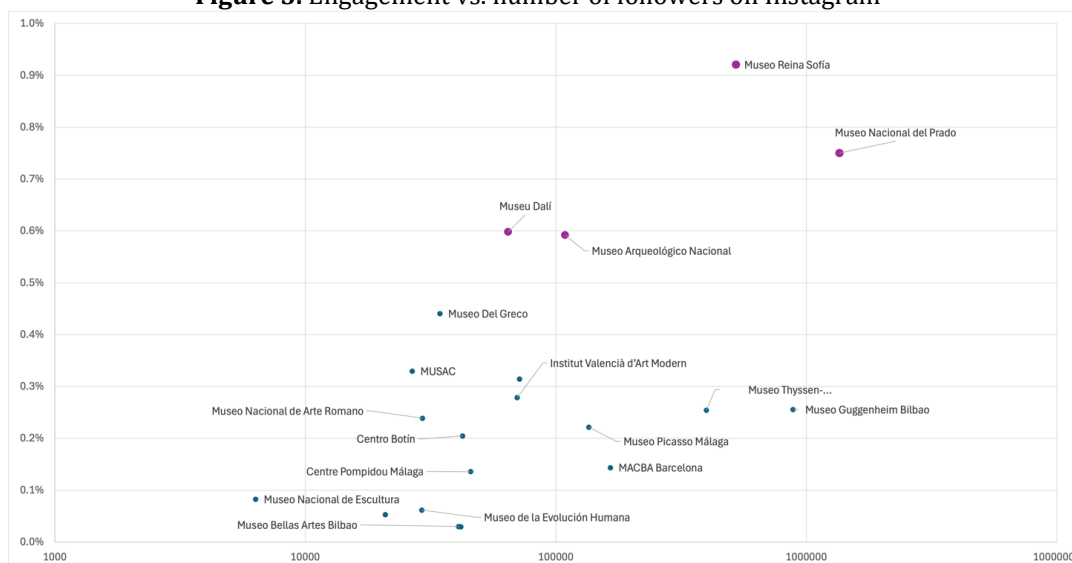


Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

With regard to engagement levels, as illustrated in Figure 3, the data indicate that the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and the Museo Nacional del Prado combine both a high number of followers and elevated levels of interaction. These institutions not only maintain large online communities but also succeed in fostering active audience participation. Museums such as the Dalí Theatre Museum and the National Archaeological Museum, despite having smaller follower bases, likewise demonstrate strong engagement among their audiences.

By contrast, institutions including the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and the Museo Picasso Málaga, although characterised by substantial follower numbers, register comparatively lower engagement rates. These findings suggest that follower volume alone does not ensure the development of a committed digital community, thereby underscoring the need to reconsider content strategies. Lower engagement levels among certain museums point to opportunities for innovation in digital communication practices aimed at increasing both audience interaction and the consolidation of online communities.

Figure 3. Engagement vs. number of followers on Instagram



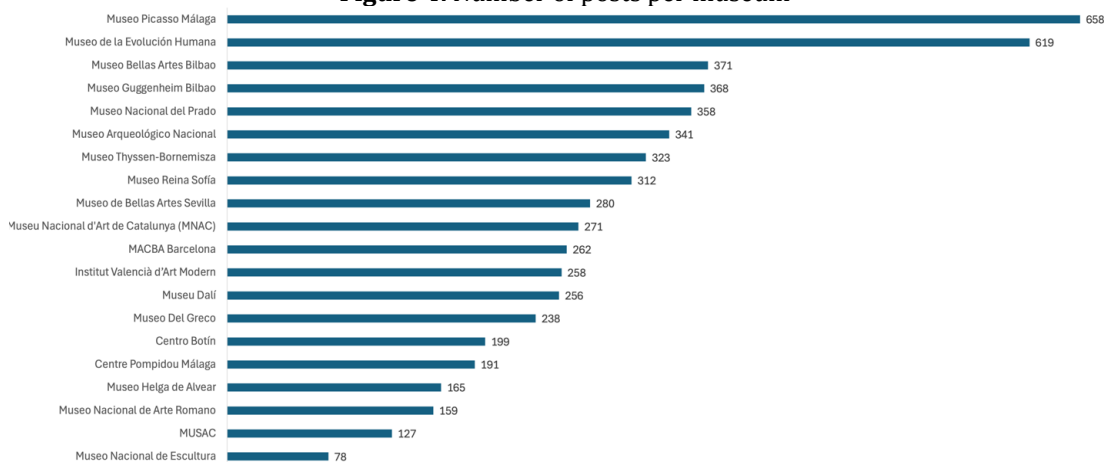
Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

With respect to publication volume, as shown in Figure 4, the Museo Picasso Málaga emerges as the most active institution on Instagram during the period analysed, followed closely by the Museum of Human Evolution. These two museums lead the ranking by a considerable margin, indicating an intensive approach to content generation. However, this level of activity does not correspond to similarly high levels of audience interaction, suggesting the need to reassess the quality, format or relevance of the content published.

