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Co-creative Expertise: Auran Games and *Fury* – A Case Study.

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Abstract

This article discusses the ways in which the relations among professional and non-professional participants in co-creative relations are being reconfigured as part of the shift from a closed industrial paradigm of expertise toward open and distributed expertise networks. This article draws on ethnographic consultancy research undertaken throughout 2007 with Auran Games, a Brisbane, Australia based games developer, to explore the co-creative relationships between professional developers and gamers. This research followed and informed Auran's online community management and social networking strategies for *Fury* (<http://unleashthefury.com>), a massively multiplayer online game released in October 2007. This paper argues that these co-creative forms of expertise involve co-ordinating expertises through social-network markets.

Introduction

The phenomenon of consumer created content and user-led innovation is reshaping the media industries as media consumers increasingly participate in the process of designing, producing and marketing media content and experiences (Hartley 2004; Jenkins 2006; Benkler 2006; Von Hippel 2006; Bruns 2008). In the past few years these consumer-producer interactions have evolved to such an extent that they are now a significant source of both cultural and economic value creation. Processes of innovation are attributable not to firms alone but also to the creative participation and contributions of socially networked

consumers (Von Hippel 2006; OECD 2007)¹. This re-engineering of producer-consumer relations unsettles the closed paradigm of professional expertise that has dominated the organisation of media production throughout the industrial era. At the heart of these transformations and value creating activities is a blurring of the professional-amateur divide and an increasingly interdependent relationship between professional media producers and users (Jenkins 2007: 50-58; Benkler 2007: 125-27; Bruns 2008: 214-19)

Commentators such as Andrew Keen (2007) warn us that such a 'cult of the amateur' may well undermine and threaten our standards of cultural value. David Weinberger (2007), on the other hand, sees a potential democratising of cultural knowledge production in which forms of "social knowing" associated with blogs and other forms of "user-driven content" disrupt the centralised authority, power and control of traditional incumbent media industries (Jenkins 2007; Zittrain 2008). But are these co-creative practices perhaps also an extraction of surplus value from the unpaid labour of the consumer participants that then also exacerbates the precarious employment conditions of professionals working in the creative industries (Ross 2006a, 2006b)? I will not engage in detail with these "free labour" (Terranova 2004) critiques in this paper as I have recently addressed these debates in a co-authored piece with Sal Humphreys (2008). The understanding of co-creative expertise that I develop here, however, suggests that such "free labour" approaches fail to recognise that co-creativity is generated through a dynamic and co-evolving relationship between the cultural and the economic, rather than a static face-off between these domains in which the gaining of value for one side necessarily means a loss for the other.

I explore and refine this understanding of co-creative expertise by drawing on consultancy ethnographic research undertaken throughout 2007 with Auran Games (a Brisbane, Australia based games developer). Through this

¹ Jonathan Zittrain (2008: 84) comments that "generatively-enabled activity by amateurs can lead to results that would not have been produced by a firm-mediated market model"

participatory-observation research I followed and informed Auran's online community management and social networking strategies over the final stages of the development and launch of *Fury*, a competitive, player versus player (PvP), massively multiplayer online game (MMOG). This research focused on the co-creative relationship between Auran's professional developers and a network of gamers who provided the company with extensive play-testing feedback and creative design input.

I propose that consumer co-creative expertise, understood and theorised as a *social-network market* (Potts, Cunningham et. al. 2008; Potts, Hartley et. al. 2008; Banks and Humphreys 2008; Banks and Potts 2008), is a co-evolutionary dynamic of both economic and cultural change. Innovation, change, creativity and growth are then attributable not just to firms' professional developers alone, but also to the distributed expertise and co-creative practices of socially networked citizen-consumers. This involves transactions and interchanges across forms of expertise that may appear to be incommensurable.

