

Voice and representation in participatory media

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Abstract

This submission draws on research and practice completed over a twelve-year period (2003-2015). It explores changes within the media economy, considers the historical development of participatory media and then interrogates practice within it by using two key periods of action research (*Inclusion Through Media*, 2004-2008; *Digital Storytelling with older people in their communities across two major projects – Extending Creative Practice and Silver Stories*, 2009-2015) as fields of enquiry.

Three supporting documents (*Building the Knowledge Economy: A Strategy for the Media and Related Creative Industries in the Channel Corridor*, 2003; *Digital Science: A Collaboration between the Wellcome Trust and Nesta*, 2006; *The Power of Youth Media to Change Lives*, 2012) set out the changing nature of media from 2003 to 2010. The first adopts a strategic approach to economic development and, in doing this, shows the particularity of the media economy. Taken together, the second explores the use of media within a new market and the third reviews the growth and importance of youth media. The three reports examine the impact of digitalization on the media landscape.

This combination of diverse research sources enables the submission to draw on an evidential richness transcending different worlds of policy, practice and theory. In doing this it is able to join dots to provide a clearer picture of voice and representation within participatory media. The submission argues that the development of new forms of media activity enabled by digitalization led directly to new modes of community-based media which, in turn, created spaces for community based practitioners that emphasized the importance of the voice of the participant. It uses three concepts of voice, namely opportunities for new voices to speak and be heard, an increased mutual awareness flowing from a greater influence over distribution and exhibition and the potential for new intensities of listening as a means to interrogate the notion that digitalization has increased the range and number of voices across the media. The thesis argues that these changes have shifted the dynamics of participatory media away from a model dependent on the patronage of broadcasters to a more varied landscape with lower costs and a greater range of funding opportunities. This has led directly to an increase in the amount and range of media. New forms of media, such as Digital Storytelling, have acquired an international standing. The thesis considers the extent to which these changes have created a space for the voices of participants to be expressed and heard. It goes on to argue that the representative components of these new forms of media are partly illusory as the participant voice

is frequently distorted and curtailed by the need to meet an explicit requirement set by the funding agencies, the longer term needs of the producer or by the inability of the work to reach and engage an audience. Examples to illustrate these points are taken from Digital Storytelling work completed over the past six years.

Voice and representation within participatory media

Introductory Note

This submission is divided into two parts.

The primary document is titled **Voice and representation in participatory media**. The second part consists of eight supporting documents; these are ordered chronologically to illustrate my research journey and provide the broad range of supporting evidence needed to anchor a full understanding of the issues raised throughout the submission.

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Introduction

The development and growth of new forms of media activity enabled by digitalization has led directly to new modes of community-based media, which have, in turn, created spaces for community-based practitioners to undertake innovative work showcasing the voice of the participant. This submission uses the term participatory media to describe a specific mode of media production based within communities that draws together community groups and professional or skilled media-makers to create different forms of media. It argues that the dynamics of participatory media have shifted away from a model dependent on the patronage of broadcasters to a more varied landscape characterised by lower costs with a greater range of funding opportunities and outputs. This has led directly to an increase in the quality, amount and range of participatory media.

The submission explores the extent to which these changes have created a space for the voices of participants to be expressed and heard. It proposes that it is utopian to think digitalization provides unprecedented possibilities for participatory media and argues that the participant's voice is frequently distorted and curtailed by either the need to meet an explicit requirement set by the funding agencies or by the longer-term needs of the producer or commissioning agency. The dynamics of mediation may have shifted, yet the marginalized voice remains on the periphery.

The primary evidence within this submission is from research and practice completed over a twelve-year period (2003-2015). This material identifies and explores changes within the media economy, considers the historical development of participatory media and then explores practice within it by using two key periods of action research as fields of enquiry, namely Inclusion Through Media, (2004-2008) and Digital Storytelling with older people in their communities across two major projects – (*Extending Creative Practice* and *Silver Stories*, 2009-2015).

Three supporting documents (*Building the Knowledge Economy: A Strategy for the Media and Related Creative Industries in the Channel Corridor*, 2003; *Digital Science: A Collaboration between the Wellcome Trust and Nesta*, 2006; *The Power of Youth Media to Change Lives*, 2012) chronicle the changing nature of media from 2003-2012. The first adopts a strategic approach to the economic development of the media sector, and in doing so, shows the particular forces at work within the localized economy of the Channel Corridor in Kent. The second explores the development and use of media within an emergent market and the third reviews

the growth and importance of youth media. The three reports interrogate the impact of digitalization on the media landscape from distinctly different starting points but, taken together, they provide a means to understand the dynamics within a media practice environment where economic and technological change is fast while policy and institutional reform is often slow. They provide empirical evidence of a shift in policy thinking to a point where culture is seen as an area of economic or technological activity rather than a contested creative space. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research is supplemented by three academically published articles drawing on research completed during my time in academia. Appendix One provides a Research and Methodological Overview, which demonstrates the journey across the different parts of the submission with the earlier work defining the context within which subsequent practice-based research occurred.

Taken together, these reports provide a broad range of material from different worlds of policy, practice and theory that is needed to anchor a fuller understanding of voice and representation within participatory media. The research took place over a significant period of time but is consistently positioned in a way that addresses a common set of concerns from a series of different starting points. In this respect, it shares much with the research position of the reflective practitioner set out by Schon (1983) who defines "a professional practitioner as someone who encounters certain types of situation again and again" and distinguishes this from the reflective practitioner who is someone "not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case". Schon considers the importance of reflection in practice, notes that such reflection can take time and argues, "when someone reflects in action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context". Alinsky (1971) makes a related point when he contrasts process and purpose by noting how it is commonly accepted that "Process tells us how. Purpose tells us why", yet in practice " they are part of a continuum". In this context, my own research and practice are part of the same continuum.

The research journey set out in this submission chronicles my move from commissioned policy analysis through self-generated action-research into academic practice and research, which took place across the period from 2003 to 2015. It also draws on my initial research training in quantitative and qualitative approaches from my time at the BBC and the British Film Institute, as well as the action research projects highlighted throughout the document. The essence of the submission is that this weight of experience provided me with the means to identify and reflect on the impact of digitalisation on participatory media and, in particular, to

understand the limitations on voice flowing from changes in the processes of mediation.

Silverstone (1999) proposes that the study of the media is a process of understanding mediation; a notion embracing the development, production and reception of media content. The thesis draws on the overview of mediation developed by Thumim (2015) which identifies four overlapping elements of mediation, namely an emphasis on technology, a focus on the broader cultural context of production, the processes by which media content is produced, and the means by which material is distributed and exhibited. Thumim extends this to consider the means by which self-representations are shaped by institutional, textual and cultural factors; these distinctions provide an underpinning framework for the thesis and are utilized as a means to explore three ideas around voice put forward by Couldry (2010). These three concepts of voice are firstly opportunities for new voices to speak and be heard, secondly an increased mutual awareness flowing from a greater influence over distribution and exhibition and finally the potential for new intensities of listening as a means to interrogate the notion that digitalization has increased the range and number of voices across the media. The portfolio of policy studies and practice-based work supporting this thesis provides evidence to interrogate these concerns.

This submission uses the term participatory media to describe a mode of media production where community groups, or individuals with little or no experience of media production, work with media professionals to use different forms of media to tell their own stories or document issues of concern. This is the research focus of the submission. Media content made by, or with, community groups or individuals working with practitioners or facilitators has deep roots within practice, yet terminology remains both loaded and slippery in an area with a history of competing definitions. In this respect participatory media differs from DIY media where groups or individuals make their own material for distribution on outlets like YouTube.

Fountain (2007) traces the history of alternative film back to the Workers' Film Movement of the 1930s and it can also be seen in the BBC's Community Programme Unit established in 1972 and, perhaps most notably, in the Channel Four supported workshop movement of the mid/late 1980s. Jankowski's call (1992) for qualitative research to aid an understanding of different forms of media practice with communities flowed from an extensive survey of pre-digitalised activity in Europe. It remains valid today when the range of activity has extended to embrace new forms media and

modes of production, including various forms of self-representation and an enhanced range of online, broadcast and public exhibition opportunities. This submission informs, and is informed by, the work of Thumim and Couldry by using two substantive periods of action research named above as a means to create a distinctive understanding of existing and emergent issues around this collaborative mode of production. My portfolio of work has been completed over a twelve-year period and it has been consistently positioned at a liminal point where policy and practice meet so it provides the range of evidence needed to both identify the lacunae in this territory and examine the notions of giving voice and providing representation that are so often claimed as the space of participatory media.

Section One – What is contemporary participatory media?

The Roots of contemporary Participatory Media Practice

The desire to democratize media production and distribution to enable more people to take part as producers, to build access to production equipment and to extend the scope for distribution is not recent. The uneven and complex history of participatory media work remains relatively untold and is a sidelined somewhat lost history of marginalized voices within the British media.

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the publication of influential writing that shaped contemporary approaches to participatory media practice. These included the writings of Paulo Freire and Saul Alinsky who both advocated a culture of pragmatic radicalism “rooted in concrete situations” (Freire 1996, Pg 19). Alinsky’s work eschewed a restrictive ideological position to argue that radicals should move their causes forward through pragmatic engagement. Taken together the two texts share an ontological commitment to the importance of community-based education and related action as a means to stimulate radical, progressive change.

The basic requirement for the understanding of the politics of change is to recognize the world as it is. We must work with it on its terms if we are to change it to the kind of world we would like it to be (Alinsky (1989) pg 12).

It would be misleading to isolate developments in media practice from similar activity in other cultural and intellectual spheres. A

closeness between theory and practice driven by changing technology shaped many contemporary cultural practices. For example, an interest in the use of technology to gather life stories can be seen in Oral History; Plummer (2001, Pg 28) charts the growth of oral history from the emergence of audio tape recordings in the 1940s and the subsequent transformation of a movement into a professionalized academic discipline with representative societies established in USA (1966) and the UK (1970), distinctive journals and a myriad of practices stretching from local history groups through to international academic conferences. In a different cultural sphere, Daniel Meadows' Free Photographic Omnibus (1973-2001) used personal photographic portraits as a means to capture everyday experience across 22 different locations in the UK during 1973 and 1974 and then revisited the locations 25 years later to track down participants and take comparative photographs chronicling the passage of time. Meadows (2001, Pg 53) describes how his approach to photography was shaped by the 1973 writings of William Stott who described social documentary "a radically democratic genre" with a capacity to provide "permanent revelations of the spirit".

Fountain (2007) describes alternative filmmaking from 1965 to 2005 as having a "multifaceted, complex and uneven history" embracing a range of practitioners with different outlooks. He looks for common themes to define key characteristics of alternative filmmaking and concludes these are:

- critique and challenge to mainstream media
- contestation of the media public sphere especially in relation to public service and state resources
- transformation of people's relationship to media through participation and democratization
- an aspiration towards relative autonomy of resources
- connection to oppositional movements and the aim of contributing to the transformation of society

Fountain, Pg 30, The Alternative Media Handbook (2007)

This submission accepts these characteristics as features of a range of related practices including alternative filmmaking, and it uses them as a means to shape an understanding of participatory media.

In 1972 the BBC established a strand of programmes initially called Open Door that continued in various forms, including Video Nation, until it was closed in 2004. This new space allowed a small number of non-professionals access to the resources needed to make programmes and the airtime required to show them. From the late 1980s, it pioneered the development of the video diary – self-

authored, present tense documentaries about people's lives told from their own point of view. This was a step forward from the observational approach of the 1930s though it was still limited in terms of reach and impact. Fountain's own work as a Commissioning Editor for Independent Film and Video at Channel 4 (1981-1994) enables him to understand the importance of funding and a means of distribution capable of reaching a significant audience. His period as a commissioning editor saw the Channel support 44 film and video workshops across the UK through the provision of equipment and funding to support the development of new programmes. Many of these groups picked up the cudgels of the 1930s and worked to provide a means of access to production equipment and distribution through Channel Four. Much of this was done in partnership with others, including the British Film Institute and sympathetic local authorities, but it was Channel Four that provided the foundation for the growth and development of a pluralist alternative media sector. Conditions of grant often meant the workshops had to provide diverse services, not just production but also training and media education and this had an impact on the work created across the film and video workshops which was characterised by the coexistence of a shared ethos and different practices. Porter (2007) chronicles his own involvement with media production and in doing so provides an account of a 30-year trajectory. Like Fountain he struggles to define a unifying set of characteristics for a sector that, as both Porter (2007) and Atton (2015) notes, has variously been labeled as alternative, community, independent, underground, grassroots, radical, citizens' and experimental. Porter suggests:

It is a sector that lacks institutional status, operates outside the mainstream culture, and tends to work with people who are themselves marginalized and lack the social and cultural not to mention economic capital that would give them agency in the wider society (pg 74, *IMAGEination in Power – The Creative Citizen – Andy Porter in Inclusion Through Media*)

Porter charts his own experience over thirty years of working as a producer and director and, in doing so, also provides an account of the processes of change taking place across the media and the related cultural industries. Porter describes a shift from a pre-Channel Four workshop era where reportage style short films were made with local communities through to a point where Channel Four funding initially created opportunities for new voices that were ultimately stifled through the advent of more commercial pressures. The final section of Porter's chapter in *Inclusion Through Media* illustrates both the impact of technology and availability of public sector support for the creative industries. It also highlights the

importance of finance from beyond the media sector as a means of developing and facilitating support for participatory media activity. Gidley takes this up in his chapter from the same book describing *Beyond the Numbers Game*, a research project designed to develop a new approach to the evaluation of participatory media. UK Sound TV was one of the 25 Action Research Projects delivered as part of the Inclusion Through Media development partnership; a network I conceived, developed and led from 2004-2008 when it was the largest media based action research project in Europe. In this context, action research within the programme was constructed as a reflective process whereby practitioners, researchers and community groups collaborated on new forms of practice enabled by digitalization to gain insights intended to have an impact on media practice. The practitioner and researcher constructed a creative process designed to enable the community group to have as much control as possible. For example, a group of eight "hard to reach" young people from the east end of London were able to develop, produce and distribute their own audio-visual material with support from media practitioners led by Porter. This work was primarily supported as a skills-based employment programme yet the outputs included documentary, comedy and primarily Grime music and the channel reached some 2.5m people within nine months of launch.

Writers cited in the subsequent section like Florida, Hartley, Hesmondhalgh and Howkins come from different perspectives yet they each describe dynamic changes in technology, form and content that has fundamentally altered media practice. These changes are charted and explored in my own report on Youth Media which chronicles a growth in practice and describes a wide range of practitioners readily creating a mix of media; this differs sharply with the world of the 1970s described by Porter where participatory practice was readily seen to be informed by theory. In contrast, contemporary theories driving participatory media in my own research were economically and technologically defined by commissioning agencies; developing an improved understanding of how digitized content played second fiddle to technical, economic, social and managerial issues. The Creative Industries were seen as a driver of economic growth and the arguments used to support participatory media were often framed as a means to make marginalized people more employable. The focus was on the capacity to create media rather than an ability to understand it; content was undertheorized. Skills development mattered more than the quality of the content or the media produced. Flowing from this, a participatory media practice has emerged which is defined defensively and, because of this, it is rife with contradictions.

Digitalisation extended earlier forms of participatory media by enabling makers to engage directly in the distribution and exhibition of their work so media entered a networked space with the potential to build new forms of practice and civic engagement to raise mutual awareness. Hannon, Bradwell and Tims (2008) celebrate a Video Republic where people can make and distribute their own material, and in rare cases reach a large audience. The dynamic of mediation created by digitalisation has established a space where what can be seen and what is seen possess an added dimension and the scope for mutual awareness has changed. Despite this, issues of voice and power that were driving the debate about media in the 1970s remain central to a contemporary understanding of participatory media practice. Thumim (2012) takes a broader more critical perspective; her work draws on Williams (1983) to consider different notions of the ordinary suggested through the word “community” and proposes four different ways in which the term can be used to investigate media production: namely as a means to explore ideas of denigration, celebration and the everyday, and as a tool for citizenship. The body of work in this submission is primarily concerned with the relationship between media and citizenship, and the changes brought about through digitalization of production, distribution and exhibition, and speaks through practice and empirical documentation to the themes identified by Thumim as will be demonstrated later.

Positioning participatory media: Growth of the Creative Economy and the concept of Cultural Industries

Florida (2002), Hartley (2004), Garnham (2005), Howkins (2001/2007) and Hesmondhalgh (2007) chronicle the emergence, development and application of distinctive terminology in academic and policy discourse to describe a shift from support for the arts through the cultural industries to the more industrial notion of the creative economy. Hartley points out that this term combines and radically alters two older terms – creative arts and cultural industries. Garnham charts the history of academic and policy discourse and describes how the priority given to creative factors above cultural concerns allowed an economic analysis based on the “information society” to prevail. The key element within this is the progression from an understanding of culture as an area of contested creative activity towards an understanding seeing it as an economic arena ready for speculative investment and development. Distinctive features of this shift included a revised and extended definition of the creative sector, a greater focus on market dynamics rather than direct public sector support, the growth of copyright and intellectual property as a key economic driver and the

impact of technology on business and creative practice. Garnham describes the importance of this analysis and how it filtered through into policy making throughout the 1980s and beyond. My own policy reports in the supporting portfolio illustrate the complex impact of these factors on media practice. Writing with the advantage of hindsight, Hesmondalgh punctures the optimism of Florida, Hartley and Howkins arguing their work overstated the importance of the creative industries as a driver of economic growth and regeneration. While this is undoubtedly correct, it is also true that the earlier writers were astute in their exploration of a shift in policy development that attempted to keep pace with rapid economic and technological change.

