Digital Transformations

Tackling crucial issues for a digital age, such as intellectual property, cultural memory and identity, and communication and creativity

Arts & Humanities Research Council

Community-Powered Transformations

*A research network exploring digital transformations
in the creative relationships between
cultural and media organisations and their users*

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Executive Summary

A generation ago, cultural and media organisations had a reasonably straightforward relationship with their audiences. They created material – such as TV programmes, publications and exhibitions – in a 'broadcaster' mode, and it was consumed (or not) by the public. But today, these organisations are merely one part of a creative ecosystem, which is driven by digital transformations where communities of amateur enthusiasts may be the producers of the most innovative material. These communities of participants interact to create, curate, organise and support cultural experiences.

This project studied those changing relationships and interactions, and explored ways in which cultural organisations can work with creative communities to make great things. The network considered the opportunities, affordances and risks of this ecosystem through a network with world-leading partners, including Tate, the British Library, and MuseumNext.

Four one-day symposia were held, based around digital transformations in four themes: Production and creativity; Business models, rights and ownership; Design; and Learning. Each was attended by 70 people from cultural sectors and universities. An evening event with a talk and discussion led by Henry Jenkins, Provost's Professor of Communication, Journalism and Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California, was attended by 400 people and streamed live online.

Researchers and Project Partners

Principal Investigator: Professor David Gauntlett, University of Westminster.

Co-Investigators:
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Dr Anastasia Kavada, University of Westminster.
Professor Jeanette Steemers, University of Westminster.
Dr Melissa Terras, University College London.
Professor Claire Warwick, University College London.

Research Associate/Network Co-ordinator: Didem Ozkul, University of Westminster.

Lead partners: Tate, The British Library, MuseumNext.

Summary report

The project brought together researchers at the Communications and Media Research Institute (CAMRI) at the University of Westminster, and the UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, with some of the UK's leading institutions in digital engagement: Tate, The British Library, MuseumNext, and others. It engaged with a broad array of companies and organisations, large and small, who are dealing with digital transformations in different ways, including Across The Pond/Google, BBC/The Space and totallyradio.com. 23 guest speakers from the above-mentioned institutions and other organisations participated in the workshops and made presentations based on the project's four themes.

At our four workshop events, talks were followed by group discussions and brainstorming sessions, with group presentations summarising the discussion at the end. Among the workshop participants were academics, entrepreneurs, students and independent researchers who wrote blog posts for our project website, www.digitaltransformations.org.uk, and with whom we have extended our network.

The blog was unexpectedly important to the project; in contrast to more formal research outputs, the more conversational and networked nature of the blog led to something arguably more valuable, namely the identification of shared conclusions from different perspectives.

In addition to the UK-based guest speaker line-up, Professor Henry Jenkins from the University of Southern California, gave a special talk about his new book *Spreadable Media* at the University of Westminster. The talk, followed by a discussion with Professor David Gauntlett, author of *Making is Connecting*, was streamed live online and more than 400 people attended this evening event.

Our events

Our project was conceived from the start as an interdisciplinary network, which consequently cut across all three of the Digital Transformations themes, 'Text: Authority and Power', 'The Creative & Performing Arts and Technology', and 'Translating Knowledge'.

This can be seen in the four different workshops which were organised:

Digital Transformations in Production and Creativity Workshop
29 March 2012, University of Westminster.

Key questions discussed included:

- How can the creativity of interested communities be unlocked for maximum benefit?

- To what extent can the creativity of enthusiasts be channelled and organised to achieve specific goals?

- What is the role of the professional producer as they find themselves in a community of enthusiast producers, fans, and other practitioners?

Speakers included:

- John Naughton, former Professor of the Public Understanding of Technology at the Open University

- Jim Richardson, founder and director of MuseumNext

- Frances Taylor, The British Library

- Neil Cummings, Chelsea College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London.

- Daniel Nathan, totallyradio.com

- David Gauntlett, University of Westminster

Digital Transformations in Business Models, Rights and Ownership Workshop
20 April 2012, The British Library.

Key questions discussed included:

- How can communities create new business relationships which work towards sustaining the community, rather than sustaining any given business model or relationship?

- How do we deal with the profound challenges to ownership rights across the cultural industries, which have been created by digital transformations in the roles and relationships of creators, curators, sponsors and audiences?

Speakers included:

- Robert Waddilove, Across The Pond/Google

- Charles Beckett, Arts Council England

- Susannah Simons, BBC/The Space

- Rachel Marshall, The British Library

- Chris Speed, University of Edinburgh

- James Bennett, Royal Holloway University of London

- Paul Dwyer, University of Westminster

Designing for Community-Powered Digital Transformations Workshop
15 May 2012, Tate Britain.

Key questions discussed included:

- On digital platforms – which enable communities to aggregate and curate content created by a wide range of professional, semi-professional and amateur participants – design makes a real difference: why is it, for instance, that members of the knitting network Ravelry tend to have a much higher quality of supportive conversation than the remarks on YouTube?