'It's Your Game Now'? Negotiating Gamer Expertise

T. L. Taylor (2006a: 159-60; 2006b) argues that players are co-creative "productive agents" in the creation of videogames and asserts that we need "more progressive models" for understanding players' creative contribution to the making of these products and cultures.² She asks (2006b), "what it might mean to move beyond simply managing player communities to enrolling them into the heart of design and game world discussion" Such a scenario poses expertise as a problem, as it asks us to consider extending expertise to player-consumers. It asks us to legitimate the role of players in the design decision-making process. But what does it mean to extend expertise beyond the boundaries of the firm to include the knowledge, skills and competencies of players? What are the

² On the role of gamers as co-creators in the game production process also see Banks (2002; 2007) and Humphreys (2005).

implications of such distributed co-creative expertise networks for our understanding of consumer and media culture?

I should disclose at this point that from June 2000 through to June 2005 I was employed as Auran's online community relations manager. This role largely involved managing Auran's relations with an online rail-fan community that formed around the game development project, *Trainz*: a train and railroad simulator first released in 2001 (Banks 2002, Banks 2007; Banks and Humphreys 2008). In late 2006 Auran management approached me to provide them with consultancy advice on their relationship with an online gamer community forming around the final stages of the development and launch of *Fury*. Auran's CEO, Tony Hilliam believed that the support and endorsement of hard-core PvP gamers would be crucial for *Fury*'s commercial success. As he put it to me:

"We need to involve them, we need their input. It must be their game. And we've already made a start on this. We are already working with a core group of player-testers who are providing us with feedback on very early builds of the game. But we now need to expand on that and build interest and enthusiasm for the game as we ramp up to release later in 2007"

Undertaking this research involved working closely for extended periods throughout 2007 with members of Auran's online community relations team, *Fury*'s developers, and Auran senior management. I also participated in pre-release play testing of *Fury*, joining in extensive play and feedback sessions with the *Fury* gamers, as well as interviewing gamers participating in this co-creative relationship with Auran. Through this research then I participated in the making and negotiation of emergent co-creator relations. More specifically, I consider how the design and production practice of Auran's professional creatives (designers, producers, community managers, etc.) were disrupted and unsettled by the need to negotiate with the expertise and knowledge of players. With this in

mind, much of the ethnographic material I draw on for this article tends to be written from the perspective of Auran's professional developers. When I draw on interviews with the gamers, forum posts made by the gamers or my participation in play test sessions with the gamers, I am focusing on how the gamers' expertise was integrated into Auran's design and production processes. I do not claim to occupy a neutral observer status in relation to these co-creative practices. My research practice aimed to assist Auran with better understanding and managing their relationship with the co-creator gamers. I worked closely with Auran's community relations team and members of the design team as they grappled with the challenges of what it meant to involve and integrate the players into the development process. I contributed to meetings, informal discussions and email exchanges in which the role and significance of the players' contribution to the design process were debated. The expertise of the ethnographer is therefore also at stake in the distributed expertise network that I'm describing.

Over the final twelve months of *Fury's* development, the Auran development and community relations teams recruited a core group of experienced PvP MMOG gamers to participate in the process of testing and refining the game's design. Many of these gamers were leaders of high profile PvP guilds that were active in successful MMOG games such as *GuildWars* and *World of Warcraft*. In the months prior to commercial launch, these expert gamers exhaustively play-tested *Fury*, dedicating many thousands of hours to providing the Auran development team with robust and critical feedback. In pursuit of innovation and commercial success, Auran relied then not only on the creativity of internal professional developers, but also on a distributed network of expert, skilled and knowledgeable consumer co-creators operating over social networks of guilds, fansites and other new media.