Evidence of this shift is provided by the establishment of a bespoke Government Ministry initially called the Department of National Heritage (1992-1997) but later renamed the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (1997-now). The new Department held responsibility for a raft of Government policies, including the cultural or creative industries and, unlike other areas of Government, it operated primarily through work delegated to Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) such as the Arts Council of England and the British Film Institute which were charged with using culture as an instrument to facilitate economic and social impact as well as cultural programming. The supposition was that by working through these bodies, policy makers would be able to bypass many pre-existing structures and effect change more directly with practitioners in one of the most dynamic areas of the economy.

In 1999, DCMS undertook the first comprehensive survey to map the creative industries in the UK. Ross (2010) notes the term Creative Industries was imported from Australia in the early 1990s but found its "definitive expression" in the early years of the New Labour administration. The creative industries were defined as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property". (DCMS, 1998, Pg2) The sector was subdivided into thirteen individual sectors with revenues of £60bn or approximately 4% of GDP and employed c1m. The exercise was repeated in 2001 using the same definition and the updated document demonstrated that the importance of the creative industries sector to the UK through the employment of c1.3m people and revenues of £112.5bn accounting for around 5% of GDP. In terms of employment, the largest single sector in 1999 had been the Software and Computing Services with some 272,000 people had grown to 555,000 to represent 42% of total employed in the sector. Connections

between the different sub-sectors of the creative industries could be hard to fathom in an industrial sector ranging from the Arts and Antiques market through film production to software development. There is more than an element of truth in Hartley's (2005, p.23) observation that "the creative industries are so varied in scale, organization and sector of economic activity that they are barely recognizable as a coherent object of analysis within this framework". The Work Foundation undertook a comparable study in 2007 and NESTA argued for a revised definition of the creative sector in 2012. In January 2014, the DCMS revisited the earlier work and published economic estimates exploring the creative industries, which concluded some 1.68m people were directly employed in a sector accounting for 5.2% of the UK economy. This went on to explore the wider importance of the creative economy extending to include people in creative roles outside the original 13 subsectors.

The relationship between academics interested in cultural policy and policy makers developing policy to stimulate growth in the creative economy became closer as academics were drawn into the policy arena. Academics such as Florida (2001) Hartley (2005) and Howkins (2007) turned into policy makers by promoting templates to stimulate factors contributing to the growth of creative economies. Florida's Creative Cities Index provided a particularly influential typology for policy makers and played a key role in shaping my own policy research during this period; academics looking to develop knowledge transfer activity also drew on Florida's work as a rationale to build the high level innovation and technology incubators demanded by the sector. Establishing creative clusters where small businesses could co-exist in a large enough critical mass to enable them to collaborate successfully and thereby find routes to the far larger commissioning agencies which dominate the creative sector became a seemingly realizable policy goal for many public sector agencies. Florida's argument for direct intervention to enable "Technology, Talent and Tolerance: The 3 T's of Economic Development" to flourish stimulated public sector support for the creative sector across the UK based on a belief that "regional economic growth is powered by creative people, who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas". (Florida, pp 249) The utopian aspect of Florida's work is dominated by the economic driver of commercial success and this attracted considerable academic commentary. Ross (2010, pp. 10) talks of a "jackpot economy where intellectual property is the glittering prize" and describes a downside of insecure work, long hours and self-exploitation; in short, the creative economy is seen as "the new face of neo-liberal entrepreneurship".

This is the context in which I was working when conducting my own research as a policy development consultant through DS Media, explicitly tackling these overlapping areas of academic theory and policy. My research agenda and projects explored the media components of the creative industries and worked to develop these within the wider economic and social drivers underpinning the creative industries. Hartley (2005) adopts a comparable approach by stressing both the contextual as opposed to the categorical aspect of the concept and the importance of high-level policy making in localities seeking to secure economic growth. The study of the Channel Corridor completed in 2003 looked at the importance of the creative sector in Ashford, Maidstone and Folkestone, three radically different towns in southern Kent and made a number of recommendations for initiatives which could be used to stimulate the economic growth of the creative sector. These localized interventions recognized the creative sector in the UK as predominantly based in the South East of England with many businesses dependent on their relationship to large commercial players in London. Growth outside the M25, our report argued, would be facilitated by strategic intervention from public sector agencies and employers. Key development tasks centred on business support, education and training and access to broadband. Our study of local business databases identified some 1,500 creative businesses with 800 involved in content origination. Businesses were mostly small with 85% having fewer than 10 employees and about half turning over less than £100,000 a year. The absence of cultural facilities in the area was seen by businesses as a very significant barrier to attracting the highly skilled, creative workforce needed to boost the sector. Our research also pointed to the disparities between the different towns and the absence of serious commercial relationships with Nord Pas de Calais, despite the availability of Interreg funds designed to stimulate such developments.

The applied research underpinning the Media Strategy for the Channel Corridor was heavily influenced by Florida's work and partially shaped by a need to serve the policy drivers identified in the DCMS work. The radical differences between Ashford, Maidstone and Folkestone explored in the report accounted for the absence of a clearly distinguished vision for a set of towns which were primarily joined by a major arterial road rather than unifying economic, social or cultural factors. The artificiality of the Channel Corridor concept undermined the strategic vision. Localised proposals focused on the need for decisive action at a local level and the importance of economic, cultural or social change was only tangentially linked to questions around media policy or practice. It went on to argue that directed strategic interventions were needed

to build an infrastructure capable of nurturing talent. These included support for regional TV production, the establishment of a Digital Media Centre and a feasibility study into developing the infrastructure around the TV studios in Maidstone. In making these recommendations, the report accepted many of the key factors influencing change as economic or social concerns which fell beyond the creative industries and therefore lay outside the scope of the commissioned study. For example, the impact of the high speed rail line on Ashford was highlighted as a particular concern, with the reduction in commuting time to London predicted to lead to consequent pressure on local educational and health facilities as the local population swelled with commuters. Many of the then relatively new public sector institutions charged with addressing the specific concerns around the creative industries, such as Screen South, SEEDA and BBC3, have since been abolished or are in the process of closing. Ongoing volatility within both the media environment and uncertainty in creative industries policy-making are primary reasons why sector development struggles in locations without either an established infrastructure or track record. The stop-start nature of policy and practice inhibited sustained growth and the delivery of wider economic and social benefits. Florida's work identified key forces within the creative economy, yet it downplayed the importance of content and lacked a pragmatic sense of the day-to-day difficulties facing many living and working in the media and related creative industries.

When television was still the dominant form of media, Williams (1974) warned about the dangers of seeing its development in isolation from wider social, economic and cultural forces, which shape it, and his point remains pertinent to any understanding of the relationship between contemporary technology and content. The point can also be flipped to highlight the dangers of seeing the media or creative industries primarily as an economic force where content is relegated to the position of output or product. For example, large-scale regional production funds established across England from 1992 to 2008, primarily the Moving Image Development Agency in Liverpool and the Yorkshire Media Production Agency in Sheffield, were largely driven by economic arguments about job creation through the film production supply chain rather than content creation. Technology may contribute to changes in media form and content but a fuller understanding must take account of wider issues shaping content, including those within and outside the production, distribution and exhibition of content.

Changes in media practice were part of wider developments around the growth of the cultural or creative industries throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Economic and technological developments drove

changes in practice yet policy and institutional support failed to move at the same pace. Digitalization created an opportunity for practitioners to gain a greater degree of control over the development, production and distribution of media material. It facilitated the growth of peripheral markets for media material through the rapid expansion of corporate and consumer demand for media material and the emergence of a digital games sector. The evaluation of the Digital Science programme submitted as part of the portfolio provides one example of the changing contexts of media production and the emergence of new areas of media practice.

Hesmondhalgh describes how digitalization started to have an impact on a range of creative practices from the late 1970s onwards as the price of technology fell and the technical possibilities grew. For media producers, these changes accompanied the growth of an independent production sector, initially brought into being by the establishment of Channel Four as a publisher-broadcaster in 1982 and then given an added stimulus through the introduction of an increasing quota for independent commissions at the BBC. The emergence and subsequent growth of a dynamic independent production sector willing to work actively through the market and embrace the opportunities provided by changing technology provided space for new voices to be heard inside and outside broadcasting. Much of this happened on the edge of mainstream programming, or at points where institutional and budget constraints forced change. One pertinent example is provided by the emergence of youth programming as a distinctive strand of production willing to adopt new modes of production alongside experimentation with the form and content of TV. My own article (1993) shows how programmes like Network 7 (Channel 4 from 1987-88) and subsequently the DEF II strand (BBC2 from 1988-1994) provided opportunities to experiment with the multi-skilling enabled by new technology.

Underpinning this approach to the media and the related creative economy lies a belief that direct policy action could yield economic, social and cultural returns through new activity within a dynamic, innovative economic sphere. Academic and policy research had a direct impact which provides an intellectual foundation for specific interventions. For example, the study of youth media included in my portfolio helped shape a new programme of activity introduced by the British Film Institute. Shirky (2010) is correct when he asserts that we need to reconceptualise media so it is something both consumed and used. Not only are the spaces where we consume and use media changing, but also the uses media is put to are also changing. For example, the evaluation of the Digital Science

initiative commissioned by NESTA and the Wellcome Trust within this submission explore the pedagogic use of different forms of media as a tool to teach science in secondary schools. In this respect, the artificial construct of the creative industries concept is of less practical importance than the direction and energy taken through the framing of the discourse around the media and the related creative industries. This recognises the changing nature of economic activity, increasing social diversity and the impact of technological change. A fuller exploration of the wider, deeper political and economic questions around the conceptualization of the creative industries falls outside the scope of this submission yet the work provides a prism through which to view exploratory glimpses of the dynamic nature of mediation and the changing components of participatory media.

Section Two: Understanding Voice in Participatory Media

Couldry (2010) outlines five¹ new possibilities of voice enabled by digital technology and this submission draws on the supporting evidence to explore three of these, namely opportunities for new voices to speak and be heard; an increased mutual awareness flowing from a greater influence over distribution and exhibition; and the potential for new intensities of listening as the space of media discourse is opened to new voices. It draws on action research from Inclusion Through Media (2004-2008), a body of work I have led through DigiTales and University of Brighton (2009-2015) and material explored in the jointly authored *The Power of Youth Media to Change Lives* (2012) to address these questions. Inspired by technological change, individual participants in these projects made, distributed and exhibited their own media and, though this ordinarily required the involvement of professional media makers, the outcome was a range of open, accessible and original work. The active participation of skilled professionals is key to this as it shifts the production values beyond the basic so the product or output acquires an equal status with the production process. The professional's role is primarily facilitative; to find the strongest means to tell a story, to pass on technical or creative skills, and to encourage the storyteller to consider the audience. This leveling out of media practice enabled by digitalization was based on the mutual respect needed to create open, accessible, original work. The work was frequently intercultural yet rooted in

¹ The remaining two are new scales of organisation and a change in our understanding of the space required for political organisation. While these are obviously relevant to the vernacular media, they are not the focus of the current proposal

place to engage with themes around identity. It focuses on the lives people live and their memories of ways of being; this manifests itself in different ways depending on content or form. Community members participated as audience members, performers and practitioners. It is these dimensions of contemporary participatory media practice that writers such as Burgess (2006) have characterised as vernacular; an accessible space where people and landscapes reveal a kernel of their own reality.

Public Voices

The opportunity for new voices to speak in public is the first possibility enabled by digitalization proposed by Couldry. He talks about how both the amount of voices and the increasing range of opportunities for expression have grown through digitalization. It is certainly true that the projects gathered under the Inclusion Through Media banner and the Digital Stories, made with older European citizens through the research programme I led between 2009 and 2015, could not have been made in the analogue era. In this way, digitalization can be seen to have extended the range of creative possibilities. Shirky (2010) makes a similar point, but takes this further to propose that the impact of digitalization is profound. He argues that the ability to both speak publicly and to pool our capabilities is radically different from what we're used to and we need to rethink the basic concept of media, so that it's not just something we consume, but it's also something we use as a form of quotidian expression. This brings to mind the arguments posed by Anderson (2006) who coined the term "The Long Tail" to describe how the internet made it possible to make large – almost infinite – numbers of items available for purchase with a small number of large scale providers and a vastly larger number of niche or specialist offers. In a similar vein, the opportunities to create media proliferated yet, in many respects, the emphasis within participatory media continued to privilege the importance of the process above a focus on the quality of content or reaching a substantive audience, which often includes pre-identified, target groups.

My own work through the linked action research projects Extending Creative Practice (2009-12) and Silver Stories (2013-15) enabled the production of some 800+ Digital Stories made by different older people across European Community (EC) making it one of the larger stand-alone collections of Digital Stories in Europe. This work is considered in two of the articles in the portfolio. The first of these looks more generally at work completed through Extending Creative Practice (2010-2012) and explores the interlocking complexities of introducing the digital storytelling processes into new settings

across three countries, and working with older people with limited digital competencies, while serving overarching policy drivers set by a funding programme. Against this background, the article looks closely at two of the more powerful stories from Romanian elders; Anisora Stamate's *"Marriage in the middle of ruins"* and Ploscaru Cornelia's *"Nanogenerian"*. The first tells of the incongruity of celebrating a wedding in the aftermath of a tragic earthquake and the ruined lives and buildings it left. She tells her personal story through the medium of the digital story and recalls her wedding day in Vrancea, located in at the epicenter of the 1977 earthquake which shook the Balkans with the loss of 1,578 lives and over 11,000 people injured. Speaking calmly over images of ruined buildings being demolished to make way for the reconstruction of the city centre, Anisora describes this event as "the greatest misadventure of my life". Her story talks eloquently about the psychic and social impact of the past on the present, yet the pacing and editing reveal this is clearly a film about an extraordinary experience made by a non-professional. Ploscaru Cornelia's film *"Nanogenerian"* adopts a more poetic and distanced tone to tell a complex tale of multiple hardships and the stoicism needed to overcome personal problems. The narrator describes how the girl at the centre of the story was orphaned at a young age, of her marriage to a man from upstream, the death of their child and their subsequent separation when he failed to return from battle. The narrator tells how the young woman "picked up her heart and fostered her twin nephews, whose parents had perished in sickness and misery". We then learn of her husband's unexpected return and the birth of four children. The photographs shift from monochrome to colour and we see pictures of a contented family life. The narrator talks of importance of optimism, supporting one's children and the film closes with a word of thanks to her mother who is, in fact, the subject of the film.

These stories, and the many others like them completed through these two action research programmes, provide an opportunity for telling stories in a public space which talk directly and personally about the historical past and the deeper forces shaping people's lives. The two stories cited describe the trauma lived through by an older generation and use this as a means to demonstrate how the past frames the present. Digital Stories are clearly constrained by a number of factors including the length of each piece, the availability of imagery and the willingness of the storyteller to speak publicly. The narrative in many of these stories, and the subsequent evaluation of the project, talked directly of a desire to share experiences to inform younger generations. In many respects, this highlights one of the more traditional aspects of Digital Storytelling, namely the roots in the time-honored process of one generation

passing on tales to the next. It takes this and simply adds a digitized twist to it. Lambert (2009) sees Digital Storytelling in a distinctly American tradition and cites "the democratized culture that was the hallmark of folk music, reclaimed folk culture, and cultural activist traditions of the 1960s" as a forebear of the process he pioneered through the Center for Digital Storytelling. The roots of Digital Storytelling are far richer and more diverse than Lambert acknowledges in this brief introduction. Plummer (2001, pp 17) notes how "the world is crammed full of human, personal documents" and his classic study describes the quality, range and number of approaches and then interrogates the differences within and between them before noting that "these are not mutually exclusive discrete categories but overlap and feed into each other (pp45). Scott (1999, pp.160) examines the positioning of different voices within particular stories to explore the relationship between people in authority and those they yield authority over. He argues that oral traditions "due simply to their means of transmission, offer a kind of seclusion, control and even anonymity that makes them ideal vehicles for cultural resistance". A consequence of this anonymity is a loss of authorship so there is no definitive version of a text and all renditions are therefore deviations. From this perspective, Digital Storytelling may share a set of values or common processes with certain folk traditions, but it has two particularly distinctive features. Firstly, the voice within Digital Storytelling is an individualized, personal one which means it has much in common with other forms of personal storytelling stretching across form and discipline. It is not seeking to be journalistic or objective and connections made within individual stories are often personal and idiosyncratic; perspective within a given story comes from the storyteller making sense of his or her world within a restricted format. Secondly, authorship is directly attributed to the individual storyteller; it is presented as his or her personal story and, while the genesis of the story may lie in the "storycircle"², identifying the author is conceptualized as relatively straightforward yet understanding the story is often a more complex task which may often require consideration of a larger number of stories or contextualizing an individual story. However, the processes of production or storytelling are more complex than presented by Lambert and the mediating roles played by the producer-facilitator and the commissioner needs to be taken into account if we are to gain a fuller understanding of digital storytelling practice. Moreover, this draws Digital Storytelling practice into ethical questions around the aggregated use of an individual story where the material given is personal yet may also be considered

² See Dunford, M, Jenkins T (2015) and Crisan, C, Dunford, M (2014) for a fuller description of the production processes with Digital Storytelling, including the use of the "storycircle" as a means of getting to the individual story through the collaborative experience.

more generally as part of a wider archive of related stories. Forms like Digital Storytelling draw on and extend a multitude of established storytelling practices and, in doing this, it does, as Couldry suggests, increase the amount and range of voices in the media. Making sense of Digital Stories as either individual texts or aggregated collections of data is more problematic; a voice is given the opportunity to speak but making sense of what is being said requires further considered analysis.

