

Digital Culture

Charalambos Constantinou (907455)

Project: "Digital Culture in Cyprus"

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Digital Culture Definition

We often hear the term "digital culture" in a lot of discussions in our life. But what does really "digital culture" mean?

According to Gere (2002) p.12 digitally can be thought of as a marker of culture because it encompasses both the artifacts and the system of signification and communication that clearly demarcates our contemporary way of life from others.

Cyprus Facts

Full country name: Republic of Cyprus

Area: 9,250 sq km

Population: 802,000 (End of 2002)

Capital City: Nicosia

People: Cypriot (Greek 78%, Turkish 18% - including 141,000 in North Cyprus)

Language: Greek, Turkish, English

Religion: Greek Orthodox 78%, Muslim 18%, Maronite, Armenian Apostolic and Christian 4%

Government: republic

Head of Government: President Tassos Papadopoulos

GDP: US\$10 billion

GDP per capita: US\$15,000

Annual Growth: 3%

Inflation: 1.7%

Major Industries: Tourism, fruit & vegetables, wine, cement, clothing, shoes

Major Trading Partners: Russian, Bulgaria, UK, Greece, Japan, Germany, Turkey (North only)

Member of EU: Yes

Cyprus background – History of Cyprus

Cyprus was destined to play a very important role in history because of its geographical position. Asia Minor is only 40 miles away and the Syrian coast only 60 from the easternmost tip of the Karpass peninsula. Egypt and the Aegean Sea are 240 miles apart. Therefore it was only natural that a great civilisation flowered in Cyprus beginning as early as the 8th millennium BC.

Hittites in Asia Minor and Egyptians in the south claimed the island as their possession, but the Greeks from the west were those who stamped its destiny when in the late 13th, 12th and 11th centuries BC, they established themselves as permanent settlers. Despite the fact that the island fell prey to all big powers of the day, the presence of Greeks gave Cyprus a historical and cultural continuity ever since.

During the ages Cyprus was invented by a lot of empires including the Frankish, the Ottomans and the Romans.

A very important period for Cyprus was from 1878-1960.

Under the 1878 Cyprus Convention, Britain assumes administration of the island, which remains formally part of the Ottoman Empire until 1914. In 1925 Cyprus is declared a Crown colony which last at about 30 years because an Armed Liberation Struggle, after breaks out in 1955 which last until 1959. In 1960 according to the Zurich-London Treaty, Cyprus becomes an independent republic.

The 1960 Constitution of the Cyprus Republic proves unworkable and so a period characterized by problems and instability between the two parts (Greek and Turkish) followed including the rebellion of the Turkish Community on 1963.

In July 1974, a coup is staged in Cyprus by the Military junta, then in power in Athens, for the overthrow of President Makarios. On 20 July 1974, Turkey launched an invasion with 40,000 troops against defenceless Cyprus. Since 1974, 37% of the island is under Turkish military occupation and 200,000 Greek Cypriots, 40% of the total Greek Cypriot population, were forced to leave their homes in the occupied area and were turned into refugees. The invasion of Turkey and the occupation of 37% of the island's territory as well as the continuing violation of the fundamental human rights of the people of Cyprus have been condemned by international bodies, such as the UN General Assembly, the Non-aligned Movement, the Commonwealth and the Council of Europe.

In 1983, the area under Turkish military control declared itself independent and proclaimed a republic called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" [TRNC], which, to this day has not been recognized by any country except Turkey and is considered as illegal by the international community.

In May 2004 Cyprus became member of the European Union although the problem still remains.

Cyprus Culture

It is probably no surprise with a history so long, that Cyprus is remarkably rich in culture. Its importance has been honoured by UNESCO which has included nine of the island's Byzantine mountain churches and the entire town of Kato Pafos in its World Cultural Heritage List. Wherever you tread in Cyprus you are reminded of a strong tradition that is kept alive from generation to generation through the many events which are celebrated.

Hardly a week goes by in Cyprus without a celebration of some sort, whether it be a colourful festival or homage to a saint on one of the numerous 'name' days. The 'Panigiri', a traditional open-air fete, takes place mainly in the villages on the occasion of a saint's name day. Easter, the most important Greek Orthodox religious event, is celebrated with solemnity, joy and hope

Cypriot culture is also reflected in the rich folk art of the island. Age-old crafts, handed down from one generation to another, are faithfully carried on to this day by skilful hands and nimble fingers, fashioning handicrafts, both decorative and useful, that would grace any home.

Examples of Cypriot folk art, which is an outgrowth of traditional Greek art, are in the Folk Art Museum (1950) in Nicosia. The Cyprus Museum (1883) at Nicosia houses many archaeological artefacts found on the island. Museums in Paphos, Larnaca, and Lemesós display other important collections.