On 13 December 2007, two months after *Fury's* release, Auran Developments Pty Ltd went into voluntary administration. Some 50 staff lost their jobs in the

wake of the commercial failure of *Fury* – a three year project costing \$15 million. The difficulties of successfully managing the interface between the professional development team and the expert gamer-testers contributed to *Fury*'s failure. In a post-mortem interview with me shortly after announcing the voluntary administration, Auran's CEO, Tony Hiliam commented that the online word of mouth from these networked consumer-citizens "has been the ultimate killer" for *Fury*. Many of the core player-testers expressed the view that *Fury* had been released too soon and the Auran developers had not gone far enough in responding to their critical feedback over the final stages of development. What went wrong and what can we learn from this?

There was significant debate at Auran about the role and importance of these co-creative gamers' to *Fury*'s success or failure. Many of the leads in the development team (for example, the lead designer and senior producer), while regularly expressing support for the importance of the gamer community to *Fury*'s success, seemed to understand this as largely a marketing and communication function. On crucial issues of fundamental game design they were generally reluctant to give too much credence to the views and opinions of the players. This was their domain as professional developers and designers. As a range of design controversies flared in the core testing community over the final crucial few months of development, Auran management struggled to manage this tension between the expertise and creative control of the professional design team and the collective intelligence of the gamer community.

After many weekends of play testing between August and late September 2007, the feedback from many of the hard-core gamers, particularly from some of the influential leading competitive guilds, indicated that wide-ranging and in some cases quite fundamental design changes were needed. The view was growing among the core testers that for some reason Auran was now compromising on their original commitment to develop and deliver a PvP and e-sports focused

MMOG. At this stage, only a matter of weeks from commercial launch, things were not looking promising for *Fury*.

Field notes written during and after my regular visits to the Auran offices over these final few weeks of development and testing note that in my opinion the community relations team were also losing confidence in the lead designer's and producer's willingness to accept the critical feedback expressed by many of the core player-testers. One of the community managers felt the lead designer was not taking seriously the feedback coming through from the core testers. He was actively lobbying Auran senior management on behalf of the player-testers, arguing that *Fury's* commercial success was in serious jeopardy if many of the key changes were not made. He believed many of the leading guilds and influential players were close to abandoning the game.

In early October 2007, only three weeks before commercial release, Tony Hilliam directed that significant design changes needed to be made. He drafted and released a forum post and email newsletter addressed to the core PvP gamers announcing this major direction change:

We've been receiving a lot of feedback about the state of *Fury*. We've taken some time to assess that feedback and will shortly be announcing some wide ranging changes to *Fury*. Put simply: the community made its desires known, we've listened, and we've been convinced that changes need to happen.

The announcement briefly outlined many of the major changes that the core player-testers had been consistently requesting and included the comment,

This really is your game now [my italics], it is our task as developers to listen and react by deciding how and when to implement improvements.... Now is the time to get your Guild-mates to come

onto the forums to discuss these changes and help us make *Fury* the number 1 PvP game on the market.

The response from many in the player community was immediate, enthusiastic and generally positive. However, the gamers met Auran's eventual December release of the promised update with anger, frustration and disappointment. The development team had chosen to ignore the feedback from the hard-core PvP testers and taken the design in the direction of hopefully appealing to a more mainstream and casual gamer market. In an extended post to the *Fury* forum, respected community member and long time *Fury* tester, Republica, criticised the Auran developers and designers for failing to make the changes that many players had been requesting. Responding to a post by *Fury*'s lead designer, Adam Carpenter, in which he seeks to justify Auran's refusal to introduce some of the requested changes, Republica comments:

'Please understand that I say this with the most heartfelt respect and compassion to you and your team: you are standing on very, very thin ice. Considering the amount of investment in this game, you need to be very careful with how you treat your players. We loved the idea, but now we're being told that the one thing we really can't stand about the game isn't going to change because you don't want to change it. And I hope you can understand that this is a bit insulting, and doesn't make it a game a lot of us will continue to play. It's also probably a huge reason behind why you're not getting better word of mouth publicity from the PvP crowd'. (Forum Post, 16 January 2008).