A second paper submitted within the portfolio deals with the rationale for telling particular stories with the largest sub-group of individual storytellers across Extending Creative Practice, namely elder participants from across the Romanian Library network. This worked to understand additional issues around the consideration of individual stories and collections. The intention underpinning this work is to find a means to understand the process of mediation engendered through the three-way relationship between the storyteller, the workshop facilitator and the funding agency. Two particular concerns drove the research. Firstly, the possibility that the opportunity to speak and be heard may be curtailed or enhanced by the experience of the workshop and the storycircle. This element of mediation with Digital Storytelling is partially formal. There may be stories that are just too complex to tell within a two-three minute story. There may also be certain things that cannot be said or others that participants feel should be said in a particular way. These could be personal; for example, one storyteller in the Romanian sample was concerned about the possible view her relatives may take of her story. Flowing from this is the more serious issue that explicit, or more likely perceived, demands placed on the storyteller and the facilitator by the funding agency or producer may work to limit the scope of storytelling. It could, for example, prioritise some story questions over others or shift the focus of the storytelling in a particular direction. Poletti (2009) discusses the formal limitations on voice within Digital Storytelling where an emphasis on simplicity and universality of narrative derived from the seven steps with Lambert's Digital Storytelling Cookbook (2007) coalesce around a common worldview; stories are structured to have cathartic endings. A further limitation is apparent within stories completed through commissioned projects where the narrative shifts towards a conclusion addressing the particular concerns of the commissioning agency. In this way the voice can be mediated so that it may be curtailed or structured to meet the perceived or unacknowledged needs or concerns of a particular policy driver or funding stream. This form of mediation is a relatively new phenomenon in participatory-based media and adds a complicating factor to the ability to speak publicly where a voice is distorted or structured in a

way that addresses a particular array of concerns. For example, stories created with the support of the Salvation Army Housing Association (SAHA) through the Silver Stories programme typically end with an uplifting comment about the support provided by the Association for the storyteller. Similar points could be made about stories commissioned by the British Council as part of the Living Together/Imagine Your Future project (2008-10) and DiGem, a pan EC project looking at the use of Digital Storytelling to provide digital skills for people re-entering the labour market. The degree of professionalism enabled by the funding secured from outside mainstream media illustrates that the extension of the media landscape is a two-way process, with both the production and commissioning opened up through digitalization. While the “long tail” of voices remains almost infinite, and the power of broadcasters is somewhat diminished, the space in between has been colonized by new commissioners to a point where the media landscape now readily accommodates the needs of policy makers, educationalists, health care providers and social housing concerns. Mediation has, in marketing terms, developed vertical (one to few) and horizontal (peer-to-peer) aspects. In this respect, mediation of participatory work has extended beyond the media or creative sphere to include a further set of factors, meaning that the authenticity of the participant voice is being mediated through more complex commissioning and distribution processes in a dynamic and contested digital arena. The extent to which the voices expressed through established or emergent forms of participatory media provide a critique or challenge to mainstream media is a question that can only be addressed through a clearer understanding of the forces of mediation shaping production.

Distributing Voices

The second dimension of voice identified by Couldry looks at the greatly increased distributive capacities brought into being through the web. The opportunity for voices to be heard has extended the space for political discourse so that “not only can someone in Iran take a photo at a street protest with their phone and then upload it to a website or on to Twitter; but many others can recirculate that photo or incorporate it in their own public reflections”. (2010, 140) This foregrounding and sharing of distinctive interventions in a way that influences political conversation has been described by many writers, notably Shirky (2008) whose wide-ranging account of the changing context of political organizing through the web embraces flash mobs in Belarus, bloggers in Cairo and Howard Dean’s 2004 US presidential campaign. Shirky draws a pertinent contrast when he compares the role of the contemporary activist seeking an immediate impact with events in Leipzig during 1989 where a

gradual “information cascade” saw a relatively slow escalation of protest that ultimately led to the collapse of the Berlin Wall. His work also describes relatively low-key events; everyday experiences such as the retrieval of a lost/stolen phone enabled through social networking. In this respect, his writing describes the shift beyond the simple broadcast model of one-to-many to a more dynamic, unpredictable mode of distribution embracing peer-to-peer or horizontal modes of communication, where material is shown in community settings or shared on line, and by specific targeting or vertical modes of address, where a small audience, such as policy makers or academics, is targeted directly by a specific intervention. Papacharissi (2013 pg 10) notes that “Digital Technologies shape and are shaped by users and producers, working within new fields where symbolic values shift with new means of communication”. My own work has been consistently positioned at this liminal point where the earlier boundaries between producer and audience have crumbled and one primary concern of this submission is how the new means of communication shape both the ability to express yourself and the scope to be heard.

This is both a new and old problem. Finding and then reaching an audience has always been a problem for participatory media. The question for contemporary practice is whether, and, if so how, the changed distribution and exhibition potential created by digitalization has made this task harder or easier. In this respect, I’m referring to the shift from the one-off broadcasting of material from a single source, such as the BBC or Channel Four, to many people to the digitalized space where control over immediate distribution rests with filmmaker or storyteller, though distribution typically takes place over time. These changes represent a fundamental shift in the process of mediation to embrace both vertical and horizontal forms. Mediation becomes more complex with a shift towards fragmented forms of distribution that are simultaneously diffuse and targeted. Flowing from this is a related question about who or what is reaching the audience and how this audience, or perhaps more accurately these audiences, are constructed. Papacharissi (2010, Pg 65) notes that if “participatory media culture becomes collective and critically diffused, then it could present an alternative to media power” and Couldry argues there is a potential to bring “our experience of politics closer to hand” (2010, pg140). The extent to which participatory media, such as Digital Storytelling, the material made across the UK through the Youth Media Production agencies cited in the accompanying report or the programming created by the UK Sound TV youth production team as part of Inclusion Through Media, can be seen as representing the voice of the participant, producer or

commissioning agency differs according to the individual circumstance in which it is commissioned and seen.

Hartley and McWilliam (2009) characterize Digital Storytelling as a participatory media movement combining professional creative expertise and knowledge with participant creativity, but note that “most digital stories persist only as unused archive”. Digital Storytelling can be justifiably criticized for a focus on small-scale production that is rarely shared beyond the specific communities that participated in the Digital Storytelling workshops. Hartley (2013) returns to the theme when he notes that Digital Storytelling as a movement has to “combine self representation with scaled up digital communication”; by this he is referring to a need to find new ways to reach an audience beyond the immediate and the local. This would, in all likelihood, require the reuse and remediation of stories and therefore draw Digital Storytelling into questions which practitioners have studiously avoided around both the ethical and commercial use of material. Work completed through *Extending Creative Practice* and *Silver Stories* bears this contention out. Despite the best efforts of all the partners, it proved to be extremely difficult to reach and sustain an audience beyond the core partnership and the process of mediation was restricted or curtailed by the absence of a clear means to reach a significant audience. The most successful intervention took place through the Romanian Library network (Crisan and Dunford, 2014; Rooke and Slater 2012) but was dependent on finance from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation together with EC funds, and the particularly well resourced facilities of the Romanian network of County libraries. Some 400 stories were gathered between 2010 and 2015 and a number of libraries, such as the one in Constanta established local storytelling clubs, thus providing a further tangible example of a localized or horizontal form of mediation. However, this success also lends an explanatory credence to Hartley's assertion that “Digital Storytelling has taken hold in various educational, therapeutic and screen culture contexts” as the infrastructure needed to facilitate the immediate and on-going delivery of Digital Storytelling workshops is most frequently found in well-resourced, sympathetic institutions with, I would add, the ability to either deliver workshops in-house or, as is more often the case, commission work from small production companies. A further complicating factor is that commissioning within these organisations is likely to pose specific questions which may undermine the often-claimed integrity of the Digital Storytelling process. Storytelling is therefore framed or mediated to address specific concerns and these may, or may not, capture the interests of the storyteller. This narrowing of the storytelling space sits alongside the exponential growth in the number of stories. The tension between these factors

is at the heart of current discussions about the role and purpose of Digital Storytelling. For example, ideas around grouping and contextualising stories are being actively explored in the work of academic-practitioners, such as Dush (2015) who is currently investigating the aggregation of digital stories made by US non-profits. My own research is moving in a similar direction.

This question of distribution was a particular concern in the research on Youth Media commissioned by the Media Trust that has been included as part of this submission. This reviewed the rapid growth of media made by young people, the benefits of working through a collaborative production process and considered its use as an advocacy tool for social change. It concluded that provision across the UK was undermined by the fragmentation of production support with different localized providers enabling the making of films by, and for, young people within their communities but the lack of distribution opportunities thwarted an ability to reach an audience. The more transparently successful programmes in terms of reaching an audience were those which had built vertical connections with large media entities. For example, the Media Trust had successfully worked in partnership with producers and young people to find spaces for young people's content on national platforms such as BBC, BSkyB, ITV, Channel Four and The Guardian. These interventions, such as the Breaking into News competition cited in the report, are relatively limited in scope but do highlight the importance of an intermediary with good connections into production, distribution and exhibition. The report recommended the introduction of a new national agency for youth media and the development of a national aggregator to distribute material made by, and for, young people. Both these recommendations were designed to enhance the processes of mediation underpinning participatory media from young people and were taken forward by the BFI which established INTO Film at the end of 2012. These interventions show a direct address to the issues raised by Hartley in his critique of the Digital Storytelling movement. It creates scope for youth media to move beyond the "unused archive", yet it is also dependent on the strategic intervention and financial muscle of a powerful patron capable of shaping the dynamics of mediation. Our report highlighted the potential for institutional agencies like the BFI to shape aggregated distribution through the development of programmes addressing particular concerns. However the scope for open storytelling may become limited when the space is structured by the needs of the more powerful institutions. For example, recent projects from INTO Film include a call for films exploring the transition from primary to secondary school which is clearly driven by educationalists rather than young people. A more optimistic view of youth media is provided by Hannon et al. (2008, pp 42) who

propose that digitalization created “a new theatre in which the process of identity creation can be played out publicly” and finds hope that this “explosion in audio-visual creativity” can sow seeds for a more participative, expressive democracy, yet their pamphlet also bemoans the absence of skills needed to create watchable material and the difficulty in reaching an audience. In this respect the work highlights the need for skilled support from professional filmmakers.

UK Sound TV, one of the action research projects within the Inclusion Through Media programme, offers an alternative model which goes some way to addressing the concerns raised by Hartley and Hannon. This broadband-based TV station programmed a mix of locally made music videos, comedy and interviews local MCs and crews from the Grime scene. The first nine months saw 2.5m visitors to the site with an average download of five megabytes per person (Chandler, 2007, Page 6, ITM Case Study: UK Sound TV in *Inclusion Through Media Evaluation Report*). At least half the visitors came from overseas, with a majority from USA. Porter (2007) describes the importance of establishing long-term connections with young people in the East End of London, initially by working on a project-by-project basis and then through the structured support available from the European Social Fund. In this respect, the longevity of the development period shows the abiding influence of Alinsky on many community based projects. He puts the success of UK Sound TV down to two primary factors. Firstly, the facilitative role taken by the team from Hi8us, the youth media charity that led Inclusion Through Media, where I was Executive Director, which ensured that “we gave them creative, personal and technical support, but not direction” and, secondly, the impact of a digital distribution which allowed new material to be uploaded each fortnight. Chandler’s evaluation of UK Sound TV (2007) also points to the low running costs of Broadband based TV, the popularity of the emergent Grime music and the ready access to a global audience as factors driving the immediate success of UK Sound TV. He also notes that the Channel “didn’t interest young people as much as the live shows and making films/content”. The channel lost momentum as the funding programme closed and the youth producers moved on. It does, however, provide a concrete example of a series of relatively small-scale productions that were shared far beyond the originating community and, in this way, it provides a localized address to the concerns raised by Hartley. Key factors driving this were the relatively hands-off approach taken by both funder and commissioner which empowered the young people to develop their own content which appealed directly to their peers across the world. Interest in Grime music coincided with the development of UK Sound TV and this, in turn, provided an

opportunity for young people to access material not readily available elsewhere. It is this largely one-sided facilitated dialogue between the young producers and a receptive audience for their content that lay behind the success of UK Sound TV. The greatly enhanced distributive capacity brought into being by UK Sound TV provided the youth producers with the power and means to be seen and heard. Using the different understandings of mediation explored by Thumin, UK Sound TV operated through a process of mediation, which maximized opportunities for participant's voices to be heard. It was a product of very particular benign circumstances so it is difficult to portray UK Sound as an ideal model for participatory media yet it is clear that the commitment invested at the start of the project by the core production team laid the foundations for subsequent success. In this respect, Alinsky's work on pragmatic engagement through the establishment of direct routes into communities remains hugely relevant. It is, without doubt, the project which comes closest to realizing the five characteristics defined by Fountain.

Listening to different Voices

The third dimension of voice and representation in participatory media considered in this thesis is more speculative. Couldry proposes that the potential cumulative impact of the increase in the number and range of voices brought in to the public sphere through digitalization is to stimulate "new intensities of listening" to a point where "a vastly increased range of public voices" means "Governments cannot any longer say they don't hear". Listening can be defined as understanding the means by which we demonstrate attention has been paid. This falls squarely within Thumin's second notion of mediation, namely the "broader media context within which meanings are made, remade and circulated". Papacharissi (2011) draws on Habermas's notion of the public sphere as "a realm in our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (Durham and Kellner, 2006, pg 72) to consider the democratizing potential of new media as part of an ever changing public sphere. Her argument distinguishes between the public space as the expanse which allows the public to convene and the public sphere "where citizens deliberate and debate on public affairs" (2011, Pg 65). Access to information, reciprocity of communication and the commercialization of the internet restrict the potential transformation of the internet into a public sphere, but the notion of a digital public sphere may be different and "not what we have experienced in our civic past". She proposes that the merging of public and private space on the internet has created new hybrid spaces, and new forms of content and discourse are needed to fill these. This opens up a space for participatory media and

comparable forms of practice to meet the aspirations set out by Fountain. The question flowing from this relates to the types of conversation which may take place in the public digital sphere. My own portfolio includes examples of material (e.g. Digital Stories, UK Sound TV, Over to the East, etc.), which could be placed in the digital public sphere, yet much of this demonstrates the unfulfilled possibility of a conversation rather than an actual conversation involving the fruitful exchange of ideas and information. Dreher's work (2012) uses a case study of workshops conducted by Information Cultural Exchange (ICE) in Western Sydney to examine the limits of digital storytelling as a means for communities to tell their stories. She stresses the need for "a dynamic conception of voice in which listening is clearly foregrounded". This chimes with Couldry's work on the value of voice, in which he notes there are many opportunities for voice, but not necessarily for listening. Sennett (2011) distinguishes between dialectical and dialogic conversations. The former are conversations where the imperative is to find the common ground connecting two apparently different positions, whereas the latter is a discussion which does not resolve itself in this way as the differences between the starting points are too great. Resolution of a dialogic discussion requires an understanding of the need to accommodate difference and, because of this, a greater emphasis is placed on listening. Sennett's work suggests that listening in the digital world occupied by participatory media needs to find ways to accommodate the dialogical and this is borne out by my own experience. The new intensities of listening called for by Couldry need to be placed in this context of an emergent digital space which hosts opinions that sometimes conflict, and often come from different traditions, yet finds a means for these to be part of an open ended conversation.

Dobson (2014) explores different aspects of listening and his work can be used as a means to take this further. He argues that listening out for or to, previously unheard voices requires paying close attention and draws a distinction between cataphoric listening, where the listener uses existing prejudices as a means to understand or shape the subject, and apophatic where such prejudices are suspended or abandoned. He proposes that "apophatic listening is the key to effective dialogue" and suggests decision makers may need to acquire new skills to meet the challenges this poses; he then notes that one of the challenges is to scale up from person-to-person to broader contexts. My contention is that digitalization has opened up a digital sphere and there is the potential for participatory media to function effectively as one means to develop new spaces for listening where voices can be heard and the potential for apophatic listening is real. A more engaged and theorized set of practices need to be established for

this to be realized, yet the fragmentation across the participatory media sector provides little incentive for collaboration so the strategic opportunity is unfulfilled.

The mantra of the Center for Digital Storytelling, relaunched as Storycenter (September 2015), is *Listen Deeply, Tell stories*. The priority afforded to listening demonstrates the importance given to it as part of the creative process in the Digital Storytelling workshop rather than the act of sharing or using completed stories. This draws Digital Storytelling back to the previously cited tension between process and product in participatory media. Hartley's (2013) critique of digital storytelling revolves around his frustration that the process has done much to open up the practice of storytelling to new voices, yet the act of communication has failed as the content frequently fails to extend enhance or even enter the public sphere. He challenges "digital storytelling activists and agencies to try something new" (2013, pg 101). His article starts with the observation that Digital Storytelling has "taken hold" in various educational and health related settings, and this could be extended to include activist based worlds. These are spaces where a personal narrative can be used to illustrate and amplify a larger point in a way which could open up a space for apophatic listening where the Digital Story talks directly to a key audience. For example, the work of Patient Voices cited in one of my supporting articles (Dunford and Jenkins, 2015) and recent stories made by Digital Story Lab for Amnesty International, presented at the Silver Stories conference by Lohmann at the Politécnico de Leiria in May 2015, both used commissioned personal narratives to engage directly with questions posed by policy makers and thereby ensure a horizontal conversation. In this respect, the form of direct intervention characterised by these stories uses a personal narrative to amplify a point made by Hartley, yet it also draws attention to the mediating role played by the commissioner. At one level, success depends on, firstly re-conceptualising our understanding of what is meant by different audiences and, secondly, securing a simple, direct route to relevant audiences. This, in turn, suggests a willingness to listen which often requires a starting position defined by a key listener through a commissioning process with the consequent difficulty being that the storycircle process then enters an echo chamber where the listener hears an answer to a question they've posed. In this respect, the ambition to relocate mediation in the community may be thwarted if the storyteller can be perceived to be ventriloquizing the commissioner's voice.