- How can we build sustainable cultural production and support creative curation?

Speakers included:

- John Stack, Head of Tate Online, Tate

- Claire Ross, UCL

- Jake Berger, BBC/The Space

- Martin Rieser, De Montfort University

- Sunil Manghani, York St John University

Community-Powered Digital Transformations in Learning Workshop
21 June 2012, UCL.

Key questions discussed included:

- How can we use digital tools to explore knowledge in new ways, and translate ideas and materials into digital arenas in order to gain new understandings?

- How can communities of digital participants transform their own learning, and that of others?

- What are the uses and implications of this for museums, schools, and universities?

- How can learning in the arts and humanities be enhanced by online creative participation?

Speakers included:

- Amy Twigger Holroyd, Keep and Share

- Kate Lindsay, Learning Technologies Group, University of Oxford

- Alison James, London College of Fashion

- Caroline Bassett, University of Sussex

- Melissa Terras, UCL

Collaborations that have developed during the project

Being primarily based around networks and networking, our project may have led to a number of relationships and collaborations including some we don't know about. Those we do know about include:

- Prior to this award, University of Westminster researchers had not worked with the UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, so this was a new and untested enterprise. The collaboration was fruitful and is likely to lead to future work together.

- Similarly, this project was the first time that we had been involved in any formal arrangement with Tate, the British Library, and MuseumNext. These collaborations went really well and will lead to further work together. This can be at various levels, from research applications and projects, to other things – for instance, following on from our successful collaboration here, John Stack, Head of Tate Online, served as an external panellist on an interview panel in July 2012 when we appointed a new Professor of Social Media.

- Amy Twigger Holroyd, who runs Keep & Share, an SME producing knitwear and knitting workshops, attended all four of the events and became a central part of the network, even though she was unknown to us before and had only come to the first event out of "curiosity". She wrote two separate thought-provoking posts for our blog. Now she is making an application which brings together herself and colleagues from Birmingham City University, with David Gauntlett and Didem Ozkul, of University of Westminster, for the AHRC's Collaborative Skills Development Call (September 2012), an entirely new collaboration.

- Alison James, London College of Fashion, attended our events and spoke at the final one; again, we did not know her before, but now we are working with her on an AHRC Research Grant application (with James as PI and Gauntlett as Co-I).

- Following the success of this project, the research team have received valuable invitations to other events and networks. For instance, David Gauntlett was invited to be a keynote speaker at the prestigious conference, *Innovation in Mind*, in Sweden (September 2012), where the keynotes in previous years had included the well-known digital transformations experts Clay Shirky and Charles Leadbeater. He was also invited to give a keynote presentation on the connections between crafts and digital technologies at the Crafts Council annual conference, *Assemble 2012* (September 2012). These kinds of invitations lead to connections with people in other spheres and industries, beyond those of one's academic discipline, and so can be especially fruitful.

- We will be submitting an application in the second phase of AHRC Digital Transformations, for a Large Grant. This will build upon some of the relationships and ideas developed during this project.

In addition to the project events, we organised and hosted a meeting for holders of the AHRC Digital Transformations Research Development Awards. Out of the 18 projects running in the first half of 2012, all but one were represented. This one day event was held at the University of Westminster, central London, on 30 April 2012. The meeting was also attended by AHRC staff including Mark Llewellyn, AHRC Director of Research. It was very helpful to hear about each of the projects and to exchange ideas, and identify areas of common interest.

Value of the AHRC Digital Transformations theme

The Digital Transformations theme helped to make this project more than the sum of its parts. Professor Gauntlett said in a comment to the AHRC: 'The Digital Transformations theme enabled us to do something quite unique – certainly something we would not have done otherwise – and offered a kind of platform for creative and engaging conversations. Which is very appropriate, because our project itself was about how we can develop platforms for creative and engaging conversations. We were conceiving of those platforms as primarily online, but the experience of our AHRC Digital Transformations project has been that a synthesis of offline and online discussion offers the most fruitful results.'

Development of our understanding 'digital transformations'

Our understanding of the notion of 'digital transformations' certainly grew and took shape during the course of this project. Gauntlett developed a 'three spheres' model which was adopted by some other researchers working on other projects in the theme.

The model looks like this:
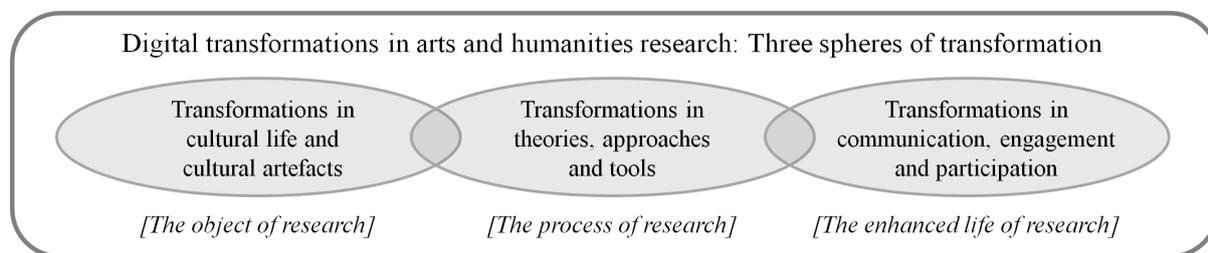
The model shows that digital transformations is not simply about 'new things' that we can study, but also about 'how' we conduct that research, and the ways in which we communicate and have conversations within and after that process:

▪ *Transformations in cultural life and cultural artefacts:* Digital technologies and cultures lead to new objects of study – new communities, networks, devices, texts and artworks which should be the focus of innovative academic research.