There were many forum posts made by gamers, including influential guild leaders, which expressed very similar viewpoints. This is a brief example extract from the many extensive forum posts, email exchanges and online in-game chat discussions through which these game testers provided Auran with feedback. I participated in many of these online exchanges, including extensive online and in-game chats with long-standing player-testers who expressed surprise and disappointment at what they regarded as the Auran development team's failure

to take into account their feedback over the final stages of development. Of course forum posts such as Republica's had a contested status in the Auran development team's design decisions. The lead designer and producer regularly questioned the validity of forum posts as a reliable guide to gamers' experience of *Fury*. In informal discussions with me, the designer would argue that he could point to just as many posts that offered alternative viewpoints. He commented that great care should be exercised when evaluating a game's design based on forum posts:

.... they're just too unreliable and all over the place. One post or thread will tell you one thing, but read on and other gamers will be arguing just as vehemently and passionately for the opposite case. We see that all the time. You cannot change a game's design based on what you're reading in the latest hot forum thread. Who would you listen to?

He referred to this as the risk of turning *Fury* into a "design by committee mess". Auran's community relations managers on the other hand referred me to Republica's forum posts as in their opinion offering a well articulated and argued perspective on *Fury*'s problems. I was also referred to Republica's posts by many of the long-standing and committed *Fury* play-testers. Many of these core testers, like Republica, took Auran's invitation that "this is your game now" seriously. They expected Auran to deliver on its commitment to listen and to make the key changes that the players demanded. When the Auran development team failed to deliver on this commitment, the support and endorsement of these core players quickly evaporated.

One of Auran's community managers was becoming increasingly critical of the development teams reluctance to respond to the feedback from the experienced PvP gamers. In an interview with me conducted in late December 2007, he commented:

The problem was no one from design wanted to listen to us.... Maybe it was because the designers and devs didn't like hearing the

criticism.... The devs say the feedback coming through wasn't representative of a broader casual gamer market. I've never got that and I think it is just an excuse for not listening and not making changes soon enough. The devs for whatever reason didn't want to listen to the feedback. This was great input from really experienced hard-core players. These guys put in a lot of time testing. Why just ignore that? I can also tell you that the server stats show many of these testers were racking up more game time, much more, than the designers and devs were. Think about that, they probably knew the game systems and how they played better than the designers did. Why didn't we respect that?

The community manager's question gets us to the crux of the problem of co-creative expertise. Integrating players into the heart of the design process means extending the recognised sources of expertise beyond *Fury's* immediate professional development team to include the community relations team, an ethnographer and the led core gamers. This problem and challenge of coordinating often competing and divergent if not incommensurable forms of expertise in the design decision-making process gets us to the core dilemma of distributed expertise networks.

In an extensive post-mortem interview in late 2007 with Adam Carpenter, *Fury's* lead-designer, it became apparent that the development team had a very different understanding of what 'this is your game now' meant, particularly in the context of making key design decisions. When I put the community manager's question and criticisms to Carpenter and also raised with him the anger and frustration expressed by the core-testers, he replied:

A couple of key things. The hardcore community generally doesn't understand how long it takes and what is required to make the changes they want. Even with a lot of our hardcore people who we

assumed were advanced enough gamers to understand stuff, when we did explain combat mechanics concepts that were crucial to the design, well they still really didn't understand it. Even though these are people with a lot of gaming experience, and we very much respect their opinion, we never got them to get outside of their own personal view and to see it from a much higher level design perspective. In terms of a lot of changes requested, even among the hardcore group, there were very diverse views. It wasn't necessarily a unified front or opinion that we were hearing. They weren't speaking with a clear enough or consistent voice for us to say 'yes this is definitely a problem' and likewise the feedback that we were getting was not necessarily from more moderate, casual gamers who were playing *Fury*. In some ways our community team could have helped us do a better job by including a more diverse range of feedback and not concentrating so much on just the hardcore.

