

Mapping the Skills of Tomorrow

How AI-driven social listening is revealing the future
workforce of Europe's Cultural & Creative Industries



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The ekip Project

European Cultural & Creative Industries Innovation Policy Platform

ekip is a collaborative platform co-funded by the European Commission, designed to strengthen innovation capacity across Europe and connect the Cultural & Creative Industries (CCIs) with policy experimentation and open innovation.

The project brings together 17 partner organisations from across Europe — including universities, consultancies, creative networks, and cities — to redesign how Europe starts innovation, with creatives at the core.



17 Partners

5 UNIVERSITIES

- Lund University, Sweden
- University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
- Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
- Politecnico di Milano, Italy
- Humak University of Applied Sciences, Finland

4 CONSULTANCIES

- Nextatlas, Italy
- Technopolis Group, Belgium
- Idea Consult Group, Belgium
- Creativity Lab, Estonia

4 CREATIVE AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Creative Business Network, Denmark
- MSCOMM Group, Greece
- New Moment network, SEE region
- Netherlands Institute for Sound & Vision, The Netherlands

4 CITIES

- City of Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava, Slovakia
- Creative Industry Košice, Slovakia
- Cité du design, France



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OUR CONTRIBUTION

The CCI Social Media **Observatory**

10,000+ European creative professionals monitored across Instagram, YouTube, X, Reddit, and Behance — combining AI trend detection with human editorial intelligence.



01

Community Detection

10k+ CCI professionals, 4 EU regions, 9 sectors.



02

AI-Powered Listening

Semantic intelligence powered by advanced NLP on millions of posts.



03

Weak Signal Detection

Trends spotted months before going mainstream.



04

Regional Intelligence

North, West, Central & East, South Europe deep dive.



05

Sentiment Analysis

Not just what creatives say, but how they feel about it.



06

Trend Correlation

Every report paired with a long-term NextAtlas trend.



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All ekip policy areas **we mapped**

A dedicated observatory report for each *ekip* policy area: a deep listen into how European creatives engage with specific systemic challenges.



AI & Cultural Creative Industries

Generative tools, copyright, new creative expressions, and ethics of automation.



New European Bauhaus

CCIs enabling green transition through design, architecture, and sustainable aesthetics.



Immersive Media

VR, AR, and mixed reality reshaping cultural production and audience experience.

New funding models for creativity and innovation

New funding architectures, blended finance models, and investment frameworks.



Crafts-led Innovation

Traditional craft knowledge as a driver of sustainable and frugal innovation.



Music Platformisation

Streaming economics, artist revenues, and the restructuring of the music industry.



Inclusivity in Gaming

Diversity, representation, and accessibility in Europe's video game industry.



Reimagining deep-tech

How creative practitioners unlock the human potential of frontier technologies.



Cross-Innovation: Performing Arts

Theatre, dance, and live arts as catalysts for cross-sector innovation.



Fashion Transition

Eco-design, circularity, digital product passports, and sustainable consumption.



Cultural Heritage & Open Innovation

Heritage institutions as innovation hubs within creative ecosystems.



Spaces, structures and ecosystems

How EU innovation policy can better support CCIs.

Identifying Tomorrows' Jobs

JUN 2025

As a by-product of Nextatlas's Social Media Observatory within the *ekip* project, we detected the emergence of new professional identities reshaping the sector.

From this body of signal intelligence, we identified 10 distinct personas or archetypes representing the most relevant "New Jobs" emerging within the Cultural & Creative Industries. Each persona reflects real skills, behaviours, and needs observed in the field, and is accompanied by a short profile, relevant pains & gains, and top competencies.

Creative Personas II



SEPT 2024



Creative Personas I



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AI Artist

“ I started off as a painter but now I’m fully immersed in blending traditional artistry with advanced algorithms to create unique and compelling art pieces. It’s a dynamic field where technology and creativity intersect, allowing for endless experimentation and innovation. ”

Maya, 26 y.o.



+ Needs

State-of-the-art Tools: Access to cutting-edge AI software and platforms that facilitate the creation of art, such as generative design tools, machine learning frameworks, and image synthesis applications.

Community Engagement: Sharing insights and collaborating with like-minded individuals to stay inspired and to exchange knowledge.

Visibility: Platforms and venues for showcasing AI-generated art, whether through exhibitions, online galleries, or social media,

- Pains

Ethical Concerns: Navigating ethical dilemmas related to authorship, copyright, and the potential for AI to replace human artists can create anxiety.

Technical Complexity: The technical aspects of working with AI can be daunting, leading to frustration when artists encounter challenges in creating works.