Carnival is one of the best known Cypriot celebrations, along with 'Anthestiria', the Spring Flower festival, and 'Kataklysmos' - the festival of the Flood - which coincides with Pentecost. Throughout the year there are also exhibitions, concerts, drama and folk festivals.

Cyprus in the Digital Age

Today, Cyprus is becoming known as the Singapore of the Middle East, with Nicosia, the modern capital of the island, established as an international business center providing state-of-the-art technological support to local and international business. The thriving of the Cyprus economy, with hundreds of offshore companies operating on the island, could not have been made possible without the employment of state-of-the-art Information Technology and Telecommunications and the utilisation of electronic ports, routes and channels. The technological infrastructure of Cyprus is effectively and efficiently supported by a plethora of experienced and well-qualified Computer Science and Computer Engineering scientists.

Cyprus in the Digital Age is following the steps of Singapore and is transforming itself into an Information Society, with computers and

telecommunication networks turning the "tiny island" into a "microscopic island" and connecting residents to the world global village. Of course, as anyone would expect from people inheriting the Greek culture and civilisation where freedom of speech and expression, but also philosophy and democracy were born and bloomed, Cypriots are examining ethical and philosophical dilemmas emanating from the creation of the Information Society.

The Information Technology industry plays a very important role in the transformation of the Cypriot Society into a modern Information Society. Private companies, semi-governmental organisations and governmental Information Technology Departments are all actively engaged in major IT projects. The Cyprus Telecommunications Company (CYTA) is a key player in this transformation.

The Government of Cyprus participates in many European IT projects, one such project being the Mediterranean Information Technology Nodes that aims at interconnecting all Mediterranean countries. International Companies such as IBM, SUN, NCR, CSC, SAP and NetU have all large branches in Cyprus, which many times serve as Middle-East headquarters, providing consultancy and expertise in the area. Large Cypriot software companies are also well known in the Middle East and are engaged in many IT projects in the area.

When Culture becomes digital:

"ΘHCAYROS" - a Corpus of Historic Monuments of Cyprus

The program "THE CYPRUS TREASURE - a Corpus of Historic Monuments of Cyprus", is a joint project of the Department of History and Archaeology and the Department of Computer Science at the University of Cyprus, which combines historical, archaeological and information systems research and focuses on Cyprus archaeological treasures. The chronological frame is the period from the "Cypro-Classical" era (conventional beginning is the year 475 BC) through 1192 AD, the year which marks the end of the Byzantine epoch and the beginning of the Frankish rule. In the program participate many universities and research centres from Cyprus and abroad. The "Thesaurus" project aims to the development of a platform independent Internet application that supports the storage, manipulation and presentation of the archaeological treasures of Cyprus.

Cyprus Media Profile:

“From newspapers to Internet”

The audiovisual media

The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation, established with Cyprus' 1960 independence, used to operate as a semi-governmental organisation in conditions of monopoly until 1990.

Pluralistic radio and television were introduced in Cyprus in 1990 and 1992 respectively putting an end to the state monopoly since the 1950's. In the Republic of Cyprus, there are two state and five private television channels with an island-wide coverage and three state and six private radio channels with an island-wide coverage. The state channels have lost the lead in the numbers of viewers and listeners to private channels. In the Turkish occupied area of Cyprus, the Broadcasting Service is operating under the absolute ownership and control of the Turkish-Cypriot administration. In fact, the Turkish authority-controlled radio and television is more than 80 percent fed from Turkish national television.

Further, a number of channels from Turkey and one from Greece beam directly to Cyprus while satellite television with the world wide coverage is becoming increasingly widespread.

The written Press

The first newspaper was published in 1878, the year of Cyprus' transition from the Ottoman occupation to the British colonial administration. Since then, more than 400 newspapers and periodicals have been published mainly in Greek, but also in Turkish, Armenian and English, for [and by] the respective communities and minorities.

Keeping in mind the political situation on the island, the development the Cyprus media has shown great progress, with all newspapers having switched to computerisation, and adopting up-to-date printing techniques.

However, the small size of the population defines some of the barriers imposed on all the aspects of organisational structure and outcomes of the press.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics of March 11, 2003, the newspaper circulation ratio was 110 per 1000 people. The average circulation of all newspapers is around 65000 copies - with the largest newspaper (PHILELEFTHEROS) selling 25000 copies daily.

Newspapers

Cyprus has 8 National Newspapers and many local newspapers. In Cyprus almost every newspaper supports some Political Party

The National - wide newspapers are:

[Phileleftheros](#)

Phileleftheros is the daily newspaper that sells more in Cyprus. It supports the Social democratic Party which is now the party that governs the country. Phileleftheros is written in Greek and is also available online.