They are followed, at some distance, by institutions such as the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and the Museo Nacional del Prado, each with publication volumes of approximately 350 posts during the observation period.

By contrast, museums including the National Sculpture Museum, MUSAC and the National Museum of Roman Art display substantially lower levels of activity. This limited publication frequency may be associated with restricted resources or a lower prioritisation of digital communication within institutional strategies. Overall, the disparity in publication volume reflects markedly different approaches to the management of social media communication across the museums analysed.

Figure 4. Number of posts per museum



Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

The analysis of publication frequency (Figure 5) reveals that most posts are concentrated during weekdays, particularly between 10:00 and 16:00, with Monday, Tuesday, and Friday being

the most active. Fewer posts are published at weekends, despite interaction levels generally being higher during this period, suggesting a potentially untapped strategic opportunity.

Figure 5. Frequency of posts



Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025.

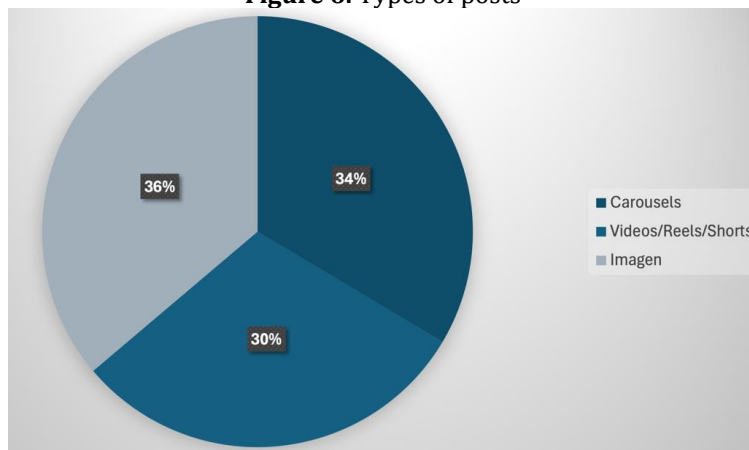
As shown in Table 2 and Figure 6, still images remain the most widely used content format, followed by carousels and videos. This preference for static formats may constrain the platform’s interactive potential, particularly in light of the growing prominence of short audiovisual content.

Table 2. Number of posts by type

Carousels	1957
Videos/Reels/Shorts	1,766
Images	2111

Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

Figure 6. Types of posts



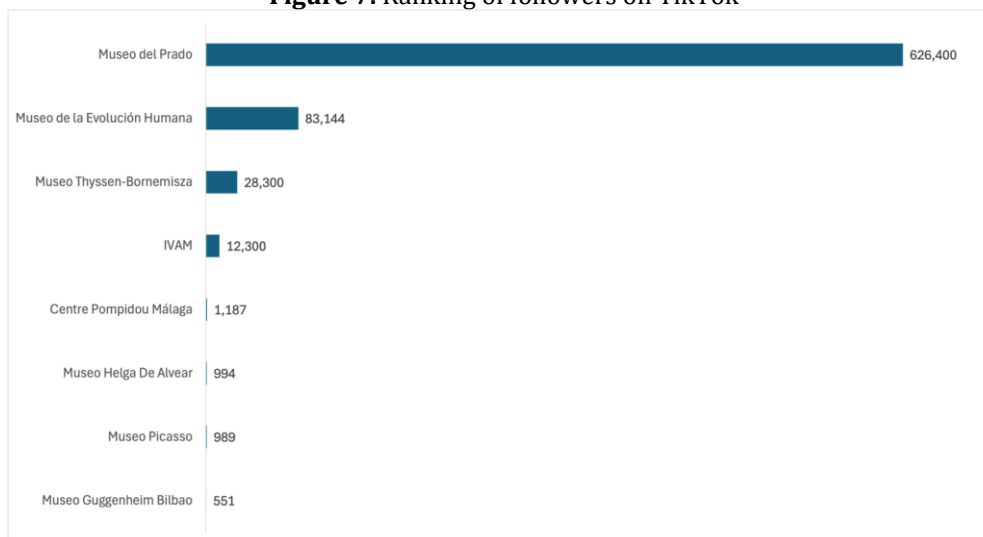
Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