Market Competition: Difficulty to stand out and gain recognition as AI art becomes more popular, and more artists are experimenting with new tech tools



Top Skills



Artistic Sensibility



Creativity



Tech Literacy

+79%

Tech Literacy
(Future Growth)



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Creative Coder

“ My work involves developing innovative software solutions while infusing them with a unique, creative twist. I participate in various coding hackathons and work on DIY tech projects, which helps me stay connected to the latest trends and innovations in technology. ”

Max, 23 y.o.



+ Needs

Continuous Learning: Ongoing education through workshops, online courses, and community events to stay updated on new techniques and tools.

Creative Freedom: The need for a certain degree of creative freedom to experiment and innovate without excessive constraints.

Time for Experimentation: They need dedicated time to explore new ideas and technologies without the pressure of deadlines, fostering innovation and creativity.

- Pains

Technical Limitations: Constraints due to software or hardware limitations that can hinder the possibility to fully realize one's creative visions.

FOMO (“fear of missing out”): The fast evolution of technology and design trends can be overwhelming, making it difficult to stay current and relevant in the field.

Unclear Expectations: Ambiguous project goals or shifting requirements can lead to misunderstandings and frustration.



Top Skills



Attention to Detail



Critical Thinking



Problem Solving

+40%

Detail Oriented
(Future Growth)



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Design Technologist

“ I focus on integrating new technologies like virtual reality, AI, and 3D modeling to push the boundaries of modern design. I need to make sure that the designs are not only aesthetically pleasing but also functional and sustainable. ”

Ava, 28 y.o.



+ Needs

Continuous Learning: To stay up-to-date with the latest technologies, tools, and design trends to remain competitive and innovative.

Cross-disciplinary Collaboration: Effective collaboration with cross-functional teams, especially developers, to create seamless user experiences.

Efficient Workflow Processes: Streamlined workflow processes and clear communication channels to enhance productivity.

- Pains

Resistance to Change: Introducing new design methodologies or tools can meet resistance from team members and clients alike.

Budget & Resource Constraints: Limited budgets or resources that can restrict the creative vision and or the implementation of latest technologies.



Top Skills



Adaptability



Creativity



Teamwork

+74%
Collaborative
Design
(Future Growth)



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ESG

(Environmental, social, and governance)

Specialist

“ My role involves creating and implementing impactful ESG (Environmental, social, and governance) strategies, addressing challenges related to data integration, and navigating regulatory complexities. I’m specialized in supporting stakeholders in aligning with eco-friendly practices. ”

Sophia, 32 y.o.



+ Needs

Ongoing Training: Continuous learning opportunities to stay updated on the latest regulations, frameworks, and industry trends.

Data Management Tools: Tools for collecting, analyzing, and reporting ESG data are essential for tracking progress and ensuring compliance.

Cross-Functional Collaboration: Effective collaboration with teams across the organization, including finance, operations, and communications.

- Pains

Stakeholder Pushback: Resistance to change or a lack of understanding of ESG principles, which can delay or derail important sustainability projects

Regulatory Complexities: Continuous monitoring and updating of compliance measures, which can be resource-intensive.

Lack of Standardization: The lack of universally recognized ESG reporting standards can create difficulties in benchmarking performance.



Top Skills



Communication Skills



Data Analysis



Strategic Planning

+41%
Communication Skills
(Future Growth)



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Solopreneur

“As a solo business founder of a design studio, I essentially wear all the hats within my business. From developing strategies and managing projects to handling finances and marketing, my role is multifaceted.”

Alex, 37 y.o.



+ Needs

Networking: expanding and strengthening network.

Continuous learning: access to training resources, workshops, and courses to enhance their skills in areas such as marketing, finance, and technology.

Financial Management: tools and resources for managing cash flow, budgeting, and accounting.

Time Management: tools and strategies to prioritize tasks and maintain productivity.

- Pains

Work Burnout: Struggle to balance work and personal life, which can affect their mental health.

Limited Resources: Access to resources may be limited, including financial backing, human resources, and networking opportunities.

Skill Gaps: Gaps in expertise, particularly in areas outside their primary strengths.



Top Skills



Communication Skills



Problem Solving



Time Management

+43%
Management Skills
(Future Growth)



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AI Ethicist

“ We're entering this wild new territory where AI can create amazing things. My job is to help artists and tech folks think through the big questions: Who owns what? How do we avoid bias? It's about making sure this creative revolution is a fair one. ”

Eleanor, 38 y.o.



+ Needs

(Highly) Specialized Expertise: Deep understanding of AI principles, capabilities, limitations, relevant intellectual property law, and specific ethical frameworks applicable to creative AI.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Ability to work effectively with artists, technologists, legal experts, and policymakers.