Opening *Fury*'s development to this distributed knowledge network of expert gamers provided useful critical feedback and forward marketing. But it also exposed Auran to management challenges by disrupting a closed industrial model of expertise in favour of an open innovation model. Many of Auran's senior managers failed to recognise that harnessing the support and input of these players involves an implicit recognition of the players' expert status as co-creators. Harnessing the benefits of a co-creative relationship came with a responsibility to respect that expertise, and when, in the minds of the player co-creators at least, the developers failed to do so, an implicit contract was broken and a distributed asset of innovation and development turned rapidly into a market network liability.

Co-creators and the 'Crisis of Expertise'

How do we develop a framework or model of expertise that situates the expertise of citizen consumers in proper perspective alongside professional creatives'

expertise in the fields of design and media production? This problem of “expertise extension” identified by H.M. Collins and Robert Evans (2002; 2007) acknowledges the need to extend the domain of technical decision-making beyond the confines of a professionally qualified elite to include, for example, the “experience-based expertise” of people that is not recognised by certification or professional standing. But Collins and Evans ask how do we then go about establishing grounds for limiting the extension of these decision-making rights (2002: 237)? They provide us with a starting point for undertaking this task by establishing the necessity of recognising and categorising different types of expertise. They then argue that it then becomes “possible to begin to think about how different kinds of expertise combine in social life, and how they combine in technical decision-making” (2002: 251).

Fury’s success relied on combining the various forms of expertise possessed by the professional developers with the gamers’ expertise. Here it is not a situation of simply abandoning or displacing the expertise of the professionals. The point here is not that the professional designers were wrong while the gamers got it right. Instead, the professionals’ knowledge should have been added to by the contributions of the gamers. As Bruns (2008: 214-19) suggests, the challenge is to reconcile and interrelate “traditional expertise and emergent community knowledge structures”³. But as we see in the case of *Fury*, successfully combining and coordinating these various forms of expertise is much easier said than done. In this brief snap-shot of how the problem of expertise played out at Auran I have barely touched on the very real difficulties and challenges the developers confronted as they struggled to coordinate these often competing, conflicting and incommensurable knowledges, literacies and competencies. Throughout this research, *Fury*’s design team raised compelling difficulties and

³ In the context of a discussion of digital storytelling John Hartley (2008b) also suggests that this problem of expertise is about developing a dialogic approach between professional expert knowledge and amateur knowledge. He comments that “... the *problem* of the expertise of the facilitator ... would not be solved by simply firing all the filmmakers and letting consumers get by on their own. It is important not to fall for an ‘either/or’ model of digital storytelling: either *expert* or *everyone*.”

risks associated with integrating the gamers into the design decision-making process. These different knowledges and competenceis were aligning uneasily and often abrasively with the existing industrial media era institutions for project management and business process. Auran's professional development teams are far from united in their understanding of and support for this co-creative production process. Producers, designers, programmers, artists, community relations managers, CEOs, expert gamers and ethnographic consultant researchers have very different understandings of and agendas for how these relationships should be managed and realised. It is from precisely these uneven, multiple and messy practices, negotiations, actants and materials that co-creative culture is made and negotiated. But in all of this what are the mechanisms and processes that may help us to better understand and grapple with these co-creative expertise exchanges?

We need to develop analytical tools and models that help us to work through the mechanisms that shape these emergent co-creative exchanges. I now turn to briefly propose a possible analytic framework that might potentially explicate the complex exchanges observed. This model of *social-network markets* is based on the notion that this problem of co-creative expertise is neither an economic nor a cultural phenomenon in itself, but rather the outcome of a co-evolutionary dynamic between both economic and cultural considerations.