[Alithia](#)

Alithia has the second place in the market. It supports the Right Political Party (DHSY) and is also written in Greek.

[Haravgi](#)

Haravgi is a daily newspaper that supports the Left oriented Political Party (AKEL). Haravgi is also written in Greek and is available online.

[Simerini](#)

Simerini is another daily newspaper that supports the Right oriented political party (DHSY). Simerini is available online and is written in Greek.

[Politis](#)

Politis is a daily newspaper that supports the Socialdemocratic party and it is also available online and is written in Greek.

[Typos](#)

Typos is a daily newspaper that supports the social democratic party, it is also available online and it is written in Greek.

[Cyprus Mail](#)

Cyprus mail is the most popular newspaper for foreign people in Cyprus. It is written in English and it does not support any political party.

Cyprus weekly

Cyprus weekly is a weekly newspaper, it is written in English and it is available online.

Radio

Today there more than 100 radio stations in Cyprus. Most of them are local radio stations. Nicosia the capital of Cyprus has 38, Limassol the second biggest town has 27, Larnaka 29 and Paphos 7.

TV

Cyprus has currently 7 National TV stations and 7 Local stations.

National – wide Stations

RIK 1

State - owned station. Its program includes news, talk, series, comedies, music and cultural programs.

RIK 2

State - owned station. Its program includes movies, comedies, music, programs geared to a younger audience.

Mega Channel

Private free channel. Its program includes movies, news, serials, comedies, talk shows and sports.

Sigma TV

Private - free channel. Its program includes news, movies, music, comedies, talk shows, serials. Relays Mad TV from Greece.

Antenna TV

Private - free channel. Its program includes news, comedies, serials, talk shows and movies.

Alfa TV

Cable - pay channel. Its program includes news, kids shows, soaps, movies, comedies and sports

Lumiere TV

Cable - pay channel. Its program includes movies and films.

Local Stations:

TV Station	Location
Extra TV	Limassol
TV FM	Larnaka
Fred TV	Nicosia
Capital TV	Nicosia
Pafos TV	Paphos
Astra TV	Nicosia
Kanali Omega	Paphos

Internet

Cyprus has about 210000 regular internet users. There are several companies that provide internet services but the biggest one is CYTA (Cyprus Telecommunications) which is a semi - government organization. The use growth (from 2000 to 2004) reaches 75%.

According to the CIA Factbook, there 12 Internet hosts and 6 Internet Service Providers [ISPs] in the Republic of Cyprus in 2002. Although e-shopping is very limited, e-banking is becoming increasingly widespread and popular.

Cyprus Media Law

Article 19 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus provides:

1. Every person has the right to freedom of speech and expression in any form.

2. This right includes freedom to hold opinions and receive and impart information and ideas without interference by any public authority and regardless of frontiers.

3. The exercise of the rights provided in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary only in the interests of the security of the Republic or the constitutional order or the public safety or the public order or the public health or the public morals or for the protection of the reputation or rights of others or for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

4. Seizure of newspapers or other printed matter is not allowed without the written permission of the Attorney -General of the Republic, which must be confirmed by the decision of a competent court within a period not exceeding seventy--two hours, failing which the seizure shall be lifted.

5. Nothing in this Article contained shall prevent the Republic from requiring the licensing of sound and vision broadcasting or cinema enterprises

The Press law proposed in 1989 aimed at setting guidelines and a professional code of ethics and at stimulating greater competition by allowing private radio stations. A bill was presented before the House of Parliament and was enacted as law in 1990. During the same year, and despite the financial threat to the Cyprus Broadcast Corporation, a new relationship with the Greek media was established, allowing Cypriot television to broadcast Greek programmes. In mid-1990, another law enactment ensured that municipalities, companies, and individuals were eligible to establish private radio stations.

Media Organisations

The Union of Cyprus Journalists has around 400 members, of which less than one third are women. Its members are professional journalists employed in newspapers, periodicals, the radio and the television and the news agencies of Cyprus as well as all Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation [public] journalists. The Union is represented in the Radio- Television Advisory Committee and the Administrative Council of the Cyprus News Agency and in various cases it is invited to parliamentary committees to express its views when matters that concern the media are discussed.

Recent media developments

Cyprus has a distinct lack of sources on media development. There exist no regular publications devoted to the problems of the media industry and journalists. However, many binominal [Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots] groups of journalists, amongst which the recently-formed [Cypriot, Greek and Turkish Journalists Forum](#) is an indication of more positive discussions by and for journalists today.