▪ *Transformations in theories, approaches and tools:* These developments lead to transformations in research practice – suggesting ways of thinking, connections, and ways of working, which change the practices and processes of research.

▪ *Transformations in communication, engagement and participation:* The ways in which research can be shared and engaged with is also transformed by digital technologies, which offer compelling new avenues and opportunities.

This model helped to build recognition that the AHRC Digital Transformations theme was not simply a funding source for 'digital humanities' projects. It showed that the field of digital humanities has demonstrated the vital role of networked computing in the second of these three spheres; but it also highlighted that digital transformations in the arts and humanities are also, crucially, about opening up research, and engaging a broader and more diverse range of people – through novel, shareable, interactive forms of communication and participation.

Views from partners and participants

"I found the level of debate and presentations very high, and in terms of my own understanding and practice invaluable in achieving a significant shift in my own perceptions of how I currently use digital technologies and how I may do in the future. The project website is an excellent resource and one I keep going back to. Gauntlett's 'eight principles' for creative platforms [developed and presented within the project] have been inspiring and valuable to me, and are included in the book that I am writing."

– Dr Alison James, Head of Learning and Teaching, London College of Fashion

"The Digital Transformations project provided a unique opportunity to discuss issues of direct relevance to my PhD research, relating to amateur cultural production. I was able to discuss my experiences and ideas and hear a rich variety of different perspectives in a welcoming yet rigorous environment, and to make meaningful connections with researchers with similar interests in other disciplines."

– Amy Twigger Holroyd, Keep & Share

"The network and the events David Gauntlett organized for the Digital Transformations project were valuable in a series of ways. Above all the project brought together very interesting groups of people and produced a space to consider a series of activities that deserved scrutiny – and that were great objects to think with. Above all it produced a space

within which serious debate and discussion that laid the grounds for more sustained collaborations and future work could be developed.

The final event was particularly relevant to my work. I found it very valuable, not least because discussions had and connections made there around method and connection directly informed work being done as part of an EPSRC grant exploring digital transformations in communities and culture."

– Caroline Bassett, University of Sussex

"'I attended all four of the Digital Transformations Research Network events, which I found to be very engaging. The core themes were well judged and the project as a whole brought to fruition a genuine bridging of different fields and expertise. I think one of the most difficult things projects such as this have to tackle is living up to the word 'network'. In this case, the events really did help forge a community of ideas, which I believe will be highly significant for the future development of the AHRC theme. On a personal level, the events afforded me a wonderful opportunity to connect with others to share ideas and help build my confidence in developing future projects. At the end of each of the events there was a palpable sense the day had been highly productive and that participants went away energised."

– Sunil Manghani, York St John University

"I participated in the second event – Digital Transformations in business models, rights and ownerships – which was an excellent exchange between not only academia and industry, but also a range of cultural institutions and their users. The workshop structure generated genuine dialogue between participants and produced a network that has clear value going forward, both for individuals and as a collective, in understanding the challenges and opportunities for some of the UK's most important cultural and creative organisations/industries to make genuine digital transformations. The Twitter and blog following has already extended this dialogue further and is testament to the strength of the network built."

– James Bennett, Royal Holloway, University of London

"Tate was extremely happy to partner with David Gauntlett's AHRC-funded research network Community Powered Transformations, which has brought together a diverse group of practitioners and researchers from industry and academia. This proved to be a thought provoking and inspiring series of events from which a number of interesting partnerships have emerged. The network has been led with considerable energy and enthusiasm."

– John Stack, Head of Tate Online, Tate

Feature articles

These articles by project partners appear exclusively in this report. Several other articles and reviews appear on the project blog. Featured below:

- Big Broadcasters and Small Creative Communities: Connection impossible?
  — discussion by Jeanette Steemers

- Business models, rights and ownership
  — workshop overview by Paul Dwyer

- Designing Conversations: principles and challenges of designing online participation
  — workshop overview by Anastasia Kavada

- Crowd based Transformations: The transformation of culture and heritage via crowdsourcing — report by Melissa Terras

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Big Broadcasters and Small Creative Communities: Connection Impossible?

Discussion by Jeanette Steemers

One of the transformations in the relationship between cultural and media organisations and their communities of users is the way in which support for public service broadcasting might be slowly and inexorably fading away as consumption patterns change. Anecdotally I feel this is the case as every year more and more of my own students dispute the necessity of the licence fee, and claim to use BBC services even less than students in previous years. In fact only a handful of them actually admit to watching audiovisual content on television 'channels' at all.