4.3. TikTok

With regard to TikTok follower rankings, Figure 7 reveals a pronounced disparity. The Prado Museum stands out, exceeding 626,000 followers and positioning it as the most followed Spanish museum on the platform. At a considerable distance, the Museum of Human Evolution has just

over 83,000 followers, followed by the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum with 28,300. The remaining museums exhibit a still nascent presence. This gap reflects not only varying levels of digital engagement on TikTok but also a potential lack of adaptation to the platform's specific codes and narrative conventions.

Figure 7. Ranking of followers on TikTok



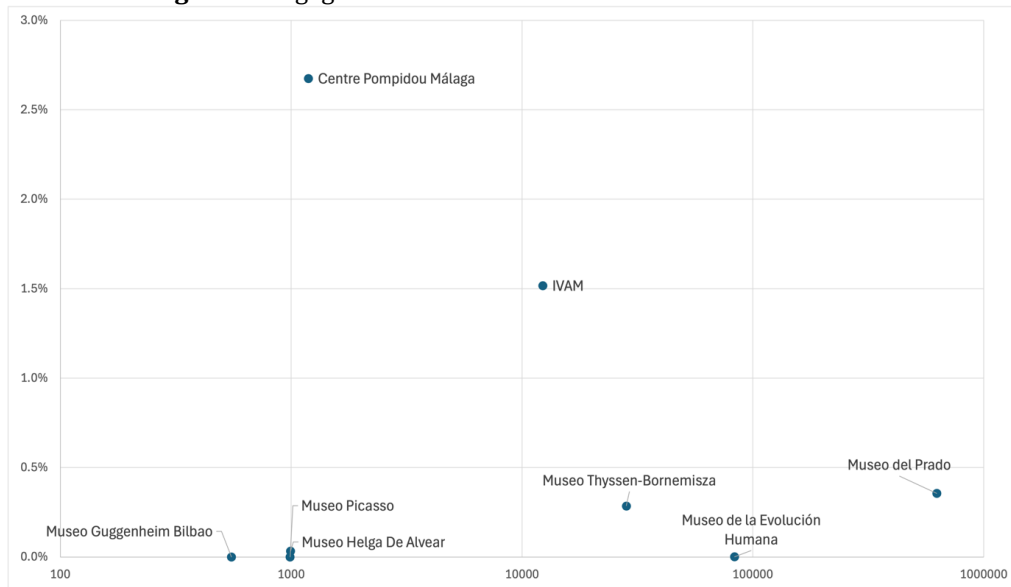
Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

As shown in Figure 8, the Centre Pompidou in Malaga achieves the highest engagement on TikTok (2.68%), despite having a smaller follower base. This finding underscores that interaction does not depend solely on audience size, but also on the alignment of content with the platform's language and dynamics. The IVAM similarly demonstrates a strong interaction rate relative to its medium-sized community.

In contrast, museums such as the Prado Museum, the Museum of Human Evolution, and the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, despite their substantial follower counts, exhibit considerably lower engagement. At the lower end of the scale are institutions such as the Guggenheim and the Helga de Alvear Museum, which combine small communities with minimal interaction.

Overall, this pattern suggests that on TikTok, audience size alone does not guarantee engagement; rather, the suitability of content to the platform's conventions is more decisive. A recurring trend is evident: larger accounts reach a wider audience but typically have lower interaction rates, whereas smaller accounts tend to cultivate more loyal communities.