At the same time, the 1998 Radio and Television Stations Law have introduced numerous positive elements to the media landscape in Cyprus. The Cyprus Radio-Television Authority is a member of the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) and of the Mediterranean Network of Media Regulatory Authorities.

The Cyprus Radio-Television Authority is an independent regulatory body established under the 1998 Radio and Television Stations Law.

Cyprus - Education in technology

Educational Institutions also play a major role in the transformation into an information society. The University of Cyprus and other tertiary level institutions are directly and indirectly contributing to the development of the strategy, planning and implementation of this transformation.

This is achieved through the scientific and applied research work and scholarly publications, the participation in many European IT related projects, the offering of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in the area of Information Technology and the "production" of highly educated graduates in the subject area. These graduates eventually become important members of the community, building and maintaining today's Information Society.

The University of Cyprus is government supported and offers a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the area of Information Technology. It offers a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science and a specialised Master's degree in Advanced Information Technology with

concentrations in Expert Systems and the Internet. The Department of the Computer Science of the University has a very strong reputation in research and competes with the best international Universities. The language of instruction at the University of Cyprus is Greek.

Some of the best private tertiary level institutions are also engaged in the field. Intercollege is the largest and most reputable of these. Its language of instruction is English and thus, attracts many international students. It also attracts many local students who see English as a language they have to master since Cyprus is really a European and international centre. Intercollege is offering the following Information Technology programs:

- **BSc Computer Science**
- **BSc Computer Engineering**
- **BSc Business Administration (Management Information Systems)**
- **BSc Multimedia**
- **MSc Computing**

The programs are supported by:

state-of-the-art hardware (SUN Workstations, Macintosh and Personal Computer Labs – supporting a variety of operating systems such as UNIX, LINUX and MS Windows)

state-of-the-art software (Java and Internet Development Tools, Oracle DBMS, Director, Visual Basic and Visual C++ programming languages, etc.)

a modern Library, holding a large number of Computer Science, Engineering and Multimedia books and periodicals, as well as, CD-ROM-based and on-line databases of information

new teaching and learning methods utilising multimedia and Internet technology.

Most importantly, the programs are supported by a lecturing team second to none when compared with lecturing teams of international Universities. The faculty members teaching on the programs hold PhD qualifications from prestigious UK and US universities, have extensive academic and professional experience and are engaged in scientific research, publishing widely in international journals and presenting papers at international conferences. Specialised courses are also offered by many IT industry expert practitioners who supplement the scientific academic environment and whose real life experience and expertise are invaluable to the programs offered.

Graduate students of the Information Technology programs are quickly absorbed by industry, following careers in programming, system analysis and design, software engineering, project management, system administration, technical support and management of information systems. International students will eventually return to their countries and become key players in the transformation of their society in the Electronic Digital Age.

Bank of Cyprus – e Banking

The Bank of Cyprus is the biggest and more popular bank in Cyprus. The Group currently operates through a total of 280 banking outlets, of which 181 are in Cyprus, 80 in Greece, seven in the United Kingdom, eight in Australia and one in the Channel Islands.

During the last 5 years the Bank of Cyprus has introduced some e-services to their customers like:

Direct Banking is offered free to all customers, Personal and Business, 24*7 through Telephone and Internet.

Internet Banking

Bank of Cyprus Internet Banking Service offers a convenient and fast way to access accounts, transfer money, pay bills online and many more. The customer can sign-on anytime, from your home or work. The Service is available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Telephone Banking

Bank of Cyprus Telephone Banking enables the customer to perform all the banking transactions by phone. The customer can perform his transactions automatically using the keypad of his telephone or with the help of the bank's agents.

All transactions are confidential, secure and fast.

Mobile Banking

The customers are now able to perform banking transactions and obtain information through their mobile phone using WAP.

Bank of Cyprus mobile banking offers:

- Bill Payments
- Balance Inquiry
- Fund Transfers (own/authorized)
- Transfer to Third Party
- Stop Payment of Cheque
- Real Time CSE rates
- Exchange Rates

The bank of Cyprus offers and other e-services to their customers like online trading etc. More information you can find on <http://www.bankofcyprus.com/main.asp?id=171>

Cyprus Portals and Directories

- Allcy.com - Directory of sites related to Cyprus.
- Arachne! - Cyprus search engine.
- Cypria.com - Portal offering directories and search engines to find anything related to the sunny Island of Cyprus.
- Cyprus Online - Cyprus directory for business, travel, and information.
- Eureka! - Cyprus web directory.
- InterCyprus - Links and information on Cyprus holidays, currency, real estate, Cyprus weather, business, education, map of the island, telephone directory and more.
- Kypros-Net - Cyprus portal.
- YourCyprus.com - Cyprus portal.

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