Of course, young people have always been a difficult target audience for broadcasters to reach, but it is clear that growing numbers are now watching non-scheduled audiovisual material on other platforms. Also rather than being convinced by the intrinsic 'goodness' of a public service ethos, they appear to be more sceptical about the public value and benefits of large institutions like the BBC; at the same time they seem quite open to the commercial inducements of large social media and search engine enterprises (Facebook, Google), which push what young people perceive as useful commercial messages in their direction. Shifts in consumption are underlined in the way the next generation of young people access media. In Ofcom's 2011 study of children and parents, 28% of children aged 12-15 indicated that they are now more likely to miss their mobile phone or the internet (25%) than television (18%).

That's not to say that there isn't still a large measure of public support for a big, powerful, comparatively well-funded media institution like the BBC. Regulator Ofcom's annual PSB Report continues to show high levels of adult satisfaction overall for the BBC and commercially funded PSBs (ITV and Channel 4), with 80% who watch any PSB channel being quite or very satisfied in 2012. And it's true to say that PSBs have engaged with the internet with variable degrees of success. For example, online interaction has been one contributing factor in the renaissance of live mass entertainment shows on free-to-air channels, as viewers become intensely involved in the back channel of social media. But the allure of big reality shows seems be fading as well; and this method of engaging audiences represents quite a narrow approach to the possibilities of participation and engagement with communities of users.

The BBC, of course, is rather exceptional in respect of the affection with which it is held, in spite of a string of scandals about expenses, executive remuneration, and alleged child abuse by popular entertainers. In many other countries, PSB is neither popular nor distinctive, undermining any claims to sustain citizenship and civil society, one of the BBC's six core purposes. In spite of exhortations to tweet along with BBC shows, the BBC's rapport with the audience is still largely one-way and limited. I'm not sure that this is going to change too soon, not least because the BBC is facing its own financial strictures and is mindful not to venture too far into areas that might be deemed more appropriate for commercial competitors. For the time being the ability to watch/listen to shows on the I-Player online its most successful online venture.

Where I think there could be change is in relation to the third of the BBC's purposes; that it should stimulate creativity and cultural excellence. It's worth noting that the BBC until quite recently used to do everything itself as a one-stop shop, and its attempts to stimulate creativity and cultural excellence were limited largely to the small elite that were employed full-time by the BBC. With the 1990 Broadcasting Act creative opportunities were opened up with a 25% quota for independent producers. More recently the Window of Creative Competition (or WOCC) has opened up a further 25% of the production slate to competition between in-house and independent producers. But in truth this still only represents conversations between professional programme-makers focused on producing cultural artefacts rather than engaging with the wider world.

In his first speech on 18 September as newly appointed Director General George Entwistle, made a case for restoring 'creativity to the heart of the BBC's internal conversation', promising 'to bring output of outstanding creative originality to as many people as we can reach' and 'not to place the narrow interests of programme, channel or service ahead of those of the audience'. But essentially creativity here is still about what the BBC deems worthy of creativity as 'a chooser on people's behalf'. Interestingly he spoke about an 'unhealthy' BBC culture where 'only the experts are encouraged to say what they think', but he was not referring here to the public or alternative creative communities, but those working within the BBC. A very small part of that speech accepted that the BBC needed to

take advantage of a new distribution model with 'its return path, its capacity for interaction', where social recommendation and curation will be more significant.

Entwistle's solution to these digital transformations is for greater collaboration and partnership with independent companies and other cultural organisations of every shape and size including theatres, galleries and museums that will benefit the UK creative sector. However, beyond big promises there is little imagination about how exactly this will occur and how the BBC intends to stimulate creativity and facilitate more meaningful interaction for everyone, rather than simply continuing the current top down relationship between producers and audiences. With the exception of The Space, a six-month pilot with Arts Council England, which focused on the creation of a digital public space, the BBC is not ready to engage with alternative creative communities. As an institution it is too wrapped up in sorting out its internal structures and placating its political detractors and commercial rivals. In the BBC's world the broadcasting model won't be replaced by a community model any time soon – because it is still an entrenched top-down culture, that doesn't have the capacity or will to accommodate a more broad-ranging creative process – beyond partnership with largely trusted independent suppliers or more established cultural organisations.

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Business models, rights and ownership

Workshop overview by Paul Dwyer

This second Community-Powered Transformations workshop looked at how ideas about business models and intellectual property law might affect the ways in which online communities and digitisation may be changing arts and cultural organisations.

Cultural organisations are not typically profit-making, so a discussion of business models would appear relevant only to the revenue-raising element of their activities. More recently, however, the idea of a business model has become separated from the conventional business practices of owning property, creating products and services or even actually making any money. The first reason for this is that the various online platforms (blogs, wikis, podcasts, websites, social networks etc.) developed for distributing digital content (text, links, audio, video or pictures) enabled the rise of businesses such as Amazon and iTunes which quickly demonstrated that some business models which had seemed solid and straightforward- like those of the publishing, music and broadcasting industries – were in fact complicated, opaque and relatively easy to disrupt (Albarran, 2010).