Matthews and Sunderland (2013) take this point further in an article which explores the potential gathering and subsequent use of collections of Digital Stories as data to inform policy making,

research or service provision. The starting point for their article is the proposition that collections of Digital Stories could provide raw data, or unheard voices, that may contribute to public discourse in new and unanticipated ways. This could happen through straightforward commissions or by the top-level interrogation of collections of stories initially created for different reasons. The analysis takes on an extra dimension when it considers the relative absence of both large-scale collections of Digital Stories and the lack of a methodology for interrogating the few collections in existence. One of the reasons for this is the fragmented nature of the Digital Storytelling world where stories are typically produced by small production entities so they are rarely brought together under a single unifying theme. For example, my own research company DigiTales has been involved in the production of over 500 Digital Stories yet these have almost all been made in small groups as responses to particular commissions or within research projects considering specific questions. They have not been collated or interrogated as a single body of work across the ten-year period since the research was established. Matthews and Sunderland move beyond these practical difficulties around collecting stories to raise ethical questions around the re-use of personal stories for research or policy analysis. Foremost in these is the concern that the thematic interrogation of stories collected as self-representations would undermine the integrity of both the individual story and the Digital Storytelling process set out by the CDS. It would, in many respects, be a retelling, or remediation, that turned individual and collected stories into unintentional, qualitative research. The trustworthiness of the stories could be compromised. Viewed from this perspective, the tension between the production and subsequent exploitation may limit the scope for the subsequent use of Digital Stories so the practice may well be condemned to modest achievements. From this perspective, the number of voices across the media may increase but our ability to hold conversations remains limited while the gap between production and exhibition of Digital Stories is neither properly understood nor adequately explored. Any process involving the re-mediation of Digital Stories needs to have an awareness of the initial production to avoid distorted meanings yet it also needs to capture more than the initial value of the material.

Comparable tensions between voice and listening are apparent in other participatory media material included within the submission. For example, the short film *When I was a Kid I used to Dream* made with young people on Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) was distributed locally in Leeds as a part of the Inclusion Through Media programme. Seidler's case study (2007) describes how "talking about dreams was a way of getting through to young people"

(2007, pg195). The film was structured as a series of interviews with individual young people who could not meet before, during or after the production because of the restrictive terms of their ASBOs and the film was distributed on DVD individually so the participating young people could see it. Local policy makers who attended the public screening subsequently adjusted ASBO terms, and in this respect, the voice of the young people was heard as a direct consequence of the filmmaking and policy was adjusted. This dialectical conversation is an example of the apophatic potential within participatory media, and it succeeded because the filmmaker connected the excluded voices directly to the policy makers. A second film made by the same team, the documentary feature *Over to the East* adopted a similar technique with a group of local residents in East Leeds addressing a series of questions about the consequences of social, economic and demographic change. Local co-operation was secured by an agreement with participants stating that the film could only be screened with the approval of all involved. The BBC expressed an interest in buying *Over to the East* but one participant, concerned about how his views could be cast as racist, rejected this and the film was never broadcast. Underpinning this was a dialogical wariness of “big” media; the distance between the community and the media outlet was simply too large to be bridged simply. It highlighted the difficulty in balancing the community trust and cooperation required to make the film with an innate uncertainty or distrust of how this could be remediated in the digital public sphere. For the community involved with the making of *Over to the East*, the production process and the control over distribution was empowering, yet the failure to reach an audience was disempowering. For the producer relocating the power to control mediation in the community backfired, as the film failed to enter the digital public sphere so the conversation was consequently curtailed.

Concluding Commentary

This thesis draws on Fountain’s conceptualization of the characteristics of alternative filmmaking to establish a framework for defining participatory media that is taken forward and explored by using Couldry’s consideration of different aspects of voice. It argues that, while Fountain’s original model remains valid, an understanding of voice and representation within participatory media can only be reached if media work (i.e. films, documentaries and newer forms like Digital Storytelling and broadband based TV) is considered in the context of the radical changes that have occurred within media practice over the past 30 years. Foremost among these has been the positioning of the media within the

Creative Industries policy construct which has seen a shift away from creative, cultural or social drivers towards the economic and technological. One consequence has been an increase in the quality, range and amount of participatory media produced and distributed. Opportunities for distribution and exhibition, in particular, have grown enormously from 1982 when four television channels and a clutch of local operators controlled access to a point in 2012 when work could be shared horizontally and vertically, as demonstrated in the Youth Media report submitted as one of the supporting documents with this project.

These developments provide a backdrop to the submission which uses a diverse body of material gathered across a twelve year research journey to explore participatory media. This material provides a distinct perspective that enables me to act in the manner of the "Reflective Practitioner" as set out by Schon (1983); this submission utilizes the range of evidence needed to both identify the lacunae in understanding participatory media, and examine notions around representation so often claimed as the space of participatory media. It uses research and a diverse body of theory to argue that the pace of change accelerated so quickly that an inadvertent theoretical and strategic void has been created.. A failure to fully comprehend the growth and fragmentation of practice took place as digitalization enabled the proliferation of different forms of production, with the obvious consequence being that much current participatory work is undertheorised and poorly understood. It is as if production has taken place in a digitised fog characterized by blind spots and limited vision. To address this, the thesis has used three of Couldry's conceptions of voice to frame an exploration of voice and representation within contemporary participatory media. It has used these to tease out two particular aspects of participatory practice which merit careful consideration. Firstly, the process of mediation through which participatory media work is commissioned, produced and distributed across the digital landscape and, secondly, the importance of finding, reaching and engaging an audience capable of both listening to and understanding a piece of work. The combination of evidence in this submission provides a means to interrogate this.

Thumim (2014) sets out a notion of institutional mediation to address the way commissioning organisations accrue power and agency within contemporary participatory media. She argues that ordinary people or communities are typically defined within participatory media projects by questions posed elsewhere. In this respect the community is mobilized to address the concerns of the status quo and power is taken away from the participant whose voice is restricted at the outset. A striking example of institutional

mediation is provided by the BFI funded INTO Film, whose filmmaking scheme looking at the transition from primary to secondary school, contrasts sharply with the earlier work of the UK Film Council funded First Light programme, which simply funded the production of film proposals from young people. My own research and practice suggests a complex iterative process characterized by the interplay of different tensions between the participant, facilitator and financier. Underpinning this is the changing dynamics within the media economy, as described in the reports within this submission, which has seen both a rapid growth in the scale and range of media practices and the related emergence of bespoke independent production companies specializing in participatory media that are not dependent on the patronage of broadcasters or public funders from the arts sector. The shift can be seen starkly in the world of Digital Storytelling where the BBC's well-resourced project Capture Wales (2001-2008) was succeeded by the emergence of a small number of practitioner based companies mostly using Digital Storytelling within specific contexts. Any meaningful notion of institutional mediation needs to be extended to embrace the complex role played by the facilitator-practitioner and the storyteller which, in the case of the former, remains largely unacknowledged. For example, the work of my own company DigiTales with the Salvation Army Housing Association (SAHA) has seen the production of some 60 stories to a brief set by SAHA; many of these involved recently homeless young people and their support staff crafting short stories about their experiences which ended on a redemptive note of praise for the work of SAHA. Similar examples could be drawn from the work of Patient Voices with the NHS in the UK or Digital Story Lab and NGOs from their base in Denmark. The emergent issue is around how both the storyteller and the independent facilitator cede unacknowledged power and agency to the commissioner, to the extent that Fountain's desired critique and challenge to mainstream media can be seen as, at best, partially lost when the participation enabled by digitalization takes place on terms set elsewhere. In this respect, the voice is stifled, distorted or curtailed rather than enhanced by digitalization in a way which adds a degree of complexity to the institutional mediation described by Thumim.

Papacharissi's (2011) notion of a public digital sphere where old, new or different types of discourse can occur provides a means to contemplate representation within participatory media. The development of radically new and different opportunities for distribution stretches beyond ideas of either vertical or horizontal reach to cover the full range of possibilities. These have the potential to extend dialogue into uncharted territory; peer-to-peer spaces and one-to-many broadcasts co-exist with many

opportunities to reach a listening audience. This creates space for the new intensity of listening called for Couldry (2010), and is a means to explore the transformative potential within participatory media/alternative filmmaking as defined by Fountain. Digitalisation and the economic changes within the media sector set out in the accompanying reports, created the opportunity for an increase in the plurality of voices through the burgeoning participatory media practices. This was at least partially driven by an emphasis on skills development rather than content. Changing processes of mediation call into question the authenticity of participation and potentially neuter oppositional movements by channeling storytelling and dialogue into a predetermined space. Practice is often based on an assumption that participatory media production has a positive benefit and, more often than not, will include the excluded. This points to a peculiar facet of mediation within participatory media practice, namely the tendency for specialist producers to work with very distinct societal groups. For example, within the Digital Storytelling movement there is predictability about the range of groups represented and it is notable that there are no stories about, for example, young racists or aspirant bankers. In this respect participatory media can be seen as less inclusive than more mainstream media where programmes such as the recent BBC3 documentary on the emergent extreme right Britain First Party do engage more directly with unpalatable views. This process of mediation affects both voice and representation. To use the terms deployed by Dobson (2014), the process of listening rarely extends beyond the cataphoric to the apophatic; in this respect digitalisation is driving a narrowing of participatory media discourse while allowing vastly more conversations to take place in a smaller space. Many digital stories, like those produced by DigiTales with SAHA or by Patient Voices for the NHS, are anecdotal reflections firstly mediated by the commissioning process and then re-mediated by cataphoric listening as the commissioner hears what they wish to hear. The empathy sought by Sennett through dialogic conversation cannot be found when the conversation operates in an echo chamber.

This submission has drawn on a body of material to explore different notions around voice and representation within participatory media. It has demonstrated a rapid growth in the diversity of quality and material brought about by digitalization and placed this in the context of economic change across the media sector. Participatory media has been defined as a facilitated process, where marginalized people are cast as individual filmmakers or storytellers with support from professional filmmakers so they can create their own media using primarily personal material and digital technology. The work is often

deliberately small scale and centred on individual experience, because of this it can be criticised for a certain modesty of aspiration. In this respect, it is often more focused on the process of making rather than distribution or exhibition, and there is notable reluctance to capitalize on the distribution potential inherent within the burgeoning digital media landscape. Practice is often underpinned by a belief that the work empowers participants, yet this assertion sidesteps the processes of mediation at play in the commissioning, production and distribution of participatory practice. A particular concern flowing from this is a fragmentation of practice, which may have reached a point where overspecialization has seen the emergence of niche practitioners with little incentive to collaborate. The consequence is a preoccupation with short-term issues rather than strategic or theoretical issues. Questions about how marginalized people are heard and represented through participatory media methodologies and the implications this has for our understanding of the processes at play within the distribution and exhibition of participatory media remain undertheorised. This submission has drawn on a range of material to shine a more strategic and theoretical light on these questions. In this way it is part of an evolving conversation designed to improve understanding of current participatory media practices.

Methodological Note and Guide to Supporting Research Documents

This note includes a set of abstracts for the supporting documents to provide an overview of the supporting material. It also describes the methodological approaches taken across the multi-faceted research activity underpinning this submission.

The first section describes commissioned policy analysis which used a bespoke research programme to address specific questions posed by commissioning agencies. Like many comparable reports, these are jointly authored pieces; in the first two – *Building the Knowledge Economy and Digital Science* - I was the project director and primary author while *The Power of Youth Media to Change Lives* was a collaboration with Chris Chandler. Each was peer reviewed and published by the commissioning agency. This body of work establishes the context within which the practice based research took place. The second group of publications draws on action research projects where I have initiated and then led a research programme which has been used as a means to address research questions of sufficient academic interest to merit peer reviewed publication. The third section includes a series of peer reviewed academic publications flowing from the research into Digital Storytelling.

The research position adopted in these studies is always overt and collaborative; it depends on the active contribution of co-researchers and the involvement of participants, whether these are policy makers, members of community groups or survey respondents. The weight of research evidence gathered across these studies is far greater and more eclectic than that ordinarily found in academic material. This allows the submission to adopt a research position akin to that set by Schon (1983) where it draws together a body of practice to define and understand issues around voice and representation within participatory media. It then enables it to draw on academic writing from leading media academics, notably Couldry, to create a framework to interrogate the evidence collected through the research.

A: Policy Analysis

Document One: Building the Knowledge Economy: A strategy for the Media and Related Creative Industries in Channel Corridor (2003)

DS Media Consulting Limited³ was commissioned by Kent County Council and South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA) in 2003 to look at the potential for media development in Ashford, Maidstone and Folkestone. It is one of series of commissions which DS Media secured and I led that took a strategic look at the potential for developing media activity within a particular locality. I was the lead consultant with responsibility for writing the three sections of the final report. The first describes the growing importance of the media and related creative industries to the economic, social and cultural fabric of the Channel Corridor. It draws on a range of material to position Kent and the Channel Corridor in the wider creative economy in the South East of England and includes a review of relevant policy and academic literature. Part two uses primary research including survey of businesses based on SIC codes and qualitative interviews completed as part of the study to give a picture of the size and concerns of the sector. The final section draws on the first two and makes a series of recommendations about how to build a stronger knowledge economy in the Channel Corridor.

Document Two: Digital Science: A collaboration between Wellcome Trust and NESTA (2004-2006)

DS Media Consulting was commissioned to undertake a formative evaluation of a programme devised by NESTA and the Wellcome Trust designed to explore the potential to create new digital tools to teach science. The impetus for this programme came from revisions to the core Science Curriculum and the belief that digital technology had the potential to provide a means to stimulate interest in science amongst pupils at key stages of their secondary education. DS Media Consulting Limited was engaged by the partners to undertake a formative evaluation of the initiative. It started with a PAL Lab⁴ in rural Kent where teams from the Lab developed a series of ideas, some of which were turned into

³ DS Media Consulting was a company I established jointly with Robert Smith. It ran from 2000 to 2012 and worked for a range of public and private sector clients across the UK including UK Film Council, NESTA, Arts Council, BFI, Regional Screen Agencies and various training organisations.

⁴ PAL is the Performing Arts Lab which hosts residential development workshops designed to foster creative collaborations between different professional groups. The Digital Science Lab included creative professionals (filmmakers, games developers), scientists and educators

educational tools as part of a development process overseen by staff from Wellcome Trust and NESTA. The research used formative evaluation to track the operational process through a series of interviews with participants and observations at key junctures when decisions were taken. It drew a number of conclusions and made a series of recommendations about how a comparable initiative could operate in the future. I was the lead on this report and wrote the final report.

Document Three: The Power of Youth Media to Change Lives (2012)⁵

This report, commissioned by the Media Trust during a period of uncertainty around the future of public sector support for youth media work, flowed directly from the abolition of the UK Film Council and a consequent reconfiguring of a range of public sector agencies which ultimately led to the creation of a new agency called INTO Film in early 2014. The research includes a literature review providing an oversight of previous work by academics, policy makers and practitioners, a series of “depth” interviews with key sector leaders, an online survey of practitioners and a series of five focus groups held across the UK. The final recommendations proposed the creation of new single national agency to lead youth media activity and the development of a national platform to promote and distribute youth media. Both recommendations were taken up by the British Film Institute when it assumed responsibility for public sector support for youth media in 2012.

B: Action Research

Document Four: Dunford, M. (2007). About Inclusion Through Media. In: Downunt, T, Dunford, M and van Hemert, N. Inclusion Through Media. London: Open Mute. Pg 25-39.

Inclusion Through Media was an EC funded action research project which ran from 2004-2007 and included 37 partners running 25 action research lines in different community settings across the UK and Europe. The partnership was led by Hi8us Projects where I worked as Executive Director and held overall responsibility for the development, management, delivery and evaluation. Research outputs included a documentary feature film, a broadband-based TV station, short films, courses and digital storytelling.

⁵ *The Power of Youth Media to Change Lives* was jointly led by Chris Chandler and I. Chris had previously worked as Head of UK Partnerships in the UK Film Council and I had led the development and business planning for First Light where I worked as Executive Chair for the first year of operation. This report was included in the REF submission for 2014.

The publication of a book⁶ exploring the themes of media and inclusion addressed through the action research was one of the key strategic outputs of the programme. It included peer-reviewed contributions with chapters from both practitioners and academics on key research projects and a DVD.

This publication was my original idea and I worked this through with Tony Downmunt from Goldsmiths College before we invited Nicole Van Hemert to join as an editor. As contributing editor, I commissioned various pieces, worked closely with specific writers, acted as sub editor and wrote my own chapter on the programme. The book was used in different ways. Firstly, and primarily, it was conceived as a means to contribute our skill, knowledge and experience to an emergent debate as relatively little of critical importance had been written about the interrelating themes of professional media production, inclusion and participation. Secondly, the book was conceived as a means for practitioners and academics or writers to collaborate on key pieces so each could benefit from the expertise of the other. Finally, the book was peer reviewed by academics and practitioners to leave a tangible record of the programme and nearly 1000 copies were distributed to academic libraries across and beyond the UK. It is currently available on my academia.edu page and 85 copies have been downloaded.

Document Five: Dunford, M. (2007). Successful Fundraising in the UK. In: Coyer, Downmunt and Fountain The Alternative Media Handbook. London: Routledge. 309-314.

Guide for academics and practitioners wishing to raise funds for alternative media projects in the UK. I was invited to write this chapter by the book's editors.

⁶ The full book can be accessed at Downmunt, T, Dunford, M and van Hemert, N (2007). *Inclusion Through Media*. London: Open Mute. 1-273 – Contributing Editor. Available at https://www.academia.edu/878368/Inclusion_Through_Media. (accessed 1st Nov 2015)

C: Academic Publications about Digital Storytelling

The three peer reviewed academic publications on Digital Storytelling included with this submission flow from a period of Action Research embracing two specific projects which I set up and led. Firstly, *Extending Creative Practice* (2010-2012) which I set up and then coordinated through DigiTales and, secondly *Silver Stories* (2013-2015) which I led from my recent base in the University of Brighton. The research has seen the creation of 600 stories across six participating countries (Finland, Portugal, Denmark, Slovenia, Romania and the UK) by nine inter disciplinary partners working across different sectors. I've presented the work to academic conferences in the UK, Portugal, USA, Slovenia and Romania. The publications represent different periods of the work. The first is a consideration of the initial phase of the project through *Extending Creative Practice* which effectively acted as a pilot for the subsequent period. The second looks at the large volume of stories completed through the Romanian Library network and draws on a survey of 76 storytellers. The final one explores the media literacy of Digital Storytelling and is based on a workshop held at the Media Education Summit during November 2014.

