

# MUAY THAI CONTENT TOWARDS DIGITAL ECONOMY

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## ABSTRACT

Thai boxing so-called Muay Thai was a Thai cultural heritage and had a long historical root in terms of an effective self-defense of Thai warriors on the battlefields. In recent years Muay Thai has been developed into such different adaptations as unarmed combat, sport, entertainment, a fitness program as well as a self-defense. This research was to examine how Muay Thai would be promoted internationally towards Thailand's digital economy. It was reported that art and culture has played a crucial role in the development of its national economy. The study was a qualitative research by collecting data based on interviews of Muay Thai masters, Muay Thai boxers, Thai boxing schools, animation studios, related research and articles as well as websites respectively. The study found that interactive animated Muay Thai would be the best format as an online promoter of digital economy since it could provide a rapid increase in education, market, social and finally cultural values. However, Muay Thai cannot be a driving force of national economy without a strong support from government including infrastructure and funding supports together with collaboration between public and private sectors.

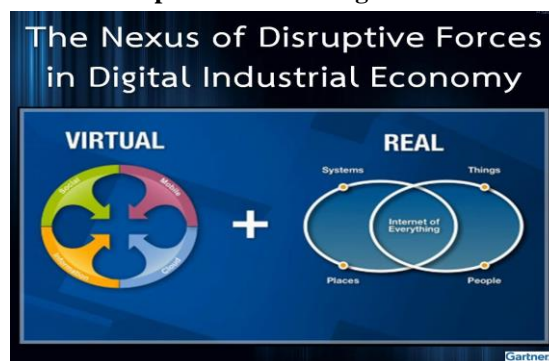
Keywords-digital economy, digital content, Muay Thai

## INTRODUCTION

The world is now facing an era of unprecedented change. The recession of the global economy has reshaped the global business landscape. The downturn has adopted key technologies-mobility, cloud computing, business intelligence and social media spurring a new way of wealth creation of emerging market by cutting cost creating innovation and driving income. Most countries worldwide are aware of these new challenges. The Oxford economics has addressed significant shifts of the world market including the global digital economy, digital transformation, reverse of digital divide and emerging market.

Therefore, ICT industries have been playing significant roles attributed to its strength as a medium of communication, education, entertainment and, more recently, as a tool for electronic commerce. The Nexus of Forces by Gartner – the convergence of mobile, social, cloud and information – has become the platform for digital business. Digital business technologies are disrupting business operations in ways that have not previously been seen.

**Figure 1**  
**The Nexus of Disruptive Forces in Digital Industrial Economy**



[www.gartner.com](http://www.gartner.com)

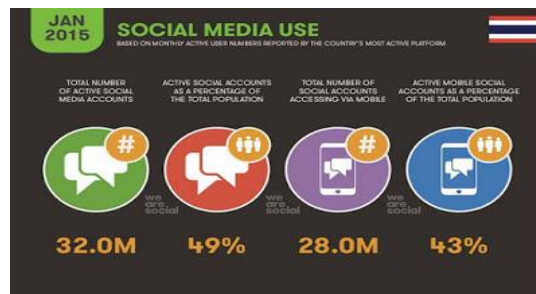
Digital economy later becomes a buzzword. OECD defined digital economy as it enables and executes the trade of goods and services through electronic commerce on the internet. Oxford Digital Economy Collaboration Group signifies digital economy in enabling and conducting the trade of goods and services through electronic commerce on the internet which is based on supporting infrastructure, e-business and e-commerce. Digital economy is able to increase performance and competitiveness across the industries contributing to the general economic growth. Further, various countries have launched policy, measures and strategies of digital economy to fuel their economic growth including Japan, South Korea, Britain, U.S.A, Malaysia and China and even Thailand. In 2013, cultural and creative industries worldwide generated revenues of USD 2250b and employed 29 million people while digital cultural goods are, by far, the biggest revenue source for the digital economy, generating USD 66b of B2C sales.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### I. Thailand Digital Economy

Thailand has been recognized as a business-friendly country for foreign direct investment in Southeast Asian in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a destination for service and industry sectors. Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as trade shifts towards the internet and technology, Thailand is transforming itself into an economy that not only embraces the industrial, but the digital as well. At present, Thailand has 34 million internet users accounted for 50% of the total population. While there are 96.4 million mobile phones in usage with 34.6 million are smart phone users. There are over 43% of active social media accounts by using facebook most.

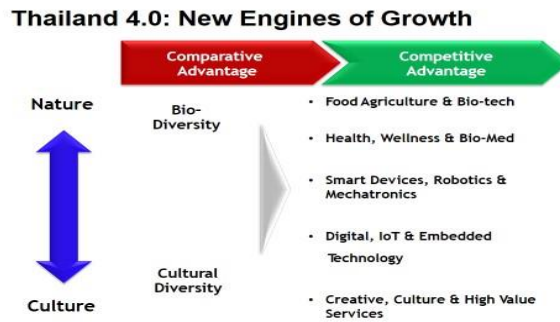
**Figure 2**  
**Thailand's Social Media Use**



[www.thaimarketingguru.com](http://www.thaimarketingguru.com)

Therefore, Thai government has declared Thailand 4.0 as a new policy to fuel the engine of national growth by changing production of "commodities" into "innovative products", transforming industry-driven activities into those driven by technology, creativity and innovation while shifting from the focus on making products, to providing services. Thailand 4.0 will emphasize economic growth unleashing human potential to creating national competitiveness and sustainability. However, the policy can transform towards the value based economy by partnering public and private sectors as a mechanism of national growth.