Secondly these technologies enabled the formation of a variety of online communities based on content shared or created by 'users' some of which became entirely new

businesses (like Facebook and Twitter) (Silver, 2009). These 'community' business models illustrated the potential to create value via the creation of the community itself rather than primarily from the creation of goods, services or content; although the production of these communities has often depended on exchanges of content which infringe the intellectual property rights of its owners (Arewa, 2010).

Thus, the idea of a business model and related ideas about communities, digital transformation and IP have become relevant to a wide range of organisations which do not make a profit. And indeed a number of authors have attempted to analyse the traditional 'business model' of non-profit cultural organisations (Falk and Sheppard 2006, Bahkshi and Thorsby (2010).

In the Community-Powered Transformations sessions, the discussions of these business models tended to focus on curating as the core business activity. This was generally defined in the sort of traditional cultural terms used by Noble (1970) as the collection, preservation and study (provenance) of cultural and natural objects. The core product (and societal value) created by curation thus resides in the collection of preserved objects and the knowledge about those collection(s).

In this respect our discussions did not follow the traditional concerns of business model analysis of cultural organisations, which has focused on the revenue raising secondary activities of display, exhibition and communication, and on ancillary services (Falk and Sheppard, 2006). Cultural organisations generate revenue by selling tickets to exhibitions of (parts of) the collections, and communicating knowledge about the collections, to an audience. Additional revenue is raised by the provision of products and services ¬(cafes, shops, merchandising etc.) ancillary to these activities. The focus on secondary and ancillary activities has partly reflected the economics of cultural organisations ¬— these activities have traditionally offered the lowest cost method of increasing audience reach and thus sales. This emphasis on increasing audience reach is clearly evident in the approach to using digital technologies illustrated in the 'best practice' cases highlighted by NESTA (Bakhshi and Throsby 2010) and the Arts Council England (ACE) (see ACE, 2010).

The Community-Powered Transformations sessions saw an important example of this approach to using digital technology in providing one of the first public presentations of the joint ACE/BBC project The Space (thespace.org) prior to its launch on 1 May 2012. Charles Beckett of ACE and Susannah Simons from the BBC explained how the project – a pop up service available across PC, mobile, tablet and connected TV – operated according to a business model which was novel to the partners. By using digital technologies to make the 'long tail' of arts content produced for the Olympic year available to those unable to attend the live events, the project clearly aimed to increase the access to and audience reach of cultural organisations and their content. The Space uses digital technology to extend the secondary role of cultural organisations – exhibition and display of collections and communication of knowledge about those collections. It may be that in doing so The Space

will improve the revenue-raising activities of these organisations by attracting new (paying) audiences.

A second example of this approach came from Robert Waddilove, from digital advertisers Across the Pond, who described how his agency had worked with the Google Art project to use digital media techniques to attract a wide audience to engage with a huge number of artworks from cultural organisations around the world, whilst also promoting Google's brand and reputation.

The potential of digital technologies to enable cultural organisations to develop revenue-raising ancillary services was illustrated by Rachel Marshall who explained how the British Library uses a conventional business model of selling licenses to exploit the intellectual property of BL collections to publishers like Cengage Learning and new media companies like Google. Sometimes these activities also increased audience reach. The BL partnered with Bibliolabs to develop a paid app which won a Publishing Innovation Award and has brought a global audience (including strong sales in Malawi) to its 19th century historical book collection.

But much of the discussion at the Community-Powered Transformations sessions focused on the potential of digital technology to transform the core activity of curation. The presentation of The Space, for example, demonstrated how the project had been designed to encourage participating cultural institutions to innovate in their core activities of acquiring and commissioning cultural objects and content (ACE, 2012). This approach has the potential to transform the nature of the works which the institutions commission and acquire for their collections, to exploit the potential of digital platforms and content.

A further focus was on the potential for digital technology to enable a radical transformation of the core activities of cultural organisations via the creation of community business models. Chris Speed from the University of Edinburgh described the ToTem project which enabled people to record the story of their possession of an object using a website, text and video. The system generated a QR code, which was then attached to the object. By thus uniting the object and knowledge about its provenance, ToTem effectively crowdsourced the activity of curation. The project also demonstrated that this primary activity had the potential to raise revenue through a partnership with Oxfam shops. People donating objects used smart phones to make audio recordings of the story of the object, which the eventual purchaser of the objects could access using the QR codes. During the period of the project Oxfam's sales in these stores increased by 52%, and in this way the project created a business model based on the market value of crowdsourced curation in the same way auction houses develop business models based on expert curation.