Document Six: Dunford, M, Rooke, A. (2014). *Extending Creative Practice*. In: Gregori-Signes, C, Brigido-Corachan, A. *Digital Storytelling: Appraising Digital Stories across Disciplines and Cultural Contexts*. Valencia: Servei Publicacions

Document Seven: Crisan, C. Dunford, M. (2014). *Understanding Inclusion through Digital Storytelling: A Case Study assessing the impact and effectiveness of workshops across Romania*. In: Ivan L, Buzoianu, C and Gray, B *Mapping Heterogeneity: Qualitative Research in Communication*. Bucharest: Tritonic

Document Eight: Dunford, M, Jenkins, T. (2015). *Understanding the Media Literacy of Digital Storytelling*. *Media Education Research Journal*. Volume 5 Number 2 Pg 26-42

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Building the Knowledge Economy

A strategy for the Media and Related Creative Industries in the Channel Corridor



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Executive Summary

- The South East of England can be characterised as a Creative Super Region divided between a flourishing western sector and an underachieving east. In many parts of the region there is a healthy relationship with the London market. The media and related creative industries play a relatively small part in the economic life of the Channel Corridor and more generally throughout Kent. There is potential for expansion if the right structure and support mechanisms are put in place.
- The sector will grow in economic importance in the next decade. Growth in the Channel Corridor, and across Kent, is dependent on the willingness of public sector agencies to work positively together so they can put in place strong sector specific support mechanisms. Taking the right steps now will lay the seeds of future growth.
- The public sector needs to ensure that key employers and businesses in the Channel Corridor have a greater involvement in plans to develop the organisational skills and facilities infrastructure needed to support media and related creative industries.
- Public sector support should be used to build broad partnerships to facilitate greater activity and long-term development. These partnerships should embrace educational institutions, local authorities, economic development agencies and the private sector. To succeed they need to have credibility, influence and a high independent profile.
- Quality of life is a key issue for those working in the media and related creative industries. Long term plans for the redevelopment of the Channel Corridor need to encompass new cultural facilities if these industries are to locate and flourish in the area.
- Building a creative economy should be part of a long-term strategic plan. Public agencies need to ensure the needs of the media and related creative industries are incorporated into these long-term plans. The proposals outlined in the report form an interlocking programme designed to lay the foundations to build the media and creative industries in the Channel Corridor. It is a coherent plan rather than a set of options.
- To develop infrastructure and capacity, a suite of projects is proposed. These address three essential components – specialist support, the skills agenda and dedicated facilities.

Specialist Support and Development

A Creative Industries Development Agency for Kent is needed to provide the creative industries with the means to take the sector forward. The first stage in establishing an agency is the identification of a Creative Industries Champion for Kent

Putting the Skills in Place

An enhanced role for Further and Higher education in building skills, nurturing talent and creating opportunity

Dedicated Creative Business and Networking Facilities

Access to Broadband

Building Production Capacity in Maidstone

A Digital Media Centre – quality of life issues are key for people working in the creative economy and a feasibility study is needed to investigate the potential for a media centre where people can meet, see, learn and make.

- Immediate action could be taken to build capacity and knowledge in the Media and Related Creative Industries, including:
 - Development and promotion of a comprehensive data base of Creative Industries in Kent
 - A Conference addressing the way forward for the Creative Industries in Kent
 - Learning by Example – visits to comparable Media and Creative Industry developments in the UK and Northern Europe

Research Findings

Our study of local business databases indicated the presence of about 1,500 creative businesses in the Channel Corridor, of which about 800 were categorised involved in Content Origination¹. The most common types of Content Origination businesses were Architecture and related services (19%), Software and Computer Services (17%), Design Activities (17%) and Advertising (14%). The remaining third of businesses were divided fairly equally into Publishing, Photography, Audio-Visual Production and 'Other'.

Further database analysis and data gathered during the primary research (a small postal survey and sixteen depth interviews) provided the following picture of content origination businesses in the Corridor:

- Businesses were mostly small, with about 85% listed as having fewer than 10 employees, and about half turning over less than £100,000 a year
- Most businesses had a significant client base beyond Kent, where the demand for creative services was felt to be higher (in part due to the small number of big businesses, with marketing departments, based in Kent)
- Some businesses found property and living costs in Kent an improvement on London though, others were struggling to compete on price terms with businesses in parts of the UK with lower overheads, and also on 'status' terms with London-based firms
- There were varying views about business support and advice services. While some were happy with the general business support they had received, particularly start-up advice, others had little contact or awareness of the services on offer. In particular, there was felt to be a need for a more prominent and comprehensive local directory or website, which would serve both to link local businesses with potential partners and clients, and also to create a sense of a media and creative community in the region.
- A small number of businesses had successful relationships with European clients and partners, boosted by the existence of the Eurostar link. But on the whole, few businesses appeared to have significant links with Europe. Reasons for this were felt to be language problems and differences in business culture.
- There were some concerns expressed about the levels of appropriately skilled workforce in the region (particularly, graphic and web design, and writing) although there was felt to be a fairly good supply of skilled ex-TVS freelancers based in the area. A need for more dialogue between local training providers and employers was called for in order to better meet business needs.
- Balancing the lower rents associated with basing a business in rural parts of the Channel Corridor, and the poor access to broadband in those areas, was a key issue for many small businesses.

¹ (These figures need to be treated with considerable caution, as there were a number of difficulties with the databases, such as potential over-inclusion of marginally relevant businesses covered by SIC codes, duplicated and out of date information, and under-inclusion of small, non-VAT registered businesses)

- Good transport links to Europe and within the Channel Corridor were a positive feature of the area. However, as many businesses worked with clients beyond Kent, they struggled with the cost and time impacts of poor road and rail links to other parts of the UK.
- The lack of cultural facilities in the area was seen by businesses as a very significant barrier to attracting the highly skilled, creative workforce needed to boost the sector. The lack of such facilities was also felt to restrict the scope for interaction between Kent-based creative businesses and individuals, an important element of creating a successful media and creative “community”.

Introduction

Building the Knowledge Economy: A strategy for the Media and Related Creative Industries in the Channel Corridor has been commissioned by Kent County Council in partnership with the three local authorities which make up the Channel Corridor, namely, Ashford, Maidstone and Shepway.

The document is divided into three distinct sections. The first describes the growing importance of the media and related creative industries to the economic, social and cultural fabric of the Channel corridor. This draws on a range of material to show the relative position of Kent and the Channel Corridor to the wider creative economy in the South East of England. Part two draws on primary research completed as part of the study. Rather than being an audit of the media and related creative industries in the Channel Corridor, this is a picture designed to give a sense of the size and concerns of businesses. The final section draws on the first two and makes a series of recommendations about how to build a stronger knowledge economy in the Channel Corridor. Many of these proposals suggest further development work is needed. Putting in place the right structure is a complex and time-consuming task, however, if the seeds are not planted then the growth will be limited, and an opportunity lost.

1 SECTION ONE - Media, Creative Industries and the Knowledge Economy

1.1 The Knowledge Economy and Creativity

“The real assets of the modern economy come out of our heads not out of the ground: imagination, knowledge, skills, talent and creativity”²

Creativity has seldom carried a higher currency or had a higher profile. Across government and industry creativity is increasingly understood as the mainspring of all successful enterprises throughout all business sectors. Creativity, talent, imagination and innovation will be the central drivers of the new economy.

“The emerging economy puts a premium on skills and knowledge at all levels, but particularly on creativity and the ability to innovate....”³

The government’s two White Papers of the late 1990’s “*Opportunity for All in a World of Change*” and “*Our Competitive Future; Building the Knowledge Economy*” set out clearly, and, for the first time unequivocally, the new awareness that nurturing creativity and enabling the growth of creative economy was no longer an optional extra in economic planning or in economic development.

“In the global marketplace knowledge, skills and creativity are needed above all to give the UK a competitive edge. These are distinctive assets of a knowledge driven economy.”⁴

The creative and media industries, spanning traditional cultural and artistic practice to high tech innovation in media and digital technologies have multiple and critical roles to play in the economy:

- A major economic contribution, with fast growth, significant employment and the potential to exploit ideas as assets through Intellectual Property Rights
- A key role as a generator of innovative ideas, applications, processes and products across many industry sectors
- Provide the creative and cultural context around which other industries like to cluster
- Provide the creative and cultural context attractive to high-skilled workers

These factors will be especially noteworthy in those areas where:

- The economy is subject to significant restructuring in the face of the decline of traditional old economy industries
- Where an area is failing to compete effectively with comparable and / or neighbouring areas in a number of spheres – relocation, graduate retention / skilled workforce, evening economy, visitor economy
- Where an area is experiencing or planning for significant physical change or growth
- Where an area is suffering from factors associated with social exclusion, which must be addressed through long-term structural change

The creative and media sector will not always provide the economic panacea, nor can it give branding or cultural “gloss” in every context or to every locality or sub-

² Living on Thin Air, Charlie Leadbetter, 1999

³ Opportunity for All in A World of Change, DTI, 2000

⁴ Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Economy, DTI 1988

region. However, it has become increasingly clear that the creative element of the new economy is structural, a critical component in the overall make-up of a local economy. Furthermore, the skills profile of many parts of the creative sector is similar to those valued in other high value adding sectors, such as new technology, science and the financial services. In its revised Regional Economic Strategy SEEDA states

“..sustained economic growth can only come from continued productivity improvements driven by innovation and creativity”⁵

1.2 The Creative Economy

In 2001 the DCMS updated *Creative Industries Mapping Document* demonstrated the scale and dramatic growth of the Creative Industries sector in the UK⁶:

- Generate Revenues of c£112.5bn
- Employ c 1.3 million people
- Contribute c 10.3bn to the balance of trade
- Account for over 5% of GDP
- Grew by 16% - one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK economy

Within this the new and technology driven sectors of the creative industries dominate with Software and Computer Services alone generating £36.4bn and 555,000 jobs.

In 2002 SEEDA and SEEC published “*Cultural and Creative Industries – an economic impact study for South East England*”⁷. This report sets out the significance of (a somewhat more broadly defined) creative industries to the economy of the South East. The findings are startling:

- Generates an annual turnover of £46.5 billion
- Employs 560,000 people
- The sector has grown more than any other region, including London, with employment increasing by 28.4% in the South East in 1995-2000; almost double the average for England as a whole.

Most significantly, this study identified the central importance of Content Origination to the Creative Economy. Content Origination, is the core part of the Creative Industries production chain and rests in the generation of creative ideas, which can be developed into product that can deliver successfully into the marketplace and generate additional values from the IPR created. In the South East Content Origination:

- Generates an annual turnover of c £17.3 bn
- Employs c 300,000 people
- Has experienced employment growth of c 46% in the period 1995 to 2000
- Accounts for c70% of all VAT registered Cultural and Creative Industries businesses in the region.

In the region, in parallel with the UK Creative economy as a whole, the dominant elements of the Creative and Cultural industries are to be found in the media and digital sector where the exploitation of new platforms and of technological

⁵ Draft Regional Economic Strategy, SEEDA, 2002

⁶ Creative Industries Mapping document, DCMS 2001

⁷ Creative and Cultural Industries – AN Economic Impact Study for South East England, David Powell Associates for SEEDA and SEEC, 2002 Key Data for the South East and for Kent is drawn from this report

convergence creates opportunities for the development and delivery of new creative products and services. In the new economy Content is King.

The creative and cultural sector is a public / private sector hybrid. There is substantial interplay and synergy between different parts of the creative and cultural sector and between the public and the private sector. Public sector investment often nurtures the development of new creative talent and new products, which may then be located in, or developed by, either or both sectors.

1.3 The Creative City

In practical terms, however, some places are simply more successful at growing creative economies than others and some of these are, recognisably, “creative cities”. American academic Richard Florida’s book *“The Rise of the Creative Class and How it’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday life”*⁸ sets out to demonstrate the factors which he believes contribute to the growth of successful creative economies. His Creative Cities Index - politically influential in the US, and requiring careful extrapolation in terms of UK analysis and policy prescription - charts the types of places that are attractive to the high skilled workers demanded by the industry.

These are places with diverse communities which display a high degree of tolerance, and can provide new economy businesses with the attractive social, creative and cultural environment that will in turn attract employees with the right kind of higher level, innovative and technology based skills required by the sector. These quality of life issues are defining features of creative economy driven cities and in many senses supersede the more traditional factors, which, for example, influence business location. The raw materials of this sector are creativity and innovation and, at least in some cases, the products of the sector can be distributed electronically.

Closer to home many of the UK’s regions and cities have invested heavily in cultural infrastructure and creative and media business support to generate the direct and indirect economic outputs required to help turn around failing and restructuring economies. In the South East, Brighton and Hove provides a view of the sort of place likely to attract the highly skilled creative workers who make the sector tick; a city with a clear identity, relaxed and diverse, with a wide range of creative and cultural activities events and a thriving bar and club economy, and a conscious sense of its quality of life.

Strong links to two leading Universities also provides a steady stream of skilled graduates who wish to stay and work or develop their businesses, in the area. Nearer to the Channel Corridor, Hastings, Whitstable and Folkestone show how a combination of natural and built heritage, a critical mass of individual artists, creatives and others can generate a critical “buzz” triggering levels of activity in places which, even five years ago, were hardly on the cultural map.

In the context of the Channel Corridor, a strategically significant area driven by transport and physical infrastructure development it is worth noting the view of Carley Fiorina, CEO of Hewlett Packard

*“Keep your Tax incentives and Highway Interchanges; we will go where the highly skilled people are”*⁹

⁸ The Rise of the Creative Class and How it is Transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life, Richard Florida, 2002

⁹ As Quoted in “The Rise of the Creative Class” op cit

A skilled, talented workforce is the key driver in the media economy.

1.4 The Media and Related Creative Industries at work

This is a diverse sector of the economy, where growth often takes the form of innovation, spin-offs, start-ups, new partnerships and diversification. The impact of technological convergence allied to media industry deregulation has structured the creative industries around a very small number of very large companies and a very large number of very small companies, an “hourglass” effect replicated across Europe.¹⁰ This effect is most pronounced in the media and related creative industries. In the South East 56% of all Creative and Cultural industry businesses turnover less than £100,000 while 73% of turnover is generated by only 2% of businesses¹¹.

Young, highly skilled and enterprising people move across traditional work and technology boundaries. Creative businesses are hooked directly into a global market place and yet are dominated by self-employment, micro and small businesses. Part time, flexible and contract working are the norm for much of this sector, and the network is emerging as the organisational form most suited to the creative economy. Spaces to meet, network, discuss and exhibit new work are an essential motor of the media economy. This has significant implications on public policy interventions and on the ability of the industry to organise itself.

This sector has particularly high levels of degree-level education. In the South East c40% of those working in Content Origination hold at least a degree level, or equivalent qualification (compared to 19.7% in the South East workforce as a whole). In this sector specialist skills need to be matched with the highly valuable “social skills” (contacts, networking etc) and, although driven by the demand for high skilled workers, the sector may at times have the flexibility to attract people of talent and ambition without traditional qualifications and can offer a way out of exclusion¹².

The new Learning and Skills Councils, changes to Vocational Qualifications, the development of Sector Skills Councils, and the move towards specialism in secondary and further education indicate a critical moment for re-thinking the framework needed to support creative skills development and training. Higher Education has not always kept pace with the changing needs of the creative industries nor has it always offered its students sufficient training in the entrepreneurial and digital skills needed to develop successful and sustainable businesses in the creative sector, or provided the mentoring and post graduation support services to enable a successful transition for education to employment.

2 The Strategic Context for Media and related Creative Industries in the Channel Corridor

2.1 The Creative Super Region: London and the South East¹³

As we have noted, the Cultural and Creative Industries – driven by media and digital practice - is one of the fastest growing sectors of the UK economy. At the heart of this economy is London – one of the world’s great creative and cultural industry hubs - and the wider South East. Taken together London and the South East add up to a creative super region of international significance with c50% of all Creative and

¹⁰ For a description of the Creative Industries sector across Europe see *Banking on Culture*, 2000

¹¹ For a detailed analysis see Creative and Cultural Industries – An Economic Impact Study for South East England,

op cit

¹² ibid

¹³ unless otherwise sourced see Creative and Cultural Industries op cit

Cultural Industry employment in England. In the period 1995 to 2000 employment across the Creative and Cultural sector as a whole grew by c28.5% in the South East and c22.4% in London compared with an average of c16% in England as a whole. However it is growth in the critical area of Content Origination which is perhaps most significant and employment in this part of the creative production chain London and the South East has demonstrated very significant employment growth – of 46% in the South East and 36% in London in the period 1995 – 2000 – compared with an average of just under 26% for Great Britain as a whole.

Digital and Media activities dominate creative and cultural sector based activity across London and the South East. 74% of the South East's CCI Businesses work in this sector and a staggering 85% of the region's Cultural and Creative Industry turnover is generated here. Media and digital activity is itself dominated by high value high technology applications, with 60% of Media and Digital employment located in software and equipment activity. Taken as a whole the Creative and Cultural sector is the fourth largest industrial sector in the region.

