

Digital Art Frame: Definition, Benefits and evolution



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Introduction

Traditionally, we associate art display with being in a single frame: one art piece, made by one artist, displayed in one wooden frame. In the last ten years, there have been many efforts to display art on digital screens. The digital display of art can have multiple advantages, such as the ability to display multiple artworks in one frame, change it dynamically, upload art from various sources, etc. Despite multiple attempts, only a few projects, such as Canvia or Meural, have taken a digital art display to the main stream market. Further, the rise of NFTs since late 2020 has given a significant boost to this segment, and subsequently, many art display projects have been announced in the last couple of years.

Definition

Digital art frames are an evolving field of new generation of products that are used to display images, videos, or other file formats such as GIFs. However, based on leading indicators of this new segment, we can define it with four major attributes that are common across leading competitors in the market.

- (i) Digital display has some unique or proprietary technology that makes it better for art display compared to regular TV or displays available in the market
- (ii) Connected massive cloud-based art library, offering users access to an extensive collection of artworks from global artists
- (iii) It is the most suitable size to display art and can be wall mounted
- (iv) It can display both horizontal and vertical art
- (v) Digital art frames should support different art genre types such as images, videos, GIFs, 3D, etc.

Segment name confusion: Digital art frames have been called out as Smart art display, smart art frame, smart art canvas, digital art display, digital art frame or digital art canvas

Many do confuse the digital art market with the digital photo frame market.

Digital photo frame vs. Digital art frame

It is common for consumers to confuse digital art frames with digital photo frames. There are some key differences between the two:

- (i) Digital photo frames are primarily used for displaying personal and family photos
- (ii) In general, the size of a digital photo frame screen is small, with most of the products offered in the market being 7 to 12 inches.
- (iii) Digital photo frames have a very limited set of features that are geared towards displaying photos, or sometimes videos, easily from a mobile app or USB, SD card, etc.

Digital art display vs TV art display

Many leading TV brands, such as Samsung and LG, have tried to use TVs for displaying art. Samsung also has a connected art library; although limited in nature, the Samsung frame project comes closest to art display in TVs.

Displaying art on a TV has many disadvantages compared to digital art frames:

- (i) TVs don't have any special technology to make an art display look like real art
- (ii) TVs lack many features, such as playlist creation, zoom, and art details display, that make the art display look ineffective

(iii) Mostly used in landscape mode: Rarely can people use vertical art display mode on TVs

A digital art frame is a superior way to display art because:

(iv) All kinds of art genres and formats can be displayed, such as GIFs, images, videos, 3D images, etc.

(v) Digital art frames are portable, and it is easy to shift their location.

(vi) Art frames can be customized according to user needs and come in a variety of textures, sizes, and colors.

(vii) Art should be displayed on a specially designated device; based on our research with artists and collectors, TVs are not a preferred medium to display art work.

Target Audience

We categorize the digital art frame customer set into three types of users:

- (i) Users who are associated with and interested in the art field—movies, art, music, etc.
- (ii) Users belonging to the high-income group who have disposable income for new gadgets and like to keep up with new trends
- (iii) NFT and crypto enthusiasts
- (iv) Home decor enthusiasts
- (v) Gift markets
- (vi) Galleries and Museums

Key Players

Currently, Canvia and Meural are leading players in the digital art frame market. There have been some other projects (Electric Objects, Klio, Depict, etc.) that were launched in this niche but failed to survive market forces due to product complexity, smaller market size, complex supply chain issues, and low margins. Samsung TV has been one device often compared to the digital art frame market due to a lack of understanding about this emerging segment.

Market trend

With time, several key features, interfaces, and new trends have been added to the products in this segment. Voice-based art frames are controlled with Alexa, or Google is one such trend.

Meural is known for gesture-based control. Canvia has been known for bringing zoom and pan features for intricate art displays and expanded mode art study.

We can categorize these features (not related to screen art display quality) into three categories

- (i) Interface-based features: Voice control or gesture control
- (ii) Features that can help art display: Text details, zoom and pan, etc.
- (iii) Features that can support different sources: NFT display from crypto wallet, SD card based display, etc.

The market continues to evolve, and we will see some major innovations in this segment that will make digital art frames a mainstream product that aids both artists and collectors. We expect AI to bring a lot of innovative features to this segment. We already see AI-based art, with some leading artists such as UCLA Prof. Dr. Rafik Anadol at the center of innovation in AI-based art. Some other companies, such as DALL-E, have been pivotal in bringing AI-based art to the market. We also expect AI to help in art library organization and personalization.

Conclusion

This digital art frame segment is innovative and revolutionary, as this product segment will bring multiple digital art display features, providing continuous access to a vast & dynamic library from renowned artists worldwide, thus reinventing the way we interact with art in home and public areas.

This is what we witnessed in the e-reader segment, in which Amazon's kindle product (an e-book reader) brought many books in digital format to one place, revolutionizing the whole space

Technology must be invented and updated according to need, and during the era where keeping multiple arts & photos can be confusing, space-constrained, burdensome, and costly to users, when users are habituated to access all things from one device, a digital art frame is the ultimate solution for the art enthusiast.