James Bennett of Royal Holloway, University of London, offered a critical perspective on community business models in his study of the news website Digg.com, the huge success of which was explained, according to founder Kevin Rose, by a model which put community first and advertising second. The Digg.com case illustrated the potential conflicts between

community business models and the rights of intellectual property (IP) owners. Rose made his name partly by a decision to support the community, rather than the big media businesses, when members posted the DVD encryption key on the Digg website. However he then appeared to undermine the community business model when he sold parts of the business to venture capitalists (raising $80m) and appeared to put advertising first. The community rebelled, a "Quit Digg Day' ensued, and Rose was forced to lay off a third of his workforce.

The Community-Powered Transformations sessions also illustrated the potential problems which current IP legislation creates for attempts to build communities around cultural content. The digital project accompanying the British Library's Writing Britain exhibition was intended to facilitate community curation by a system enabling users to 'attach' a book title digitally to a location on the map of Britain and record knowledge about the relationship between the book and the geographical area. However key elements of the project – such as recording of audio or video – had to be abandoned because they created the potential for breaches of copyright if a member of the public recorded themselves reading a poem or a section of a book.

These issues of intellectual property, community and privacy formed the focus of the workshop sessions. A number of the participants were particularly interested in the Creative Commons model and the possibility of 'common sense' applications of intellectual property law, such as a distinction between uses which are for-profit (by a business selling an app for example) and not-for-profit (the public reading out poems). Further critical perspectives on the community model took up the issue of the ethical issues surrounding the 'free labour' involved in the creation of collaborative online communities.

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Designing Conversations: principles and challenges of designing online participation

Workshop overview by Anastasia Kavada

The shift from web 1.0 to the 'social web' has emphasized the participatory and interactive aspects of the technology. For cultural institutions, this means that in addition to their more traditional roles as creators and curators of content, they now have to design and maintain complex communities of users and producers. Yet the principles and challenges of designing for online participatory platforms still demand further enquiry. This was the topic of our third workshop which took place at Tate Britain on 15 May 2012. Speakers included John Stack, Head of Tate Online; Jake Berger, Programme Manager at The Space; Martin Rieser, Professor of Digital Creativity at DeMontfort University; Sunil Manghani, Reader in Critical and Cultural Theory at York St John University; and Claire Ross, Research Assistant at the Centre for Digital Humanities at UCL.

Design was understood in broad terms, as comprising not only technical and aesthetic aspects, but also the types of community, engagement and sociability that online platforms can foster. Hence, designing the 'architecture of participation' of online spaces involves decisions around the technical layer of software, applications, and protocols, as well as the rules of engagement on the platform, the roles undertaken by different types of users, the governance mechanisms of the community, and regulations on the ownership and copyright of data and content. Yet the technical cannot be clearly distinguished from the cultural as the software of the platform encodes specific understandings of who should talk or create content and about what, and who should have access to which types of conversation or content.

Participants in the workshop argued that dialogue should be inherent in both the platform and the design process, not simply an afterthought or an added feature. In this respect, Claire Ross discussed the principles of user-centred design bringing examples from her work with the Imperial War Museums and the Grant Museum of Zoology. She focused particularly on 'agile design', a clearly delineated design process with frequent milestones where prototypes are continuously tried and tested with users. User feedback is obtained through focus groups and interviews, project management is flexible, and the user is embedded in every stage of the design process.

One the prime challenges for cultural institutions is balancing the need to maintain authority and control with the demands for user engagement and participation. The Space, a 'free digital, pop-up arts service, developed by Arts Council England in partnership with the BBC' (http://thespace.org/), was exemplary of these tensions. The platform has rather limited participatory aspects as it does not incorporate any social or discussion features due to the strict policies of the BBC on personal data and content moderation. Yet the technical

layer of the platform will be more open to users when the project ends as there is a plan to make the code freely available and share it as a 'broadcaster-in-a-box' tool.

Large institutions may also face organizational problems in their shift towards more participatory processes. In his presentation of the Tate website – 'Tate's fifth gallery' – John Stack demonstrated how the website has been transformed from a brochure to a channel to a platform. The website has now become more interactive, enabling the Tate to accommodate multiple voices in contrast to the single, broadcast voice of authority it projects in its galleries. Still, maintaining a coherent strategy is often a challenge since participation, engagement and interactivity have become core concerns for a wide range of Tate departments, including Marketing, Learning, Curatorial, Communications, Human Resources, and Research.

What the Tate case study further demonstrated is how this rethinking of participation cuts across different platforms and reshapes the experience of the physical gallery. In this respect, Martin Rieser also offered various examples of mobile technology-based projects that reconfigure how users interpret and navigate physical spaces by mapping data on specific locations. Case studies were based on the Empedia platform (www.empedia.info) and included, for instance, a collection of online maps, audio tours, and interactive guides that visitors to the East Midlands can access on their phones. Designing participation across platforms and particularly bringing together the online and the offline are pressing issues but, so far, projects have mostly focused on 'augmenting' physical space with layers of data available online. Change in the opposite direction is relatively limited as there are fewer projects investigating how physical space should be designed with online participation in mind. In other words, the most radical transformation will take place when the participatory values characterizing the 'social web' transcend both online and physical spaces.