In the South East both SEEDA's Regional Economic Strategy *Building a World Class Region*¹⁴ and the revised Economic Strategy (2002) high light the strategic importance knowledge based, media and related creative industries to the regional economy. SEEDA has invested heavily in the development of Enterprise Hubs where the emphasis is on the development of clusters of businesses working in "*leading edge products and technologies*". The Hubs at East Malling and Sittingbourne have a biotechnology and science focus, with Sittingbourne also indicating a ICT specialism. Sussex Innovation Centre, for example, (one of the partners to the Brighton and Hove Enterprise Hub) has demonstrated, for a number of years, how to make effective research and commercial connections between science, technology and creative companies) A number of Hubs (i.e. North Oxfordshire, Southampton, Surrey) focus on a range of hi-technology development including creative and / or media applications.

The Brighton and Hove Enterprise Hub has focused on developing the cluster of media and digital businesses located in the City, and in attracting and supporting high value adding and high growth potential, creative companies. Enterprise Gateways are a recent SEEDA development that is not sector focused or cluster theory driven "*There will be priority given to rural areas and areas of the region within which entrepreneurship and business skills are low. Not for profit and social enterprises will be valued participants in the gateway networks*"¹⁵

The recently published SEEDA and SECC report *Creative and Cultural Industries – An Economic Impact Study for London and the South East*¹⁶ has now identified the significance of the creative and media sector to the economy of the region (see above). The region's cultural and creative industries outperform London in a number of important dimensions. There is a largely healthy and symbiotic relationship between the creative and cultural economies of the two regions. Taken together with London, the South East is an integral part of one of the major international clusters of cultural and creative activity.

2.2 The East West split in the super region.

The creative super region of London and the South East – the powerhouse of the creative and digital economy in the UK, does however display some considerable

¹⁴ Building a World Class Region, SEEDA, 1999

¹⁵ Draft Regional Economic Strategy, op cit.

¹⁶ op cit

variations across the region. Creative and Cultural economy growth is most significant in Central and West London and the M3 / M4 / M40 Corridor in the South East. C46% of London's CCI employment, for example, is located in four West and Central London Boroughs (Westminster, Camden, Islington and Hammersmith and Fulham) according to the recent GLA Economics report "*Creativity our Core Business*"¹⁷. In the South East, Surrey has experienced 60% growth in Cultural and Creative Industry employment in the period 1995 – 2000 and employees in this sector account for 17.6% of the county workforce – and these figures do not include freelance workers in the sector. In Oxfordshire employment growth of 48% has led to a workforce share in the county of almost 16%, whereas slightly slower growth in Berkshire (c26.5%) has built on strong foundations to create over 20% share of the workforce¹⁸.

To the east of the super region the state of the creative economy, generally, reflects the weaknesses and significant structural difficulties facing large parts of the sub-region. Whilst there is growth, it is by no means as dramatic as in the western parts of the region – East Sussex for example has 10.5% employment growth and an 11% share of the workforce. West Sussex has 10% employment growth and a similar workforce share. Kent, however, shows the poorest level of employment growth at only 4.6% over 5 years¹⁹.

Notwithstanding this East London and Kent in particular are also areas of significant opportunity. The Thames Gateway represents the largest regeneration project in Europe and is a priority for London and the South East's economic development agencies. The creation of new communities, a new City perhaps in east London, and the development of significant new infrastructure - housing, educational, social and transport – along with the delivery of economic restructuring and sustainability, are the driving strategic priorities in this part of the wider South East.

These strategic drivers are reflected further south in Kent where Ashford faces similar substantial development. The Ashford's Future Study²⁰ has recommended an initial rate of growth to 2016 which would result in a population increase of 25,000 based on an annual average house-building rate of just over 1,000 new homes. This level of growth would require over 10,000 new jobs by 2016. It remains possible that further significant growth thereafter could take place. Over the longer term growth in Ashford could, for example, lead to the requirement for 30 new primary schools and 3 new secondary schools. The study suggests that just over £1bn will be needed to fund the growth of Ashford and that, in addition to a new social, educational, health and transport infrastructure significant new investment in recreation, sports and cultural facilities is required.

While the development demands of infrastructure projects of this scale are complex, it will be essential for the agencies and authorities involved to ensure that in planning for these substantial new communities the demands of physical infrastructure do not obscure the need to plan creative and cultural facilities and for the demands of the emerging knowledge driven economy.

2.3 The European Dimension

The commercial and creative connections to Europe remain an important, relatively uncharted and under-exploited, opportunity for media, digital and other companies in

¹⁷ Creativity Our Core Business, GLA Economics, 2002

¹⁸ See Creative and Cultural Industries op cit for further regional analysis by County

¹⁹ ibid

²⁰ Ashford's Future, Ashford BC et al, 2002

the sector. In this regard it appears that creative and cultural businesses lag behind their counterparts in other areas of the economy. Transport links for freight and people, an extensive visitor economy in Canterbury and elsewhere, and the infrastructural consequences of Channel Tunnel Rail Link and related developments, indicate how seriously tied to Northern Europe (as well as wider international markets) areas of Kent and its economy are.

There appears to be little evidence at the moment of high profile or high value connections between creative businesses in Kent and the Nord Pas de Calais or Belgium. The structure of the sector on both sides of the Channel is not yet clearly aligned. Data from the Nord Pas de Calais²¹ (collected and assessed on a basis which is not easily compatible with the information derived in Kent for this study) indicates that the region is:

- 3rd largest in France for the Graphics Industry, which seems to include print, publishing, graphic design etc
- largest region for packaging, and second largest for paper production activity etc
- 2nd strongest French region for textile production with a serious textile making and finishing sector

It is not clear to what extent the existence of the paper, packaging, print and graphics industries offer an opportunity for the smaller design and related businesses in the Channel Corridor, nor to what extent they form a linked community of enterprise with the mid Kent cluster of activities. Further research will be needed to ascertain what level of opportunity is either currently being exploited, or represents potential new business. On the face of it, there would appear to be potential commercial opportunities, for parts of the creative sector, worth exploring between the two regions.

The nearest substantial cluster for software development, digital media and information is Lille, which has established a growing community of young companies alongside a small number of multinationals. In addition, there is, for example, also a fashion and textile presence in Antwerp²². With the exception of Lille, and some significant funded cultural activity in Boulogne and Dunkerque, the NPDC economy seems based on older manufacturing sectors, rather than newer knowledge and content based business.

Experience from Wired Sussex and others' attempts to generate cross channel connections between small media companies further west has shown that there may be limited opportunities for collaboration and trading opportunities to develop. However for the Brighton based media community – issues of language, the cost of transport, and the relatively early stages of the exploration meant that much more attention was paid to extending UK and other international opportunities than the inter-regional agenda. This is echoed in the survey response from Channel Corridor companies (see later section).

This analysis is consistent with the picture to be drawn from the relatively small number of successful initiatives funded by Interreg funds, where it would appear that larger companies will find their own ways into the north European market without requiring the support, advice and funding on offer from public agencies or the chambers of commerce. Smaller companies, it appears, are often dissuaded by the complexity of seeking funding for the return that it offers. Research for this study has

²¹ Agence Régionale de Développement Nord Pas de Calais <http://www.ardnpc.org/info/npcchiffres/default.htm>

²² see for example http://www.mode2001.be/intro/introtxt_eng.html

only identified a very small number of publicly funded (Interreg 2) projects between Kent and Nord Pas de Calais (NPDC) based companies, and nothing in the creative sector²³. There is little evidence of French or Belgian creative sector companies seeing the Channel Corridor as having locational advantages for them, and no reported activity in the Nord Pas de Calais from locally based companies.

To date, the programme focus of public agencies such as Kent County Council²⁴ and local authorities has benefited public institutions rather than particular businesses or practitioners. There are a number of cross channel cultural projects supported by Interreg programmes, and some activity resulting between the Folkestone Creative Quarter and projects in Boulogne.

The development of the cross channel trading links in the cultural and creative sector will require a number of activities to be prioritised. Further information will be required to identify where practical opportunities might lie. Shepway DC is proposing to put an Expression of Interest into Business Link Kent (and Trade Partners UK) for an outward mission to NPDC for summer 2003. The Folkestone Enterprise Gateway will also look for TPUK and other funding for business exchanges, work placements etc.

Providing an information base, a sector focused approach to cross channel trading links, and linking with industry wide missions and other initiatives needs to be undertaken in a co-ordinated programme on behalf of the specialist businesses in the creative and cultural sectors. A number of agencies currently have a non-sector specific locus in this including Business Link Kent, East Kent Enterprise Agency in Canterbury, and Chambers of Commerce in particular at Ashford. Further exploration with local and other Enterprise Hubs (for example in Sittingbourne, Brighton or Surrey which have between them ICT and creative sector focussed activities) Higher Education research programmes, and with Screen South will be an important role for a sector support agency to undertake.

2.4 The Media and Creative Industries in Kent²⁵

Kent as a whole has experienced weak growth in creative and cultural sector employment compared to England and especially when compared to the regional average of 28.4% employment growth over all parts of the Cultural and Creative Industry (CCI) economy in the South East. In Kent employment in the CCIs as a whole grew by only 4.6% between 1995 and 2000 rising from 58,171 to 60,826. The County has 11% of the total regional CCI employment and CCI employment accounts for only 8% of the county workforce compared to a regional average of 13.2% of the workforce. Part time working at c38% in the county reflects the strengths of the Heritage and Information Management and Tourism, Recreation and Sports sectoral groupings in the county.

Location Quotients enable us to offer a snap shot of the relative density of activity based on regional activity or employment and population data²⁶. In terms of employment in the CCI sector, as a whole Kent shows strongly in Heritage and Information Management with an employment LQ of +1.3, and in Reproduction (+0.7). Employment in Tourism Recreation and Sport has a positive LQ of +0.2. However in the key area of Content Origination Kent has a negative LQ of -0.2.

²³ KCC European Business Management Office cited a project which increased collaboration between two small breweries; and support for a bi-lingual publication.

²⁴ KCC, European Affairs Unit

²⁵ Analysis in this section based on data provided for Creative and Cultural Industries, op cit

²⁶ A Location Quotient (LQ) of less than 0.0 indicates a poorer performance than expected. An LQ of 0.0 means that the industry sector performed as expected (controlling for county size). An LQ of over 0.0 suggests that the industry sector is performing better than expected and indicates a concentration of activity

IDBR indicates that there are 6,455 VAT registered CCI businesses and organisations in Kent, c 12% of the region's total of c 51,000

- 4,420 of these are Media and Digital businesses
- 960 in the Art and Design businesses

Viewed from the production chain perspective

- 3,830 of these businesses are in Content origination
- 1,690 of these businesses are in Exchange

Analysis of Yellow Pages Business Listing by sector sub-groups and by distribution in the region's Counties (including unitaries) offers evidence in relevant sub-sectors for the Channel Corridor study from Kent were as follows:

Relatively strong sectors

- Music Business +0.16 (second highest after E Sussex)
- Publishing +0.11
- Film and Broadcast -0.04 (marginally above average for the region)

Relatively weak sectors

- Design and Architecture -0.08
- Advertising and Photography -0.09 (second lowest in this sub-sector)
- Press and Media -0.19 (the lowest LQG for this sub-sector)
- New Media -0.22 (second lowest)

Apart from Publishing (which in this survey included associated print industry businesses) media and related creative industry sector do not appear to be thriving in the County as a whole. The overall slow growth rate in employment in the County will largely be accounted for by a lack of growth in this key, fast growing and fast moving area of activity. The county as a whole does however have terrific strengths in some areas of cultural and creative life.

Kent has the largest number of heritage facilities and attractions in the SE region, particularly historic sites and museums. The county has more than 17,500 listed buildings - 23.5% of the region's total, as well as leading the list of Ancient Monuments and Parks and Gardens ²⁷. Kent has substantial independent museums which include the Museum of Kent Life, Historic Dockyard Chatham and the designated Royal Engineers Museum in Gillingham. Important ecclesiastical, military and maritime sites are to be found throughout the county including Canterbury, Dover and North and East Kent. Dover Castle attracts 320,000 visitors per annum. Other examples include the Archive Consortium in Canterbury serving the City, Museum, University and Cathedral and others; and the Kent Information and Libraries Network (KILN) has extensive links to the business and commercial library sector.

This all adds up to a major strength in the County economy contributing as it does to the particular quality of life that is offered to many who live and work in the "Garden of England". It may not necessarily offer the same quality of life experience demanded by creative industry graduates and professionals as a business location.

Until recently relatively few practicing artists, designers and others chose to locate in Kent. The North Kent coast -in particular Whitstable to Thanet - is beginning to attract

²⁷ English Heritage 1999

artists, galleries and others. The planned Turner Centre at Margate promises to offer a very significant cultural attraction. Outside Canterbury, the County's significant centre for creative and cultural activity, facilities for the performing arts are smaller scale and play largely to a local and county audience. Most production businesses and organisations are small scale. Few towns in Kent contain the diverse mix of creative and cultural activity, a thriving bar and club scene and emerging clusters of creative industry activity that indicate the development of a substantial creative economy, Canterbury with a significant student population comes closest.

The other significant development focus that will affect creative sector developments in the Channel Corridor is in the Medway, Thames Gateway North Kent (TGNK) and wider Thames Gateway context. Medway plans a new regional riverside city with a cultural, educational, tourism and hi-tech focus. TGNK and the Area Investment Framework place a priority on "developing Medway's 'offer' as a location for advanced engineering, business and financial services, *creative industries*, and other key sectors."

TGNK initiatives to attract, support and retail creative industries clusters at Ebbsfleet and Chatham technology and business incubators in North Kent will also affect the opportunities being considered in this study. "The establishment of North Kent as a centre of repute for **culture and leisure** [which] is of critical importance not only to ensure North Kent's potential is developed, but also to deliver Thames Gateway priorities"²⁸, will provide a local competition for the same sectoral investor, businesses, managerial and creative skills and workforce that the Channel Corridor partners are looking for.

2.5 Strategic and Economic Development in Kent and Medway

Kent County Council's Economic Development and Regeneration Framework, *Kent Prospects*²⁹ reflects on the "mosaic economy" of the County based on a diverse business and employment base. The plan acknowledges that the County must "harness opportunities in the knowledge driven information economy" (including media and communications) and identifies gains in Quality of Life "first and foremost". Kent's Cultural Strategy³⁰ identifies the delivery of a range of specialist services to underpin the "arts" economy of the County as a Key Objective and proposes that the County will take the lead, with the District Councils in contributing to "*the sustainable growth of its creative industries*".

The very significant infrastructure developments and regeneration projects in Thames Gateway Kent, East Kent and Ashford and the address to social inclusion and regeneration in Shepway are the major strategic drivers in the county and *Kent Prospects*, along with the KMEB Economic Strategy acknowledges clearly the need to manage change of this scale sustainably. Kent has 17.1% of the South East's employed workforce but 28.2% of the region's total registered unemployed. The disparity between different parts of the County is stark – 3 of Kent's 13 local authorities rank in the lowest 3rd nationally and 5 are in the highest 1%³¹. The need to tackle what in some parts has become structural economic decline of the sort more usually associated with the Midlands and the North is as pressing as the need to manage the opportunities presented by development³².

²⁸ Realising North Kent's Potential, North Kent Area Investment Framework, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership 2002

²⁹ Kent Prospect Economic and development Framework to 2006, Kent County Council, 2002

³⁰ Local Cultural Strategy, Kent CC 2002

³¹ K&MLLC Local Strategic Plan.

³² Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council Local Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005, K&MLSC, 2002

The challenge to develop and sustain a diverse economic base, while building strength in the new economy is reflected across the range of strategic policy in the county. In terms of the skills and training base K&MLSC states “ *By most indicators, current Kent and Medway is some way behind the rest of the South East*”³³ and while forecasts indicate that the greatest growth in jobs in the region will be in high skill occupations, of the sort required in the media and related creative industry sector, there are some levels where the County is especially weak. One third of working age people in Kent and Medway have poor or no ICT skills and nearly 50% of all managers surveyed reported their ICT ability as low or non-existent. The LSC states “ *Kent and Medway has a major market shortage of ICT skills*”³⁴.

In this context the need to address the development of virtual as well as the physical infrastructure in the County is a priority and the “*Kent Broadband Prospectus*”³⁵ sets out a vision of the development of a Kent Wide Broadband infrastructure and a scalable single virtual network. Kent it appears is “*lagging behind some other parts of the UK in the provision of ICT infrastructure*”³⁶ and the Prospectus reports that according to BT the County has not yet had the “*take off*” in subscription seen in London and other parts of the UK. Access to Broadband and the availability of high level skilled workers are essential factors in the successful development of a media and related creative industries economy. Wired Kent is driving forward a proactive approach to address these issues with the County, LSC and K&MEB and together they are engaging directly with the needs of the sector. This will be essential to deliver significant development in the knowledge based economy.

A recent survey from Wired Sussex³⁷, among new media businesses, confirmed the benefits of broadband. Of those respondents already using broadband, 92 per cent said it had lived up to their expectations and a massive 85 per cent said broadband had even enabled them to change the way they do business. All those who were not using broadband were considering it in the near future.

3 The Channel Corridor

3.1 The Area Investment Framework

The four local authorities and their significant strategic partners, which together form the Channel Corridor Partnership, have commissioned this study. It represents a welcome recognition of the economic, social and cultural potential of the media and related creative industries. The Channel Corridor Partnership has developed an Area Investment Framework (AIF)³⁸ in line with SEEDA's region-wide approach, which seeks to bring together sub-regional partnerships to assess and pull together strategic needs and investment. This approach has been developed in the context of the move away from a single round bidding process to the RDA, which has in the past tended to focus on the development of individual projects rather than strategic context and delivery. SEEDA 's guidance indicates the need for evidence of a strong and sustainable partnership and while the focus may be on the overriding strategic and infrastructure issues, the RDA will require very specific and substantial changes on the ground in areas of deprivation.