Figure 8. Engagement vs. number of followers on TikTok

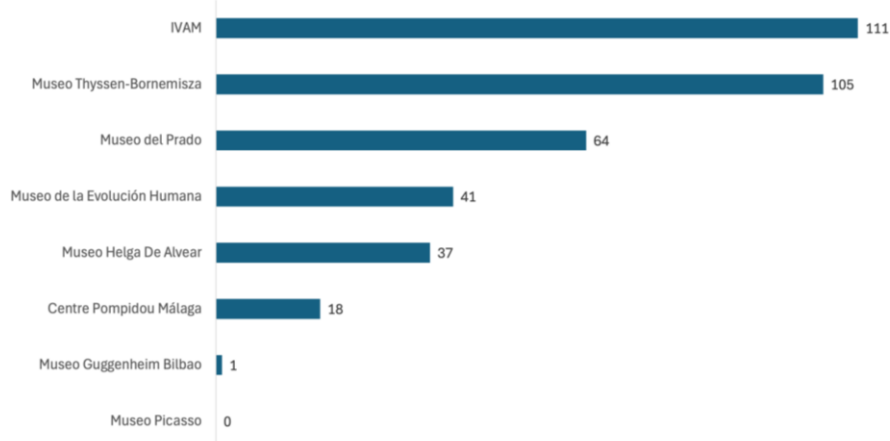


Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

As shown in Figure 9, there is considerable inequality in museum activity on TikTok. The IVAM (Institut Valencià d’Art Modern) leads the period analysed, closely followed by the Thyssen Museum and the Prado Museum, reflecting a more active and continuous communication strategy on the platform.

In contrast, the Museo Picasso Málaga did not publish any posts throughout the year, despite maintaining an account and follower base, while the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao posted only once, indicating a largely symbolic presence.

Figure 9. Number of posts per museum



Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

As shown in Figure 10, the highest activity on TikTok occurs on Mondays and Fridays, with most posts published between 12:00 and 18:00. However, engagement analysis indicates that weekends, particularly Friday afternoons, Saturdays, and Sundays, register the highest interaction levels, highlighting an underutilised strategic opportunity.

In terms of colour coding, red and orange tones predominate, corresponding to medium or low levels of interaction, even during the most frequent posting periods on weekdays (notably between 12:00 and 16:00). In contrast, green and yellow tones, which represent higher interaction rates, are concentrated on Friday afternoons and at specific times over the weekend. This suggests that, although editorial activity is reduced during these periods, weekends hold

considerable potential for impact, which museums currently underexploit in their digital communication strategies.

Figure 10. Trends in posting and engagement on TikTok



Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

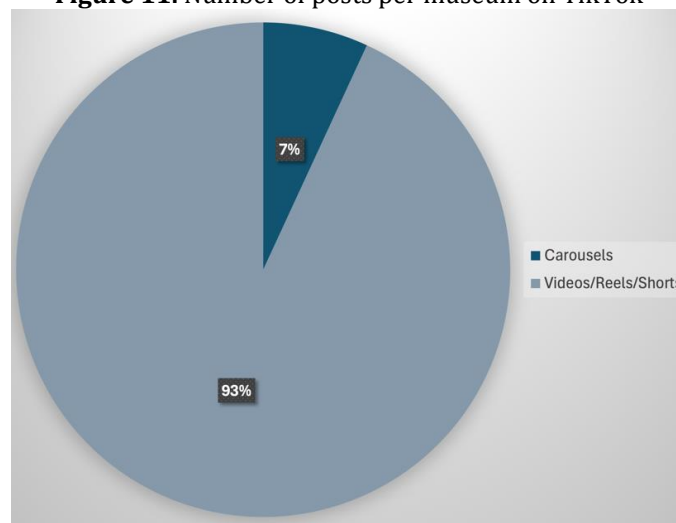
As shown in both Table 3 and Figure 11, the most frequently used post type on TikTok is video, reflecting the platform’s design as a short-form visual environment. The limited use of alternative formats, such as image carousels, constrains expressive diversity.

Table 3. Number of posts by type on TikTok

Carousels	26
Videos/Reels/Shorts	351

Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

Figure 11. Number of posts per museum on TikTok



Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

4.4. Comparison of Results

A comparative analysis of Instagram and TikTok reveals notable differences in strategy, community composition, and communication performance. Instagram remains the priority platform for Spanish museums, both in terms of audience size and the maturity of content strategies. Institutions such as the Prado Museum, the Reina Sofía Museum, and the Guggenheim Bilbao have consolidated substantial audiences on this platform, whereas TikTok communities are generally much smaller, with the exception of the Prado, which also maintains a prominent presence on this network.

Similarly, the volume of posts is markedly lower on TikTok. In some cases, such as the Museo Picasso Málaga, strong activity on Instagram contrasts with total inactivity on TikTok, suggesting that the latter platform remains underutilised in terms of planning and strategic reach.