Possibly the most challenging aspect of designing an 'architecture of participation' is defining what 'participation' itself means. Users can engage online in different ways, by commenting, sharing, remixing or creating new content. The platform can also facilitate various kinds of dialogue with different effects on sociability and community. Drawing on Richard Sennett's book 'Together', Sunil Maghani made a distinction between dialectic and discussion, the former constituting a dialogue where opposites are gradually synthesized, the latter signifying an exchange of ideas where the goal is greater understanding rather than finding common ground. In other words, togetherness is equally about difference as much as similarities and designers need to reflect on how this can be technically achieved. For example, the presentation of comments in a linear chronological order does little to capture how conversation flows naturally in a discussion. Moving towards more subtle and intuitive design can help in creating platforms that facilitate this conviviality, where dialogue can accommodate both similarities and differences.

Most importantly for cultural institutions is identifying what constitutes 'meaningful participation' in terms of the users' engagement with cultural projects. Defining this, but also measuring and evaluating it, is still a major question that requires further research. As

Sunil Maghani noted in his talk, we otherwise run the risk of creating a 'social industry' (a play on Adorno and Horkheimer's 'culture industry') where individuals simply input data in standardized templates. To design platforms that facilitate meaningful participation rather than the mass customization of culture, dialogue needs to be at the heart of both the design process and product.

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Crowd based Transformations: The transformation of culture and heritage via crowdsourcing

Report by Melissa Terras

Many of the papers featured in the Community-Powered Transformations series alluded to the shift from the broadcast model of web based technologies to a new interactive mode where individuals can engage with, and contribute to, activities in the cultural and heritage sector. Crowd sourcing – outsourcing tasks to a distributed online group – has now been embraced by many institutions in the arts and heritage arena. How is this changing – even transforming – the role of the cultural institution? How can we begin to decipher and understand this shift, and what it means for those creating and maintaining digital web based resources?

There are various applications of crowdsourcing for historical documents and artefacts. For example:

- UCL's Transcribe Bentham (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/transcribe-bentham/) encourages the general public to read and transcribe the handwritten manuscripts of the 18th and 19th Century Philosopher, Jeremy Bentham.

- The Trove project (http://trove.nla.gov.au/), from the National Library of Australia, encourages users to correct mistakes in OCR'd historical newspapers.

- Old Weather (http://www.oldweather.org/) asks users to help understand the climate by transcribing old weather records that were kept in ships logs.

- What's On The Menu (http://menus.nypl.org/), from the New York Public Library, is encouraging users to transcribe historical restaurant menus.

- The Citizen Archivist Dashboard (http://www.archives.gov/citizen-archivist/) provides a forum in which citizen archivists can transcribe, edit, and contribute content to the US National Archives.

In a recent blog post "The Key Questions of Cultural Heritage Crowdsourcing Projects" (http://www.trevorowens.org/2012/07/the-key-questions-of-cultural-heritage-crowdsourcing-projects/), Trevor Owens, a digital archivist at the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP) in the Office of Strategic Initiatives at the Library of Congress, suggests that there are four key areas of questions which can be asked about the application of crowdsourcing in the arts, humanities, and cultural heritage, which can provide a useful rubric for evaluation.

1. Human Computation. Owens points out that the benefit of crowdsourcing is where human input can complement and augment computer processable tasks. Identifying exactly how and where this can be applied is the key to success.

2. The Wisdom of Crowds. How can we harness, empower, and consult with people who are invested in the topic or task?

3. Scaffolding Users. How can our tools work as a framework in which to support users?

4. Motivating Users. How can we connect to, motivate, and communicate with our core user base? How can we explain the purpose of the crowd-sourcing effort, and present that to the public?

Many discussions in the Community-Powered Transformations series focused around these elements – how we can use internet technologies to reach out to a wider group, focus their attention on a particular topic, and encourage user to engage, share, and contribute, whether this was to promote creativity, encourage community interactions, transform learning, or transform the infrastructure (such as rights and ownership models) that will facilitate this type of activity.

It is clear that many of the questions raised are broad-reaching. Digital tools are being used to aggregate and curate content in new ways, by a range of professional, semi-professional and amateur participants. Will this continue? Will we reach crowd-sourcing fatigue? Will

every institution be expected to undertake some kind of this activity? What are the costs in setting up and maintaining such interactions with a user group, and are they prohibitive? Given that online crowdsourcing is relatively new, it is only recently that we are seeing fully fledged projects playing out over the period of a year or two, to begin to gauge in any meaningful way if they have been successful, or which framework we may even use to assess use, usefulness, and success.

In the case of Transcribe Bentham, which is now two years old, we've seen a core set of a dozen or so users undertake the majority of transcription on the corpus. We have now transcribed over 4000 complete manuscripts, which racks up to over 2,000,000 words of volunteered transcript material. It would seem then, that we were using crowdsourcing to try and engage with a relatively small set of devoted individuals: there are opportunities here for studying the uptake of crowdsourcing cultural and heritage projects, and how best we can find and support the "super-users" of crowd-sourcing capable of making a great contribution to our cultural heritage.