**Figure 3**  
**Thailand 4.0: New Engines of Growth**



Dr. Suvit Maesincee's presentation

Recently, the government established Ministry of Digital Economy and Society to replace the existing Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and a National Digital Economy and Society Committee led to directly support and strengthen digital economy. The Thai government has developed a large scale program including reshuffling government agencies to align synergies and produce a digital economy frameworks by implementing solid infrastructure, services and digital economy promotion and innovation creation respectively.

Noticeably, Thai art and culture has been signified as a high transformation in terms of generating income, providing jobs and building exports. When combined, this sector is one of the most rapidly growing arenas of the world economy. It is believed that in the next few years, the value of the creative economy is likely to become larger than an industrial sector. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a thriving creative economy would be key driving force for a country's continued economic success.

## II. Myay Thai

### 2.1 History of Muay Thai

Thai Boxing or Muay Thai is considered as the national sport and cultural martial art combat. Muay Thai is referred as "The Art of Eight Limbs" using eight points of body by the combined use of fists, elbows, knees, shins, being associated with a good physical preparation that makes a full-contact fighter. Due to the ancient history, soldiers, commoners including those from the royal family also learnt Muay Thai.

**Figure 4**  
**Muay Thai Posture**



<https://suthatzana55.wordpress.com>

Historically Muay Thai was created to protect the country especially from wars. The military arts or “Muay Thai” became engrained in the culture of the early Siamese people and young men practiced the art form for various reasons: self-defense, exercise, discipline; monks even instructed at many Buddhist temples. However, Muay Thai was recognized in the middle of the 16th century during the battles between the Burmese of the Konbaung Dynasty and Siam. The famous fighter Nai Khanomtom was captured as the war prisoner but he was acknowledged as a hero to fight against more than 10 Burmese and won the battles. His fighting style became known as Siamese-Style boxing, later to be known as Muay Thai.

## 2.2 International Recognition of Muay Thai

Currently, Muay Thai becomes internationally well-known and widely accepted. As new training camps and gyms open around the world, Muay Thai still continues to grow. Several countries have opened Thai boxing training schools, camps or gyms as a sport exercise, self-defense and a commercial martial art. There are over 500,000 studying Muay Thai per year with over 3869 Thai boxing schools and camps worldwide, 1631 in Brazil, 20 Argentina, 190 U.S.A. especially California, Nevada and Illinois, 32 Australia, 256 India, and 650 Iran.

### METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methodology was employed based on primary and secondary research sources. Initially, a comprehensive and exhaustive search of the literature on digital economy and Muay Thai was conducted. The sources of the study included related books, journals, books, proceedings, articles, and other publications. In-depth Interviews of government official, Thai boxing masters, owners of Thai boxing schools and gyms and animation studios were conducted. Descriptive analysis was used to show the results of the study.

### FINDING ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

It is regarded that creative economy is one of the fast growing sectors of the world economy. It is highly transformative in terms of income generations, job creation and export earnings. Governments and creative sectors across the world are increasingly recognizing its importance as a social, value and cultural engagement. It is undeniable that creative industries lie at the crossroads of arts, culture, business and technology.

There is no doubt that every cultural industry is impacted by digitalization. It is possible to reach a substantially larger number of potential consumers. The contribution of information and communication technology will enable new economies of scope and integration that change the economics of content distribution. Emerging market will become global scale competitors in the international market and helps broadening access to knowledge increase participation.

As creative industry has come into play, Muay Thai has been regarded as one of the Thai traditional art and cultures which is still gaining popularity. It can serve for different kinds of purposes including sport, fitness, entertainment, self-defense or even combat. Global learners can be easily attracted through various formats and platforms- interactive games, e-learning, 2D and 3D animation. Moreover, such cultural heritage is also cherished as an asset and gives society its identity and nurtures rich cultural and creative present and future

**Figure 5**  
**Muay Thai Posture in 2D format**



www.wikihow.com

**Figure 6**  
**Muay Thai Posture in 3D format**



www.imaes.net

Nevertheless, Muay Thai needs to be promoted through strong supports of government. The government should stimulate enhanced digital knowledge creation and dissemination, and encourage investments for global access to content. The government also should encourage investment in network infrastructure, software content and applications. Online commercial transactions including mechanisms for payment, electronic signatures and authentication and international interoperability, as well as intellectual property right should be well established to transform Muay Thai into a promoter towards digital economy.

### **CONCLUSION**

Technology breakthroughs have provided a lot of opportunities for disseminating national art and cultural heritage. It helps preserve social, cultural and economic values. Muay Thai which has been regarded as one of the Thai traditional art and cultures will play a vital role for Thailand's digital economy since Muay Thai has been internationally recognized and still gaining popularity continuously. Muay Thai can be promoted and introduced in various arenas and formats as sport, entertainment, self-defense art, or a martial art competition. However, government policy and measures especially infrastructure, and funding supports, 2D and 3D animated quality content and online content protection would be the key factors towards the development of Thailand's digital economy.

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