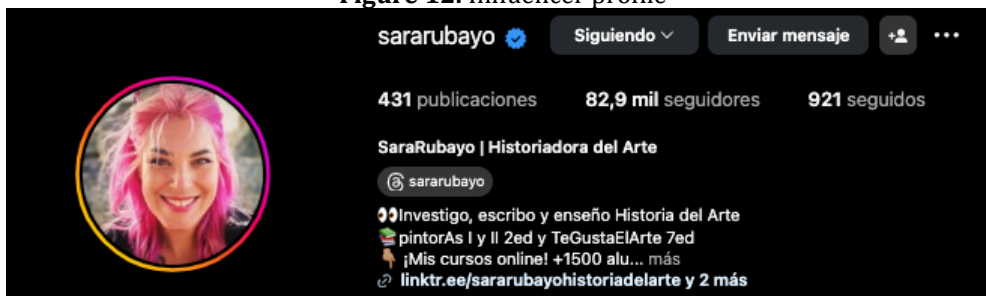
Regarding content formats, Instagram supports greater diversity, including images, carousels, videos, Reels, and Stories, enabling more versatile strategies tailored to different audiences. TikTok, by contrast, relies almost exclusively on video, implying a distinct communication logic and greater demands on audiovisual production.

Both platforms exhibit a common pattern in posting frequency, with reduced activity on weekends. However, engagement analyses indicate that these periods, particularly Friday afternoons, Saturdays, and Sundays, register the highest interaction peaks, pointing to a missed strategic opportunity. This misalignment between posting schedules and potential audience impact highlights the need to review editorial strategies to optimise visibility and engagement in digital environments.

4.5. Case Study: Influencers

Sara Rubayo ranks among the most influential profiles associated with the Prado Museum, according to the Fanpage Karma tool, which analysed the social media activity of the five leading museums in the ranking. With a community of 82,900 followers on Instagram (Figure 12), her profile combines academic training in art history with an informative narrative that effectively engages diverse audiences interested in culture and heritage.

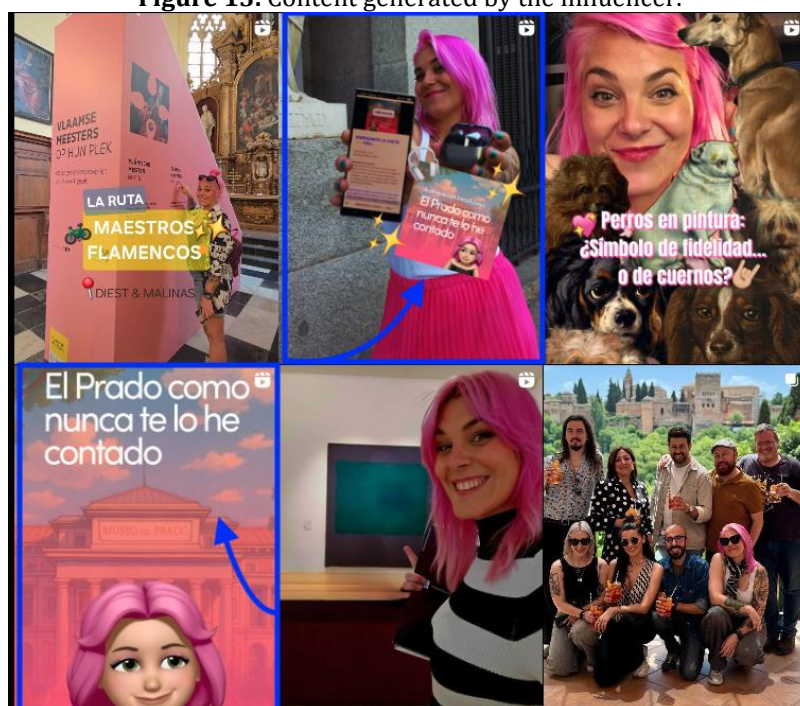
Figure 12. Influencer profile



Source: Fanpage Karma, 2025. Own elaboration

This engagement is further exemplified by recent posts on her Instagram profile, such as *El Prado como nunca te lo he contado* (The Prado as I've never told you before) and the presentation of an audio guide produced in collaboration with the museum (Figure 13). These posts are characterised by an accessible and educational tone, which translates the museum experience into language comprehensible to online audiences, thereby contributing to the humanisation of the institution and the broadening of cultural participation.