Expertise, 'Trading Zones' and 'Social Network Markets'

In these contexts of asymmetrical co-creative expertise exchange the participants need to develop and use what Collins and Evans describe as "*interactional expertise*" (2002: 256; Collins and Evans 2007a; Collins 2004). Defined as (Collins and Evans 2007a: 14) "the ability to master the language of a specialist domain in the absence of practical competence", interactional expertise is a translation role that facilitates and supports communication, dialogue and exchange across expertise domains. In developing this category of expertise,

Collins draws on his experience as an ethnographer studying scientists researching gravitational waves. He argues that through this participatory engagement with the scientists over an extended period he acquired competencies and communication skills that enabled him to contribute to discussions about the subject in a way that passes for expertise, although he does not possess the rigorous mathematical knowledge or core experimental skills required to participate fully in that domain of scientific research. Collins and Evans (2002, 2007a, 2007b) argue that this interactional expertise that often sits between and cuts across specific expertise domains is vital to the success of projects that involve collaboration across different expertise sub-groups.

Collins, Evans and Gorman (2007) have refined further this idea of interactional expertise by drawing on Peter Galison's (1997) term 'trading zone' to understand the exchanges and transactions that routinely occur in interdisciplinary scientific research across fields that may appear to be formally quite incommensurable. Galison emphasises the need to address communication problems across these domains by developing 'in-between vocabularies' and 'inter-languages'. They identify the importance of interactional expertise to the successful development of trading zones as coordinating mechanisms. Collins, Evans and Gorman (2007: 662) assert that "interactional expertise trading zones seem so widespread that it might be argued that it is the norm for new interdisciplinary work".

Co-creative expertise can be understood then as a coordination problem that requires the use of interactional expertise to create and facilitate trading zones. But developing interactional expertise is difficult and time consuming and project managers routinely underestimate its significance (Collins, Evans and Gorman 2007: 663-65; Collins and Evans 2007). In the case of *Fury* it is arguable that we failed to construct an effective trading zone that supported interchange and transactions across the differing skills that needed to combine to identify and solve the game's design problems. But is there an element of self-serving involved in identifying "interactional expertise" as the significant factor here?

Collins and Evans (2007; also see Collins 2004), for example, note that interactional expertise is a skill that is particularly characteristic of ethnographic work. This proposition then starts to look like “rent-seeking”; if we accept that trading zones are a mechanism for coordination, then the value and definition of particular expertises are at stake in these exchanges, including the value of ethnographic knowledge. I argue, however, that interactional expertise is also distributed and is certainly not exclusively exercised by ethnographers. It is a core skill of the community relations managers and it is a skill also exercised by community leaders such as Republica. And it is a skill that Auran undervalued to its cost. There is a lot more that needs to be said about trading zones and interactional expertise, however, I think that the idea of a trading zone as a place where problems of co-ordination are resolved provides us with a useful starting point for understanding co-creative expertise. But to develop this idea in the context of co-creative relations it is necessary to acknowledge that the asymmetries and incommensurabilities shaping these co-creative trading zones will be very different from those evident in interdisciplinary science research projects. For a start co-creative relations are fundamentally about a blurring of relations between economic and social domains. One of the advantages of approaching this as a “trading zone” is that it helps us to avoid a static or oppositional face-off between these domains and enables us to think about the dynamic relationships between them.

Developing a model grounded in evolutionary economics, complexity theory, social network theory and cultural studies, Potts et al’s recent proposal that social network markets provide a new definition of the creative industries foregrounds the challenge of grappling with the implications of distributed co-creative expertise (Potts, Cunningham, Hartley and Ormerod 2008; also see Banks and Humphreys 2008). Potts et. al. (169) propose that consumer choice in the creative industries is not governed by just the “set of incentives described by conventional demand theory, but by the choices of others”. Social network markets then are fundamentally about “individual choice in the context of a

complex social system of other individual choice". These co-creative relations are defined by contexts of simultaneous economic choice and cultural choice. Domains that are often characterised as distinct and incommensurable are coming together in hybrid social network market configurations. Co-creative culture then is about the emergence of new, unstable and disruptive market relations that include the entrepreneurial agency of media consumers as partners in co-creative relationships.

