

# SCIENCE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'DIGITAL'?

AI

Database

Software

IT infrastructure

Web-conferencing

Automation

Cloud storage

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'DIGITAL'?

Not *'what'*  
but *'how'*

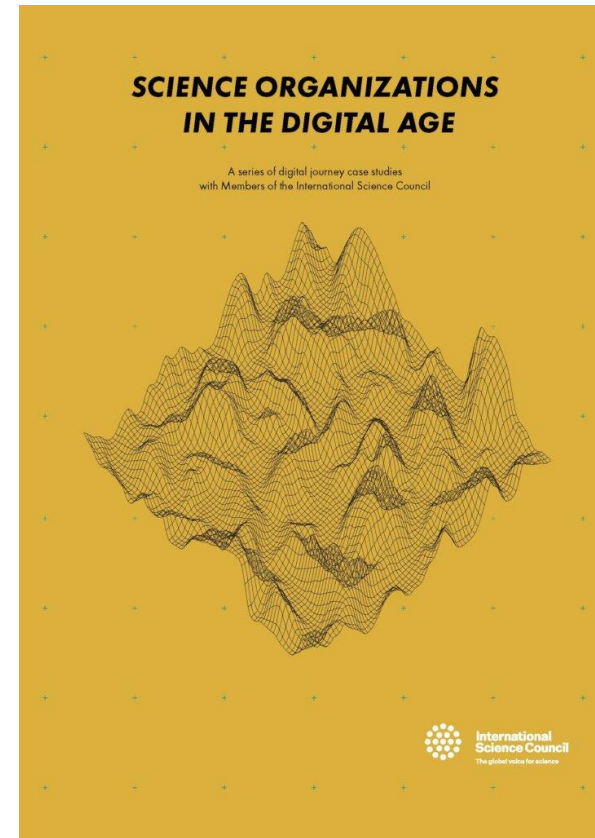


# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION?



# A LOOK AT THE ISC MEMBERS

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# A LOOK AT THE ISC MEMBERS

## SCIENCE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In terms of the key barriers to developing engagement skills, the survey showed that Members reporting lower skills levels identified basic needs like 'A clear vision of what we could achieve with digital', 'Ability to adapt quickly to change' and 'Understanding of digital tools'. As skills levels increased, Members emphasized more complex needs: 'Understanding of digital trends and how they affect your organization', 'Ability to develop and embed a good digital strategy' and 'Digital leadership skills (e.g., being more collaborative)'.

### Key questions for reflection

- Digital strategy alignment**
  - How does your organization's current digital strategy align with the changing dynamics of reach and richness in the digital age?
  - In what ways are you leveraging the power of rich content to enhance your reach?
- Inclusion and context**
  - How does your organization ensure digital inclusivity, taking into account diverse backgrounds, cultures, languages and digital skill levels?
  - Are you tailoring your digital content and engagement strategies based on the context in which your audience interacts with it?
- Continuous learning and feedback**
  - How frequently does your organization gather feedback on its digital strategies and engagement efforts?
  - What mechanisms are in place to adapt and evolve based on this feedback?
- Member-centric approach**
  - In what ways is your organization prioritizing the needs and preferences of its members in its digital initiatives?
  - How are you ensuring that member engagement is both meaningful and valuable for the members themselves?
- Future-proofing**
  - How is your organization preparing for the increasing integration of AI and digital tools in member engagement and communication?
  - What steps are you taking to ensure your digital strategy remains relevant as technology continues to evolve?

### Area 2: Create value through new products and services, quickly

As digital transformation is reshaping every aspect of our lives, science organizations stand at the crossroads of tradition and innovation. The digital revolution offers unprecedented opportunities to innovate, expand reach and create value in ways previously unimagined – and to do so with unprecedented speed.<sup>12</sup>

The most obvious place this is happening is in the value of information products: audiences can find new value in products through digital channels. Conversely, an overload of information makes it harder than ever for specific products and information to stand out, leading to the digital age being described as having an 'attention economy'.<sup>13</sup>

The **'long tail'** is a term that captures a real opportunity for science organizations, and one that they probably understand quite well. The term refers to the dynamic between cost and abundance. Some mainstream products are bought, accessed or used in huge numbers, as was ever the case. But in the digital world, a vast number of niche and limited interests can now be accessed just as cheaply and easily. This phenomenon feeds platforms like Amazon, which thrive on offering a plethora of products, from bestsellers to niche items.<sup>14</sup>

Long tail also means that science organizations working in relatively niche areas and with relatively niche products can make those available, knowing that even though the market for those products is small, it exists. This is therefore not just about which products or services people choose, it is also about which products or services can be marketed and to whom.

The World Anthropological Union (WAU) is an example of an organization that has done just that: its business model has been transformed by targeting niches with content that is of specific value to them (case study 4). Being a 'member' is not the selling point, and membership does not come with an annual fee. Instead, people now become members when they pay to participate in an activity (an event, seminar or similar). Even though the WAU is targeting smaller audience segments – with many different propositions rather than a single membership proposition – it is growing its membership. This is a membership strategy focused on the long tail.

<sup>12</sup> Hill, L.A., Le Cam, A., Menon, S., and Tedards, E. (2022). 'Leading in the digital era: Where can digital transformation take you?' *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge*.

Available at: <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/leading-in-the-digital-era-where-can-digital-transformation-take-you>

<sup>13</sup> Joly, A. (2021). 'The attention economy: Where the customer becomes the product', *Business Today Online Journal*, 18 February. Available at <https://journal.businesstoday.org/ol-online/2021/the-attention-economy-gherjey>

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, C. (2006). *The long tail: Why the future of business is selling less of more*. Hyperion.



# NEW! DIGITAL JOURNEYS

The screenshot shows the International Science Council website. The header includes the ISC logo, navigation links (About, Our work, Members, News and publications, Get involved), a 'Sign up' button, and search and globe icons. The breadcrumb trail is 'Home / Blogs / Official launch of the IDRC...'. The main article title is 'Official launch of the IDRC and ISC project to explore AI's impact on science systems in the Global South'. Below the title is a short paragraph: 'Canada's International Development Research Centre visited the ISC to launch innovative new partnership.' A large photo shows a group of people in a meeting. To the right, there are details: 'Publishing date: May 22, 2024', 'Reading time: 6 minutes', and social sharing icons. A 'Related articles' section lists three other articles with their dates and titles.

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🏠 Home / Blogs / Official launch of the IDRC...

## Official launch of the IDRC and ISC project to explore AI's impact on science systems in the Global South

Canada's International Development Research Centre visited the ISC to launch innovative new partnership.

**International Science Council**  
This global voice for science

**Publishing date:** May 22, 2024  
**Reading time:** 6 minutes

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# THANK YOU


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For any questions, email me at

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