

## Digital revolution: ZKM | Karlsruhe and its digital branch

Digital museum services are designed to attract tomorrow's visitors. But is that all that a cultural institution needs to do? At ZKM | Karlsruhe, we don't think so and have launched a new digital branch: a new website, an innovative online exhibition platform and a range of applications. All products combine artistic concepts and technological innovations. The aim is to extend our cultural program beyond the classic vocabulary. This is not about digitalizing traditional art and presenting it on screens instead of in books. Technological development should not be seen exclusively as a service. The digital revolution offers the museum new opportunities, both in our exhibition space and on the Web – the knowledge space. We are seeking to create not just new access to existing content, but also new content. The basic technological requirement is free wireless Internet, which has been available to ZKM visitors since 2008.

ZKM launched its **new website** [zkm.de](http://zkm.de) back in 2014. A website very different from those of other cultural facilities, it offers visitors from all over the world the chance to share in scientific research and cultural education at the ZKM and brings together expertise and the public. [zkm.de](http://zkm.de) is our "digital branch" and a facility in its own right - not simply an interactive publicity brochure advertising events at our physical site. **Unlike purely service pages, it is explicitly targeted at virtual visitors.** For museum visitors on the ground, it is part of the overall visit experience.

### Two routes to the ZKM website

A key feature of the design is access to information through two completely different routes, a concept that was and still is unique. Users can choose one of two different "worlds" separated by a diagonal line. You can look for specific information on the left-hand screen of this 2-screen option, and intuitively explore our virtually infinite facility on the right – the amazing "ZKM universe". Website implementation took on board the findings of user research conducted by ZKM in 2014. The ZKM is breaking new ground in terms of usability and user experience; in fact the concept is so advanced that we could not find an agency able to implement all aspects of the website.

### The digital branch as a tool

The ZKM shines the spotlight on issues, ideas and innovations, and brings together players from all sections of society – art, science, politics and business – to discuss the key questions of today and tomorrow. The digital branch therefore only provides a framework and structure where

#### Press release

May 2015

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this is useful to the users. It follows the “content first” principle: indexing and taxonomy ensure that all relevant content is linked.

The website seeks first and foremost to make processes visible and transparent: **the focus is on production, not on the product itself.** The website can itself be part of, be a tool in the production process and bring in innovative and artistic digital formats – for example as part of [ArtOnYourScreen \(AOYS\)](#).

### **An innovative digital format: ArtOnYourScreen**

[AOYS](#) is an exhibition platform primarily used to present art on the Web: a new form of museum that is bound to neither time nor place. The ZKM uses [AOYS](#) to show art that uses the screen as its canvas and explores the creative potential of the Internet as a medium. [AOYS](#) is accompanied by an innovative promotion program that interactively combines art and art promotion in the digital space for the first time. Background information about the work and the artists is provided in multimedia knowledge collages. In art promotion too, the ZKM is exploring new paths.

### **New options with mobile media**

Mobile media have brought unique changes to people’s lives that are just as dramatic as the revolution once caused by the mass media radio and television. As mobile media are individual, they are much better suited to art than the centrally organized and managed monopoly media of radio and television. Mobile art applications are the new forms of art that show how art works in the era of digital distribution, and how it is changing. This is opening up new methods of cooperation and collective creation and new approaches. The ZKM has been responding to this development since 2011 with the [AppArtAward](#). The focus of the annual [AppArtAward](#) is on artistic applications of mobile media, and these are becoming more innovative and therefore more useful and creative every year.

### **GLOBALE: the new art event for the digital era**

[GLOBALE](#), running from 19 June 2015 to April 2016, is a major project that will bring together the expertise of the ZKM and its observations of the global art world. The ZKM has developed two new applications specifically for [GLOBALE](#) that combine artistic concepts and technological innovation.

The [Karlsruhe Maptory](#) app uses augmented reality to let users experience pioneering achievements of scientific and artistic figures from Karlsruhe in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. At over 20 places around Karlsruhe, facades will be transformed into interactive art and performance areas, and posters will become cinema screens. With the [MyCity](#),

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[MySounds](#) app, users can give their town a tonal identity: they record sounds, tones, noises and voices with their smartphones and link them to the place they were recorded on a virtual map accessible online. The result will be a huge sound archive that enriches and extends our picture of the city.

**For 300 days, GLOBALE will be showcasing pioneering artistic methods - performative, live, online and above all digital.**

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