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ Kent Broadband prospectus, Kent County Council, 2002

³⁶ *ibid*

³⁷ www.wiredsussex.co.uk

³⁸ Channel Corridor Partnership Area Investment Framework, CCP, 2002

The "unifying feature" of Maidstone, Ashford and Shepway District Councils which taken together, cover the Channel Corridor sub-region, is described in the Area Investment Framework as "... that they straddle the major communications corridor that consists of the M20 and the existing railway line between London Waterloo and the Channel tunnel..."³⁹ and the AIF sets out its mission thus:

*"..to capitalize upon the economic opportunities offered by the presence of the M20 communications corridor and related rail lines in order ... to facilitate the growth of existing business, attract investment, reduce deprivation and social exclusion and improve quality of life for local people"*⁴⁰.

The AIF sets the strategic framework through which the local economy, local communities and quality of life can be sustained and strengthened through the exploitation of the key strategic infrastructure and growth drivers in the sub-region. These include improvements to the M20 corridor, exploitation of Channel Tunnel Rail Link Ashford station, significant housing stock and associated social and employment development in Ashford Town and the development of the virtual infrastructure. In terms of The Local Economy it seeks to "*Capitalise upon the economic development opportunities within the channel corridor through the removal of physical constraints, the creation of business support networks and through the encouragement of innovation and entrepreneurship...*" it states that there is within the Channel Corridor sub-region a "*strong media base from which future initiatives and strategies .. can be built*"⁴¹.

3.2 Employment, Skills and Labour Market⁴²

As a whole the Channel Corridor, with a population of 348,500, has 134,500 employees of whom 27% have higher level (NVQ level 4 & 5) skills. The sub-region has 13,900 business establishments. K&MLSC forecasts employment growth of 0.5% by 2007 before taking account of predicted significant growth in Ashford but, taking into account likely new jobs replacement demand is forecast at 33,000 by 2007. With low unemployment across the sub-region as a whole (1.8%) difficulties with recruitment, especially of skilled workers, may become exacerbated by demographic change which is forecast to result in a rise in older workers (+12% by 2011) and a decline in school age children. Not only does this impact on the availability of a local high skilled workforce but also has a significant impact on the culture and "tone" of the area. "*The sub-area needs to ensure the supply of high quality new entrants to the labour market, while upskilling those in need in the most deprived areas*". Overall the LSC identifies a skills mismatch across all sectors of industry, this is highlighted in sectors like Media and related creative industries. This shortcoming is addressed in this strategy.

3.3 The Major Centres

While they are undoubtedly linked by key and developing transport and physical communication networks, the three centres within the Channel Corridor, Maidstone, Ashford and Folkestone are in many ways very distinct. As a result of a combination of character, cultural identity and proximity they tend to orient themselves differently within the wider County and beyond – Folkestone with the coastal resorts of Margate and Hastings; Maidstone with the Medway Towns for example. There is also significant diversity in the social and economic base of the three Districts

³⁹ ibid

⁴⁰ ibid

⁴¹ ibid

⁴² All data K&MLSC Learning and Skills Assessment for the Channel Corridor, K&MLSC, 2002

Shepway is the most deprived of the three districts, 108th out of 354 local authorities in England and Wales and 6th out of 67 in the South East. As a result the District has assisted area status which enables companies planning expansion, modernization or rationalization to receive grants towards their investments. Folkestone has taken the most structured approach towards the development of the creative industries. In Autumn 2002 the "*Folkestone Creative Quarter Strategy and Regeneration Plan*"⁴³ was published. This sets out proposals for the long term, organic development of the creative and cultural sector within the town, in the wider context of its regeneration and development strategies. With significant industry leadership provided by the Saga group and concerted partnership across the creative sector, education and local government and in the context of planned faster rail links to London; the significant physical redevelopment of this seaside town gives it the potential to become an attractive location for creative and cultural workers.

Shepway District Council, working closely with private, public and cultural sector partners like the Metropole, Strange Cargo and Southern and South East Arts, is linking a series of projects aimed at the cultural regeneration of the centre of Folkestone and at Shepway as a whole. These will include a creative quarter in Folkestone Old Town, a sculpture trail along the Leas, and a new performing arts centre. Business, public and cultural agencies are sponsoring an ambitious development programme with funds provided by the SEEDA, Shepway District Council, The Arts Council of England, South East Arts, Kent County Council, South Kent College and Saga Group Ltd.

Ashford faces the most uncertain future in the sub-area. The potential scale of development in the town, identified in RPG9, assessed in "*Ashford's Capacity; A Handbook for Change*"⁴⁴ and now being developed through the Ashford Future study presents the town and the wider Channel Corridor area with substantial challenges, not only in the practical task it faces in releasing land for development, but in managing development in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable way. Ashford's Cultural Strategy⁴⁵ strongly urges an approach to development that builds in cultural and creative facilities and activity. "Ashford's Capacity" particularly identifies capacity for development in tourism and leisure activities. Ashford is developing a number of proposals for new recreational and related infrastructure, including the development of the local sports stadium to a regional sports center and a major conference center located around the International Passenger Station. It is considered that further significant investment in creative and cultural facilities may be forthcoming over time.

The town performs noticeably well in small business development, with a high level of VAT registrations and an above average level of new business formations. Notwithstanding this, and the town's undoubted strategic significance, there is limited evidence at present of a dynamic and structured approach to putting in place the kind of creative and cultural infrastructure likely to be attractive to significant numbers of media and related creative industry start ups, or indeed to provide the diversity of quality of life demanded by many relocating individuals, families and businesses. The substantial growth of the town provides a real opportunity within the Channel Corridor to develop significant and appropriate cultural infrastructure. For this reason Ashford and its partners should consider undertaking specific focused strategic planning for the creative and cultural development of the Town as it grows, and to build this clearly into the master planning phase of development. A direct engagement with

⁴³ Folkestone Creative Quarter and Regeneration Plan, Shepway DC, 2002

⁴⁴ Ashford's Capacity; A Handbook for Change, Ashford DC, 2001

⁴⁵ Ashford Local Cultural Strategy, Ashford Dc, 2002

Screen South and Southern and South East Arts to advise on the development and content of such a study is required.

Maidstone Borough Council has almost 50% of all employees in the sub-area and with only 1.2% unemployment and low levels of unskilled workers (1.3%) is well placed to develop its already successful economic base. Maidstone itself has a long history and some important historic and cultural facilities and buildings. The Local Plan has placed increasing emphasis on improving access to and enjoyment of these and the river frontage and recent development here includes Lockmeadow Leisure Complex, which includes a multi screen cinema, restaurants and a nightclub. The presence of Maidstone Studios, Meridian TV regional studios, the Kent Messenger group, a number of smaller media companies and KIAD have led both the *Local Cultural Strategy*⁴⁶ and the *Economic Development and Tourism Strategy*⁴⁷ identify the “media sector” as a key area for growth. The District Council has already identified the development of an Innovation Centre as the potential core for a Maidstone Media Enterprise Hub as a development priority. Both plans also acknowledge the need the evening economy to grow along the 24/7 model.

3.4 A Strategic Approach to the Media and related Creative Industries in the Channel Corridor

The Channel Corridor is, by name and nature, driven by the substantial challenges of infrastructure development and social change facing this part of Kent. However outside of these driving strategic factors there is no clear wider vision or perception or identifiable unifying factor for the sub-area and the three districts. Their major centres in particular have at times competing demands in respect of economic and cultural and creative development. Taken together and as an entity the Channel Corridor does not, in terms of its cultural and its media and creative industries stand out from other centres in Kent which, by recent design (for example Margate) or inheritance (for example Canterbury, Chatham), have more clearly recognizable (although substantially different) cultural and creative drivers. Within the Corridor Folkestone is planning a long-term strategy to develop its creative and media industries. Both Folkestone and Maidstone (and in the long term Ashford) have the potential to develop the wider cultural and creative facilities which attract creative and media businesses. Skilled workers locate in, and skilled graduates remain, in an area where there is a range, scale and quality of the sort of infrastructure which is currently lacking in the Corridor.

While the Creative and Cultural sector as a whole in Kent is important, it is not nearly so substantial or robust as in other parts of the region. The evidence points to a small number of key factors which must inform strategy development and delivery:

⁴⁶ Maidstone Local Cultural Strategy, Maidstone DC, 2002

⁴⁷ Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Maidstone DC, 2002

- The media and creative industries sector is largely fragmented and scattered across the county as a whole and within the Channel Corridor.
- Employment growth in the Creative and Cultural Industries in Kent has been exceptionally slow 4.6% compared to a regional average of 28.4%.
- Analysis of sub sectors indicates that the County is performing poorly in the key Media and Digital and Content Origination sectors in the context of population size.
- Analysis of sub sectors indicates that the real cultural strength of the County as a whole lies in the Heritage, Museums and Information Management sectors which fall outside the parameters of the action programme for this study.
- Companies located in the Channel Corridor have a significant client base/market outside the company and report for market opportunities within the county. There is some anecdotal evidence that public agencies and local authorities do not look for locally based creative companies when procuring creative services, but look instead to London.
- Labour supply, recruitment and retention of higher value skills, and the absence of specialised support services and networks constrain growth potential.
- Quality of life issues rate highly for creative companies, and the major players like Saga and Pfizer alike.

While there is potential for growth in this context modesty will be the key to the approach within the Channel Corridor and the strategic interventions must provide focused strategic direction and support for organic growth. By itself this part of the economy will not provide a single brand or direction for economic development. However the Area Investment Framework provides a strategic framework to complex long term restructuring and development in the sub-region and within this the development of a modern, digitised, connected and skilled creative media economy must form a structural part of planning for a knowledge based economy.

4 SECTION TWO - A Picture of the Media and Creative Industries in the Channel Corridor

4.1 Definition of the Media and Creative Sector

The media and creative sector is notoriously difficult to define. As documented in detail in the relevant literature, the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) is not well suited to identifying media and creative businesses. Many such businesses are hidden within much broader SIC codes, and for emerging types of new business (particularly in the digital sector) appropriate SIC codes are not always obvious. However, at the outset of this study, a list of relevant SIC codes were identified (and these are listed in the Appendix).

In summary, the definition which has been used for this study is fairly broad and includes the following: advertising, architecture, design, digital media, film and video, music, photography, publishing, software and computer services, radio and TV, performing and literary arts.

In order to estimate the size and profile of the media and creative sector in the Channel Corridor, the main sources of information used were business databases provided by Ashford, Shepway and Maidstone Councils and the Business Link Kent business database. Relevant businesses were identified from these databases by searching for appropriate SIC codes, and also by key words associated with the creative industries, e.g. design, media, publishing. (A full list of these key words can be found in the Appendix). This business database information was supplemented, where possible, by searches of The Knowledge directory and Kent Hothouse contact database.

Once identified, businesses were divided up into four main groups, according to their position in the production chain:

- manufacturing inputs (production of tools and materials, e.g. musical instruments, editing machines, paint)
- content origination (the source of new ideas and intellectual property rights)
- reproduction (mass production of cultural and creative product, e.g. printing, music, broadcasting)
- exchange (getting product to the audience or market place e.g. distribution, retail, venues, facilities)

Also separately identified, where possible, were organisations that provided an educational input relevant to the media and creative industries (music teachers, art schools, colleges offering relevant courses etc).

The other two elements of the research into creative businesses focused on those involved in content origination. Depth qualitative interviews were carried out with a number of local businesses identified from the above databases. A small postal survey was carried out with a larger number of such businesses in the Channel Corridor.

This section of the report outlines the primary research conducted with creative and media businesses. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed:

- a) analysis of information held on local and national business directories
 - the main databases used were those held by Ashford Council, Shepway Council, Maidstone Council and Business Link Kent

- b) sixteen depth interviews with a range of businesses
 - businesses interviewed covered a range of locations throughout the Channel Corridor and a range of different creative and media activities (e.g. photography, graphic design, studio facilities, printing, local radio, marketing and advertising, exhibition design, web design, video and multimedia, local newspaper, entertainment agency, freelance writing)
 - the issues covered in these interviews included perceptions of the local creative and media sector, market conditions, barriers to / facilitators of local expansion, business support needs, skills shortages and training issues, access to broadband, transport links and so on

- c) a postal survey of 86 businesses in the Channel Corridor
 - questionnaires were sent to about 400 businesses involved in content origination in the media and creative industries
 - these businesses were mainly identified from the four databases mentioned above. It should be noted that because of the limitations of these databases, discussed later in this report, and the limited response to the survey, the postal exercise should not be seen as providing a comprehensive picture of media and creative businesses in the area. However, the responses to the survey provide additional valuable insight into the experience of the sector in the Channel Corridor

A more detailed account of the methodology for each of these elements is provided in the Appendix, along with a full report on the postal survey responses.

The following sections are based on information from all these different sources.

4.2 Media and Related Creative Industry businesses and organisations in the Channel Corridor

Figures presented in this section of the report are only intended to be a rough guide to the likely size and profile of the media and creative sector in the Channel Corridor. The commissioned study was limited to an examination of existing council and local business support databases that were made available to the research team. The scoping exercise was therefore inevitably constrained by the limitations of those databases⁴⁸. For more accurate statistics about the sector, a much more detailed study would need to be undertaken (involving for example, a search of the Yellow Pages Business Directory and IDBR databases).

⁴⁸ Database limitations

- For instance, the databases were compiled in such a way that they are biased towards businesses which are registered for VAT and business rates. This means that they are likely to under-represent businesses with very low turnover and sole traders working from home, both known to be common types of business in the media and creative sector.
- There is evidence of substantial misallocation of SIC codes within the databases. This problem is somewhat alleviated by the use of an additional keyword search to identify businesses missed by the initial SIC code search. However, if businesses had been allocated incorrectly to SIC codes relevant to the sector, they will have been picked up unnecessarily by the initial search.
- While *exact* duplicates were removed, some very similar entries remain, which suggests there may be some double-counting of businesses, listed in slightly different ways.
- Response to the postal survey indicated that a significant proportion of the businesses listed were no longer operating at the listed address. Conversely, it is not known how many new businesses are missing from the databases.
- In addition to this, there is the problem mentioned earlier (not limited to these particular databases) with relevant SIC codes including businesses which do not fall within the sector, and therefore the likely inclusion of businesses of marginal relevance to the study.

4.3 Industry Size and Structure

Bearing the above caveats in mind, following a SIC code and keyword search of the council and Business Link directories, the study identified about 1,540 creative industries businesses based in the Channel Corridor: about 430 in the Ashford area, 790 in Maidstone and 320 in Shepway.

The majority of the businesses identified (six in ten - about 840 in all) were involved in content origination in the production chain, most commonly businesses offering architectural services, software and computer services, advertising or design services. This latter category covers a variety of different design activities (including graphic design, interior design, fashion design, stained glass design and exhibition stand design).

Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council reports a total of c13,900 business establishments in the Channel Corridor sub area. Based on the evidence set about above Creative and Cultural businesses, as a whole would account for c11% of the total.

The report *Creative and Cultural Industries – an Economic Impact Study for South East England* indicates a total of 5,380 VAT registered creative and cultural businesses and organisations working in the Arts and Design and in the Media and Digital sectors in the County. These sectoral groups are broadly comparable with the Creative and Cultural Industry sub-sectors reviewed for this study. On this basis the channel corridor has in the region of a 28% share of the County’s Creative and media businesses and organisations⁴⁹.

4.3.1 Creative industry businesses

	Ashford	Maidstone	Shepway	Total
Content origination	63%	65%	49%	61%
Exchange	29%	24%	44%	30%
Manufacture	5%	7%	3%	6%
Reproduction	11%	13%	11%	12%
Education	2%	4%	4%	4%
Total	430	790	320	1540

At c61% Content Origination’s share of the production chain in the Channel Corridor, based on these figures, is somewhat below the regional average. In the South East as a whole 70% of VAT registered Creative and Cultural Industry businesses and organisations are in Content Origination⁵⁰. It should be noted however, that this figure includes some elements of Content Origination in Heritage and Information Management and Tourism, Recreation and Sport. On this basis, and in light of the differences between definition and datasets we can surmise that the Content Origination share of Creative and Cultural Industry Businesses (as defined for this study) in the Channel Corridor is lower, but not dramatically lower than in the region as a whole. In Kent c3,830 VAT registered business and organisations were identified as working in Content Origination, just under 60% of the total. This offers a broad indication that the Channel Corridor generally reflects the Content Origination share of the county’s Media and Creative Industries Production Chain. Based on

⁴⁹ Although broadly comparable, direct comparison between the two studies is not possible because of differences in definitions used, and database search methods

⁵⁰ All comparative data extracted from Creative and Cultural Industries, op cit

these figures the Channel Corridor would appear to have in the region of 25% share of the county's Content Origination businesses, taking account of the differences in the datasets. By way of comparison 90% of businesses in the region's most dynamic creative economies – Oxfordshire, Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire – are in this phase of the production chain.

An analysis of Content Origination highlights the relative strengths and weaknesses of Content origination sub sectors in the Channel Corridor. The most common types of business were Architecture and related services, Software and Computer Services, Design Activities and Advertising. The remaining third of businesses were divided fairly equally into Publishing, Photography, Audio-Visual Production and 'Other'.

4.3.2 Content origination businesses

	Ashford	Maidstone	Shepway	Total
Architecture	16%	22%	13%	19%
Software & computer services	19%	16%	17%	17%
Design activities	21%	14%	18%	17%
Advertising	6%	20%	6%	14%
Publishing	10%	9%	9%	9%
Photography	11%	7%	9%	9%
Audio-visual production	8%	4%	6%	6%
Other	8%	7%	23%	10%
Total	250	450	140	840

Additional searches of The Knowledge, a business directory for the British TV, film, commercial and video production industries, revealed a further 19 organisations and 25 individuals working in media & creative content origination the Channel Corridor area (although these are not included in the above tables).

4.4 Industry Structure and Employment

Analysis of the business databases indicates that about three in ten businesses in the media and creative sectors in the Channel Corridor are sole traders, and a further one in five are two-person businesses. 85% businesses were listed as having fewer than ten employees⁵¹.