The Community-Powered Transformations workshops helped to put this area of concern into focus: it is clear that by understanding the behavior of user communities we will be able to encourage use, and apply findings across different sectors. The crowdsourcing projects in the cultural and heritage sectors are indicative of the fact that the online audience wishes to contribute and participate in an intellectually challenging dialogue: what can we best do to facilitate this, across all areas of our economy and society?

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Further references and links

The project blog (www.digitaltransformations.org.uk) featured the following original posts:

- 'Guest post: On being digitally transformed', by Alison James (2012/07/26)

- 'Guest post: Digital transformations in ownership and intellectual property', by Charles Beckett (2012/07/10)

- 'Guest post: Let the media drown', by Dyfrig Jones (2012/07/05)

- '#digitaltrans: The collected tweets', by David Gauntlett (2012/06/27)

- 'Guest post: Hackerspaces for connected learning', by Andrew Schrock (2012/06/22)

- 'Guest post: Designs on Conversation' by Sunil Manghani (2012/06/20)

- 'Onwards and upwards for Digital Transformations', by David Gauntlett (2012/05/28)

- 'A tale of two books', by David Gauntlett (2012/05/25)

- 'Guest post: Museums as content machines – and making it meaningful', by Adrian Murphy (2012/05/21)

- 'Guest post: Design workshop at Tate Britain review', by Martin Rieser (2012/05/17)

- 'Digital transformations means open access … and a whole new way of doing things' by David Gauntlett (2012/05/14)

- 'Community-powered digital transformations in learning workshop, 21 June 2012', by David Gauntlett (2012/05/14)

- 'Guest post: Cultural remix – Have context, provenance, and truth had their day?', by Nora McGregor (2012/05/01)

- 'Guest post: Some thoughts on curation and privacy', by Rosamund Davies (2012/04/27)

- 'Guest post: Page, Screen, Space – The Digital Imagination and the Real World', by Anna Lea (2012/04/26)

- 'Guest post: Remixing the fashion commons', by Amy Twigger Holroyd (2012/04/24)

- 'Designing for community-powered digital transformations workshop, 15 May 2012', by David Gauntlett (2012/04/23)

- 'Henry Jenkins – talk and discussion, 15 May 2012', by David Gauntlett (2012/04/22)

- 'Our events', by David Gauntlett (2012/04/21)

- 'Building platforms for creativity: Eight principles', by David Gauntlett (2012/04/10)

- 'Guest post: Unfinished is good', by David Hopes (2012/04/05)

- 'Business models, rights and ownership workshop, 20 April 2012', by David Gauntlett (2012/04/04)

- 'Guest post: Online / offline knitting', by Amy Twigger Holroyd (2012/04/03)

- 'After our first event – the blogs', by David Gauntlett (2012/04/02)

- 'Guest post: Lurking is doing too', by Jon Hickman (2012/04/02)

- 'Are DJs curators (and vice-versa)?', by Paul Dwyer (2012/03/02)

- 'First workshop: Production and Creativity, 29 March 2012', by David Gauntlett (2012/02/25)

- 'Social media, ordinary media, "monetization" and business models', by Paul Dwyer (2012/02/24)

- 'Using Twitter in university learning', by David Gauntlett (2012/02/23)

- 'Social media optimism vs pessimism', by David Gauntlett (2012/02/23)

- 'Making is Connecting video', by David Gauntlett (2012/02/23)

- 'Transforming Audiences', by David Gauntlett (2012/02/23)

The project led to several hundred posts on Twitter, using the hashtag #digitaltrans. These are archived at http://www.digitaltransformations.org.uk/digitaltrans-the-collected-tweets/, and include links to further external blog posts about the project.

Digital Transformations

Arts & Humanities Research Council

Digital Transformations is one of the AHRC's Strategic Themes, which were Identified through the Future Directions for Arts and Humanities Research Consultation in 2009. The themes provide a funding focus for emerging areas of interest to arts and humanities researchers. Professor Andrew Prescott, AHRC Digital Transformations Theme Leadership Fellow, has said:

> *"The AHRC Digital Transformations theme is about more than the creation of online editions or the digitisation of books, manuscripts or pictures. It is about fostering completely new methods of scholarly research and discourse. It will encourage arts and humanities researchers to work with scientists in developing new concepts for digital technologies to explore our artistic and cultural heritage. It will show how the theoretical insights generated by the arts and humanities enable us to better understand the profound changes currently occurring in identity, culture and society. Researchers in the arts and humanities will create new relationships with creative and cultural businesses, memory institutions and technology producers. The digital has already profoundly transformed the arts and humanities; the AHRC Digital Transformations theme will show how the arts and humanities can transform digital cultures."*

Further details about the theme can be found on the AHRC's Digital Transformations web pages at:

http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/digitaltransformations.aspx