Research Access: Staying updated on the latest developments and ethical challenges in the field of AI and creativity.

- Pains

Conflicting Stakeholder Interests: Balancing the desires of artists, technology developers, and the public.

Lack of Legal Precedents: Navigating ethical issues in a legal landscape that is still catching up with AI.

Rapid Tech Evolution: The breakneck pace of AI development leaves legal frameworks struggling to keep up, creating uncertainty and potential liabilities.



Top Skills



Critical Thinking



Legal Acumen



Tech Literacy

+55%
Critical Thinking
(Future Growth)



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Cultural Broker

“ My job is like being a translator, but for ideas and ways of working. I help artists from different backgrounds truly connect and create something amazing together, without anyone feeling lost in translation – literally or figuratively! ”

Nicola, 42 y.o.



+ Needs

Deep Intercultural Understanding: Comprehensive knowledge of diverse cultural norms, values, communication styles, and artistic traditions.

Communication Skills: Ability to articulate ideas clearly and sensitively across cultural and linguistic barriers.

Facilitation Abilities: Skill in mediating discussions, resolving conflicts, and fostering inclusive collaboration.

- Pains

Bridging Divergencies: The way work gets done, from planning and execution to feedback and evaluation, can be vastly different across disciplines and industries.

Logistical Complexities: Managing practical challenges such as time zones, travel, legal requirements, and varying professional norms across borders.

Securing Funding: Funding mechanisms and priorities can differ greatly between industries and countries, making it difficult to secure joint funding.



Top Skills



Communication Skills



Adaptability



Teamwork

+58%

Team Building
(Future Growth)



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Heritage Strategist

“ My role is to strategize how we use everything from digital tools to community stories to ensure our heritage isn't just preserved, but actively shapes our future and connects with everyone. ”

Katarina, 31 y.o.



+ Needs

Specialized Training: Need for up-to-date knowledge in areas like digital heritage management and community engagement, necessitating access to relevant training and financial support for skill development and project implementation.

Community Engagement Expertise: Skills in building relationships with diverse communities and involving them in heritage initiatives.

Technological Literacy: Understanding how digital tools (VR/AR, digital archives, etc.) can enhance heritage experiences and preservation.

- Pains

Navigating Bureaucracy/Regulations: Working within complex governmental and organizational structures can be time-consuming and restrictive.

Digital Integration Challenges: Lack of clear standards and best practices for using technology in heritage.

Funding Instability: Reliance on limited and short-term financial resources.



Top Skills



Project Management



Strategic Thinking



Research Skills

+37%
Strategic Thinking
(Future Growth)



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Impact Builder

“ My job is to spark those 'aha!' moments where creative ideas meet real-world needs. Whether it's using art for social change or tech for sustainability, it's all about making innovation in our fields actually create a positive difference. ”

James, 32 y.o.



+ Needs

Collaboration & Networking: Skills in building partnerships across different fields.

Cross-Sector Understanding: Knowledge of diverse industries and their respective challenges and opportunities.

Sustainability Literacy: Understanding of environmental and social sustainability principles.

- Pains

Intangible Impact Measurement: The challenge of quantifying the social and cultural benefits of creative initiatives.

Funding Limitations: Lack of dedicated financial support for projects prioritizing social and environmental outcomes.

Resource Scarcity: Difficulty finding reliable and up-to-date information on evolving societal and environmental challenges.



Top Skills



Communication Skills



Strategic Thinking



Teamwork

+63%

Long Term Vision
(Future Growth)



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Interactive Storyteller

“ I don't just tell stories; I build playgrounds for them. My job is to craft experiences where the audience becomes a participant, shaping the narrative and discovering their own path through the tale. ”

Samantha, 28 y.o.



+ Needs

Design Skills: Knowledge of user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) principles for interactive narratives.

Technical Proficiency: Familiarity with relevant software and platforms for creating interactive experiences (e.g., game engines, scripting languages, interactive video tools).

Adaptability Across Media: Versatility in applying interactive storytelling techniques to different platforms and formats.

- Pains

Lack of Standardized Tools: The absence of established workflows and design methodologies specific to interactive storytelling hinders efficient creation.

Funding Challenges: Securing traditional funding is difficult due to the experimental nature and uncertain monetization of interactive projects.

Impact Measurement: The lack of clear metrics and evaluation methods makes it challenging to demonstrate the artistic, educational, or commercial value.



Top Skills



Communication Skills



Problem Solving



Design Thinking

+68%

Design Skills
(Future Growth)



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