Figure 13. Content generated by the influencer.



Source: Instagram, 2025. Own elaboration.

Their role therefore extends beyond that of mere content providers, demonstrating that influencers can act as strategic intermediaries in enhancing museums' digital presence and fostering emotional connections with audiences. These communication strategies integrate influencers as specialised mediators, capable of contributing value not only in terms of visibility but also in content quality. The case of Sara Rubayo illustrates how incorporating specialised content creators can reinforce museums' digital communication strategies by combining thematic expertise, narrative skill, and emotional engagement with online communities.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This research provides a comprehensive assessment of the role that museums and influencers, as cultural entrepreneurs, play in today's digital environment. In line with the overall objective, the study demonstrates that social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok, has become a strategic communication tool for Spanish museums, contributing not only to their visibility but also to the creation of emotional bonds with audiences, the expansion of their communities, and the consolidation of their role as active agents in creative cities.

The data reveal an asymmetry between platforms. While Instagram remains the preferred environment for most of the museums analysed, with a higher volume of posts, larger audiences, and more consolidated strategies, TikTok is still in its infancy, despite its potential to engage young audiences through short, dynamic, and highly narrative content (Martínez and López, 2024). This gap highlights a strategic opportunity that is currently underexploited, particularly given that the highest peaks of engagement on both networks occur during weekends, precisely the periods of lowest institutional activity.

With respect to the first specific objective, the analysis emphasises the importance of narrative adaptation: the museums achieving the best results combine multiple formats (images, videos, carousels), adopt an accessible tone, and schedule posts in accordance with platform dynamics. Consistent with Martínez and López (2024) and Sallaku et al. (2025), these findings indicate that successful digital communication does not depend solely on posting frequency or audience size, but on the capacity to produce content that is relevant, emotionally resonant, and participatory.

With respect to the second objective, concerning the impact of digital communication on visibility and engagement, the results are revealing: museums such as the Prado and the Reina

Sofia maintain large and active communities, whereas others with substantial follower numbers, such as the Guggenheim, exhibit considerably lower levels of interaction. This discrepancy underscores the need to reconsider conventional measurement systems, shifting evaluation towards indicators that assess not only quantitative reach but, crucially, the depth and quality of relationships established with audiences (Rodríguez-Vera et al., 2024).

Regarding the third specific objective, the study demonstrates how digital communication can contribute to the development of more dynamic and inclusive cultural ecosystems. In this context, the role of the cultural influencer, exemplified by Sara Rubayo, is particularly significant. She not only amplifies museum discourses but also functions as a mediating agent between the institution and the public, generating her own content and fostering more horizontal and accessible experiences. This finding aligns with literature on value co-creation and cultural citizenship, confirming that collaboration between museums and influencers represents an emerging form of cultural entrepreneurship in digital environments (Borges Gómez and Serrano Pascual, 2023; Mortari and Almeida, 2025).

Among the principal limitations of this study, it should be noted that, although the Fanpage Karma tool enables robust quantitative analysis, it does not provide an in-depth qualitative reading of content or audience interactions. Additionally, the case study focuses on a single profile, which limits the generalisability of the results with respect to the broader universe of cultural influencers. The analysis is further constrained by its focus on a single country (Spain) and a one-year timeframe, restricting the potential for international or longitudinal comparisons.

Future research directions include expanding the analysis to museums in other geographical contexts to identify broader patterns of digital communication; incorporating qualitative discourse analysis techniques; and examining the tangible impact of collaborations between museums and influencers on audience loyalty and institutional perception.

In conclusion, 21st-century museums cannot be understood outside the digital ecosystem and the new agents that inhabit it. This research offers an integrated perspective linking the communicative transformation of museums with the dynamics of cultural entrepreneurship and the strategies of creative cities. Far from serving merely promotional purposes, collaboration between museums and influencers fosters new forms of symbolic co-production and the creation of emotional bonds with audiences. The cultural influencer thus emerges as a strategic mediator, capable of translating institutional values into accessible, affective, and participatory narrative codes. In this way, digital communication transcends its role as a mere dissemination channel to become an autonomous space for cultural production, in which reputation is cultivated, meaningful interaction is generated, and the social value of the museum is projected both within the city and internationally (Fernández-Torres et al., 2025; UNESCO, 2013).

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