The complex practices of negotiating and navigating across these social network relations that are simultaneously cultural and economic are at the core of the problem of co-creative expertise. This social network market model of consumer co-creation redraws analytic boundaries, such that distinctions between consumption and production processes are blurred; and, in the process, boundaries between the economy and culture are transformed and redrawn as each domain encroaches on and unsettles the other. Social network interactions among consumers thus begin to function in a way previously understood to be the exclusive domain of R&D laboratories or professional creative experts. In the case of *Fury* it means that design was no longer the exclusive preserve of the professional designers. Co-creative expertise concerns how organizations and institutions are evolving, often disruptively and uncomfortably, in the context of these changing production and consumption relations. This is a complex dynamic of change and feedback between consumption and production. These player-consumers encountered in the *Fury* case study are not simply engaging in production, but also in dynamic production, or disruptive innovation.

Conclusion

At the core of the social network markets model is a conception of consumers linked through social networks as agents engaged in productive exchange and value creation, not just as recipients of utility through consumption. These agents are assessing and making deals, they are exchanging money, attention, connectivity, content and ideas in conditions of uncertainty and risk. This social-

network market approach foregrounds consumers as deal makers, agreeing to exchanges and negotiating the terms of these relationships based on some level of calculation of self-advantage as well as paying money or attention to the provider in a two-way transaction of complex network choices (Hartley 2008a).

These co-creative consumers now judge companies such as Auran on how well they respond to their feedback and on how well they provide and deliver a service that effectively integrates the consumer across the creative development process. The positive word of mouth that Auran's CEO hoped to harness doesn't come for free. 'Attention-economy' (Lanham 2007) transactions or social network market exchanges play out here: the participation of the gamer consumers endorsing *Fury* through their fan social networks requires Auran in turn to recognise the status and contribution of the gamers' expertise in the context of a co-creative relationship for mutual benefit. This is a *demand driven* dynamic in which the agency and choices of creative citizen-consumers and their social networks are fundamental.

In this social network market model, creativity and innovation is situated across the production-consumption boundary in complex evolving networks among consumers, and between consumers and producers. This involves constructing and negotiating effective 'trading-zones' that facilitate and coordinate transactions across these various co-creative expertises. Here I am not proposing that these practices are seamlessly appropriated into existing stable market institutions to support a globally rampant industrial media economy. The salient point introduced by the social network market model is that this is not a static or closed situation in which we can clearly and definitively identify what are market or non-market motivations, incentives or behaviours. Instead, these emergent co-creative practices potentially redefine our understandings of what markets are and how they operate in relation to social and cultural networks. These are markets because exchange occurs, but it is social connections and recommendations, access and attention that performs the coordinating function,

not price. The social networks markets perspective suggests that co-creative expertise is not fundamentally a binary choice between professional experts and amateurs or between markets and non-markets, but rather is about the emergence of coordinating mechanisms that shape the development of markets and may even give rise to new markets. This is not about markets traditionally understood as mechanisms for efficiently allocating resources. This is about disruptive change or Schumpeterian 'creative destruction' because when the mechanisms of coordination change from the closed industrial paradigm then a change in the value and definition of particular forms of expertise invariably also follows. This unsettles and transforms current business models and practices. But these emerging interdependencies between markets and social networks also generate conditions for creativity and innovation. As companies such as Auran seek to engage consumers as co-creative participants and experts, this in turn will transform consumers' expectations about the terms and conditions of that participation. Auran unfortunately misunderstood that social network market context through which these exchanges of co-creative expertise are coordinated.

Further research is needed to open the black box of co-creative expertise. We need to more precisely understand the different types of expertise that contribute to the shaping of these distributed co-creative network. Developing a typology of expertises may be helpful in this regard. We also need to unpack the precise bargaining processes and mechanisms that shape these co-creative expertise exchanges. A key question here - are these processes transparent and participatory?

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