As the following table shows, the content origination businesses tended to be slightly smaller than other businesses in the sector. While a third of content origination businesses were sole traders, this was true for one in four creative industry businesses.

⁵¹ The precise definition of the employee number variable in the business directories is not available. Therefore these figures should be treated with some caution, as it is not clear whether this referred to FTE employees, permanent employees etc. However, the pattern is clear – the majority of the sector is made up of very small businesses.

4.4.1 Number of employees in creative industry businesses

(source: business directories)

	All creative industry businesses	Content origination businesses	Other creative industry businesses
Number of employees			
1	29%	34%	25%
2	21%	20%	22%
3 – 9	35%	31%	37%
10 – 25	11%	9%	12%
26 – 99	5%	6%	5%

Responses to the postal survey confirm this pattern, with about three in ten of the 86 content origination businesses operating as sole traders, and eight in ten employing fewer than ten permanent employees.

This is broadly in line with regional data, which indicates that Content Origination businesses and Organisations on average have 5 employees.

4.4.2 Number of employees in content origination businesses

	Postal survey data
1	29%
2	23%
3 – 9	32%
10 – 25	12%
26 or more	5%

Based on analysis of the business databases, the mean number of employees in the creative industry businesses, based on a 90% sample (excluding the top 10% largest businesses) is 3.3 employees per company. An indicative total number of employees in the Creative and Cultural industries as a whole will therefore be in the region of 4,500 – 5,000, this represents something under 4% of the sub-area's workforce of 134,500. The figure might be larger than this, and it is worth bearing in mind that as a whole the Creative and Cultural Sector in Kent (including additional CCI sectors not counted here) has a c8% share of the workforce.

Focusing on content origination businesses only, this mean is slightly lower at 3.1 employees per company. An indicative total number of employees in Content origination will therefore be in the region of 2,500 – 3,000, this represents only somewhere between 2 and 2.5% of the total number of employees in the sub-region of 134,500.

Businesses completing the postal questionnaire were asked to indicate how many freelance and casual staff they had used over the past year. The majority (60 out of 86 businesses) had used at least one freelancer during that time, most commonly between two and five over the year.

4.4.3 Number of freelance staff used in past year

	Postal survey data
Freelance staff used in past year	70%
No freelance staff used	27%
Not answered	3%
Number used in past year	
1	9%
2 – 5	36%
6 – 9	7%
10 – 19	5%
20 – 49	9%
50 or more	3%

4.4.4 Turnover – scale of operation

About half of the businesses completing the postal survey had an annual gross turnover of less than £100,000, and a further one in four reported a turnover of between £100,000 and £499,999. Very few businesses had turnovers of £5 million or more.

4.4.5 Annual gross turnover

	Postal survey data
Less than £100,000	47%
£100,000 - £499,999	27%
£500,000 - £999,999	8%
£1m - £4,999,999	12%
£5m or more	2%
Not answered	5%

In the South East as a whole 65% of Content Origination companies (which, as stated above includes a wider definition of the sector) turnover under £100,000 with a further 30% turning over between £100,000 and £1m. This may indicate that at the smaller scale of operation Content Origination businesses in the Channel Corridor are somewhat more successful at generating turnover than is the case across the region as a whole.

5 Key Issues for Media and related Creative Industries Businesses and Organisations in the Channel Corridor

5.1 Client Base and Contractors

The sixteen depth interviews with businesses revealed that, with the obvious exception of local newspaper businesses and radio stations, most tended to have a significant client base *beyond* Kent.

This pattern was confirmed by the postal survey responses, as can be seen below, with 38% conducting a significant proportion of their business in London, 26% in other parts of the South East, 30% in other parts of the UK, and 10% with businesses in other countries.

5.1.1 Number of employees in content origination businesses

	Some business	Significant proportion of business (at least a Qtr)	At least half of business
Kent	70%	52%	48%
London	81%	38%	20%
Other parts of South East	63%	26%	6%
Other parts of UK	65%	30%	17%
Other parts of Europe	34%	10%	5%
Other parts of the world	31%	9%	5%

This tendency to have a client base outside Kent was explored in the depth interviews, which revealed a number of reasons for it. Firstly, there was felt to be a limited number of big businesses based in Kent that were likely to buy the type of services that were being offered by the media & creative sector. Saga, one of the biggest Kent businesses, tended to conduct its own creative/media work in-house. Other big Kent companies - for example, Pfizer, Sea France, P&O – were sources of creative/media work (e.g. production of marketing materials, design of exhibition displays) but could only provide work for a small number of such businesses. And other big manufacturing businesses with a base in Kent tended not to locate their marketing departments (the source of design work) in Kent. Therefore, it was necessary to source media work from beyond the region.

A number of individuals interviewed reported that a lot of Kent-based companies would automatically source their creative/media business in London, rather than consider Kent-based companies (local councils themselves were identified by several interviewees as guilty of this practice). Two reasons were suggested for this pattern. Firstly, there was a status associated with London-based creative businesses, which meant that local companies were automatically assumed to be offering services of poorer quality than London-based firms. And also, there was felt to be very little promotion of local media/creative firms, which meant that potential Kent-based clients were unaware of the services on offer on their doorstep.

Specialist creative businesses (e.g. those involved in exhibition display design, complex web-site design, commercial writing) found that local businesses were not willing to pay their rates, unlike London clients. One such specialist business regarded their occasional work for local clients as *“peanuts type work. It doesn't pay our wages, and it's really just doing a service for a local company”*.

The depth interviews also indicated that while businesses on the whole were very keen to use local contractors, suppliers and freelancers, a number reported difficulties with the local supply chain. For example, for businesses involved in design activities related to exhibition and conferences, the lack of a major exhibition venue in Kent was identified as a problem. Exhibition-support services such as companies offering conference equipment for hire, stand-building services and so on tend to be clustered around major venues (for example, the NEC in Birmingham) or around airports for the convenience of foreign clients, and companies involved in overseas exhibitions and conferences. The lack of a major conference or exhibition venue in Kent, and the subsequent lack of such support services meant that designers were having to use contractors in other parts of the UK.

It was also reported that Kent-based support services (such as printers) were struggling to compete on price terms with similar businesses run in other parts of the UK, because of the comparatively high overheads in the South East. Consequently, some design businesses in Kent were using printing services based in remote parts of the UK who could offer similar services at a much cheaper price.

5.2 Business support

The issue of local business support was touched on in the postal survey, and explored in more depth in the qualitative interviews. Postal survey respondents were asked what were the main benefits and problems associated with being located in the Channel Corridor. Five businesses chose 'good business support and advice services' as a benefit. Eight businesses cited 'poor business support and advice services' as a problem.

The depth interviews revealed that while some businesses were happy with the general business support they had received from local business support organisations and networks (particularly start-up advice), others had very little contact with or awareness of these organisations. A significant number of those interviewed were dissatisfied with the available services. Several had resigned from local Chambers of Commerce because they felt they were not receiving value for money, and a number were critical of the local councils for not doing enough to promote local businesses in the sector.

This lack of local business promotion was also mentioned by several postal survey respondents. For example, when asked what sort of help they would like to see from the councils to help boost the media and creative sector, two responses were:

“Be MUCH MORE proactive in creating opportunities - have people dedicated to actively promoting and selling the talents and expertise of local professionals. Get to know us - call us - visit us - to learn what we can do, individually and collectively. Pool our resources as groups who can actively tender for major contracts (which would be difficult to do individually). Get out there and get active! We can't do it alone”.

“A venue for creative people to meet and network that could also be an exhibition space promoting creativity in Kent. Educating the general business sector, that excellent creativity exists in Kent, and the value effective creativity can have on their business. Promote local artists”.

While some reported successful local partnerships and associations between local businesses, several individuals (both in the depth interviews and the postal survey) reported a feeling of isolation in Kent, particularly those located in rural areas. They did not feel that they were fully aware of other similar businesses or potential partners based in the area, and did not know where to look for information about such connections in the media/creative sector.

Wired Kent was mentioned by one business as a positive initiative to bring together businesses within the sector, but there was some frustration expressed that it was not yet fully operational, particularly the jobs page on the website. Several other businesses suggested that a local directory or website would be helpful both in linking local businesses with potential partners and clients, and also in creating a sense of a media and creative community in the region. (Twenty postal survey respondents highlighted 'weak creative and media sector' as a local problem).

“I find the biggest problem in Kent is letting possible clients know what I do. Perhaps a database or website on which designers/companies could have space to show what they can do. If this was advertised on a national/international basis, it could generate a substantial amount of work”.

“There's no one source of information for professionals based in Kent - either a book directory or website. The sector is very fragmented and London-focused... Contacts are the lifeblood of the business and anything to increase that flow is going to help develop more of a sense of a media community”.

“The local art colleges appear to have few links with creatives in the area, and there is no design community within the Maidstone area as such”

Other comments about business support related to a lack of good advice about links with Europe, and a lack of specialist advice in connection with media and creative business.

5.3 Europe

As mentioned earlier, a third of businesses that responded to the postal survey had some European business connections, but very few conducted a significant proportion of their business with Europe.

Among the sixteen depth business interviews, there were few significant European business connections reported. Two exceptions were an exhibition design company producing designs for use in exhibitions across Europe, and an agency involved in producing marketing material for use on cross-channel ferries.

Language was felt to be a huge barrier to doing business with the French, despite the ease of travel between the two countries. Where there were links with businesses in France, it tended to be with English-speaking companies (English or American) who had premises on the Continent.

Several businesses talked of attempted links or partnerships with French businesses in the past which had not been successful. Different business cultures were thought to be a barrier to these cross-border partnerships. In particular, several interviewees mentioned problems arising from a slower pace of working in France. Another issue was the difference in copyright laws between the two countries, which caused difficulties with French authors' work appearing in UK publications.

For those involved in European partnerships, the Eurostar link was clearly a huge benefit of being based in Kent. Indeed these businesses sometimes found it easier to deal with European clients than clients in other parts of the UK, given the problems with UK transport links (this is discussed in more detail later).

For businesses involved in exhibition design, European exhibition venues were felt to be better equipped than those in the UK (in terms of facilities, hotels, restaurants etc), particularly those in the South East. And venues in Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Paris were favoured by companies because they were seen as better for reaching the Eastern European buyers, who would not be as willing to travel as far as the UK.

5.4 Training and skills

Supply of local graduates and skilled workforce were issues listed in the postal questionnaire as potential problems or benefits of being located in the area. Twenty-one businesses cited 'poor supply of skilled workforce' as a problem and nine cited

'poor supply of local graduates' as a problem. (Fourteen and seven businesses respectively saw these as benefits of the area).

In the depth interviews, it was clear that views on the local skills base varied with the type of media activity. For TV and video production, there was felt to be a fairly good supply of ex-TVS freelancers based in the area. However, some felt that the level of skill among those involved in graphic and web design was fairly low. There was a view expressed that anyone with access to the right software could now set themselves up as a freelance designer, with the result that the quality of work being produced locally was decreasing.

Good writing skills were also felt to be in short supply locally which was a recruitment issue for newspapers. One multimedia business found it very difficult to find suitably skilled audio-visual freelancers, and usually had to employ London-based staff.

Several reasons for these local skills shortages were put forward: firstly, the levels and quality of local training in media and creative skills. While KIAD was generally regarded as the best local training provider offering a good range of courses, several businesses felt that local graduates were not being prepared adequately for working life in the sector. In particular, media studies graduates were said to be graduating with very little knowledge about a host of different subjects, and ill qualified to start work in a busy specialist media business. As one postal survey respondent put it:

"We need more appropriate training - education courses are impractical and over-ambitious ... the proliferation of media related courses available across all levels of education are misleading and most are irrelevant!"

The local courses were not felt to be directly meeting the needs of employers, and several of those interviewed said that they would welcome more dialogue with local training providers, in order to address this problem. More contact between business and education/training providers was felt to be desirable, both for influencing course content and for linking college leavers with local job opportunities. For example, one business expressed frustration that Canterbury College had not been able to provide any information about recent alumni. This business pointed out that while there is a glut of college leavers in the summer, small businesses are not necessarily in a position to recruit at that time, but may be looking for new staff at other times of the year.

Several businesses expressed a willingness in theory to offer work experience placements to students from local courses, but found this very difficult to manage in practice. In a small business, it was difficult to devote adequate time to a placement student, diverting efforts away from money-making activities. One postal survey respondent wrote:

"Regarding future strategy, I would suggest that students should be encouraged to work within local business during holiday periods. Perhaps an incentive could be given to companies to encourage more of this type of activity. Students whilst educated within various colleges usually find the working environment within marketing organisations a big shock. Companies could help with this."

This suggestion of financial support being made available in order to help businesses accommodate students was made by a number of individuals. For instance, one business was keen to offer local students the opportunity to work for a day with the support of their professionals on a filmed production, seeing this as a valuable

training exercise. They felt unable to offer this kind of service because of the prohibitive costs involved in hiring the facilities and paying the professionals for the day. Help with covering these kind of costs would be welcomed.

The quality of teaching and depth of the syllabus at some local colleges (e.g. South Kent College) was also questioned. A number of those interviewed relied on graduates from colleges outside the Channel Corridor, for example Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication.

Another problem that was felt to be influencing skill levels in the area was the pattern of young people moving out of the area, particularly to London. Some were moving in order to access good specialist media training that was not available locally. Others were drawn to the higher salaries on offer in London and other cities, and to areas with more “youth culture” and “night life” than East Kent had to offer (this is discussed in more detail later).

5.5 Broadband

Responding to the postal survey, one in four businesses (24) cited ‘poor access to broadband’ as a problem about being located in Kent. And several businesses, when asked at the end of the questionnaire for their sector strategy suggestions, highlighted broadband as a key issue.

“We have had a very poor experience in dealing with BT to have ADSL installed. Councils could perhaps liaise more to ensure that business parks have priority in having access to new technology such as this. If new housing estates were built with broadband or its successor in mind, there could be more home-working. Gave up on BT, and had a radio link installed to access internet! This was a critical issue for our business with the volume of emailed images/text increasing all the time”

The depth interviews further revealed that while access to broadband was not a problem in the centre of Ashford, Folkestone and Maidstone, it was a serious problem for those located in rural areas. The only options open to these businesses were to pay for a satellite connection, which was seen as prohibitively expensive, or to get involved in a wireless network (for which the number of users would be limited). There has been a pattern of small businesses relocating from the towns to work units on farms because of the cheap rents, and bigger spaces. However, the broadband issue is leading some businesses to reconsider a move back to the towns.

5.6 Location

Opinions varied about Kent as a location for a business, depending on the client base of the business and the type of work in which it was engaged. For several businesses, physical location was felt to be largely irrelevant, when so much communication and transfer of materials can now be carried out electronically (although poor access to broadband in rural parts of Kent was a problem, as discussed above). For such businesses, the quality of life offered by Kent (access to countryside and sea, less frenetic pace of life outside London, cheaper property costs etc) was a clear benefit.

For other businesses, that were unable to conduct all their business electronically, these quality of life issues had to be weighed against the difficulties of poor transport links to other parts of the UK.

Opinions varied about the transport links, depending on the location of their client and contractor base. For businesses working largely within Kent, the M20 was

generally seen as a good road link. And for those working with European clients, the international rail link was an excellent facility. However, access to London, other parts of the UK and to airports was felt to be a real problem for many businesses. Several individuals reported having lost contracts because either traffic jams, or delays on the public transport system had prevented them getting to meetings on time. The rail link to London was felt to be unreliable and slow, although there was hope that this would improve in the coming years with the planned rail developments. Access to the North and West of the country, either by rail or road (with the impossibility of avoiding the M25), was reportedly slow and unreliable.

Travel costs, both in terms of time and money, were also an important issue. One company had been forced to employ a full-time driver, so that the creative workers did not have to spend their time stuck in traffic jams. Another company said that they had lost contracts to companies based nearer the client, because of the travel costs they had to add to the price.

There were also concerns, particularly in the Ashford area, that the infrastructure (e.g. roads, availability of medical services and schools), was not keeping pace with the rapid housing developments.

Responses to the postal survey revealed varying views about the location. While half the responding businesses (44) cited 'good transport links to London and the South East' as a positive feature of being located in Kent, thirteen businesses saw 'poor transport links to London and the South East' as a problem.

Postal survey responses on local property costs also varied – while nineteen businesses thought 'low property costs' were a benefit of the area, twenty-one saw the 'high property costs' as a problem. It seems likely that the former group was viewing property costs in comparison to more expensive areas such as London. This theory is supported by comments made in the depth interviews, particularly by businesses that had relocated to Kent from London in order to take advantage of these lower property costs. On the other hand, for several of those interviewed who were running small specialist businesses, high rents and business rates were preventing them from basing their businesses in central locations in the towns, creating knock-on problems with access to broadband and potential clients. The following comments related to business premises were made by postal survey respondents, in response to a question asking for future sector strategy suggestions:

"Make it easier for small businesses to buy freehold business properties"

"To make available realistically priced property. We are only where we are because the rent is so low, but then obviously it's not where the general shopper goes. Suggest a creative co-operative centre, e.g. when/if ever the Army & Navy in Maidstone becomes vacant, it might/could be a suitable venue"

"As we develop we shall need new premises. Provided terms are sensible, a Maidstone media centre may be a choice for us"

"Need to get much better facilities – encourage companies down from London with bait of offices and cheap rents. Develop media centres where like-minded companies will congregate"

This idea of a 'media centre' with cheap rents in a central location was also welcomed by several of those interviewed.

5.7 The wider creative and cultural context

An issue that arose in most interviews was the feeling that the arts scene in the area was poor. While several individuals reported a high level of amateur enthusiasm in the area for the arts, and a good range of community arts projects, there was repeated criticism of the lack of high quality professional performances and exhibitions in the area. In particular, the lack of a high profile arts centre, theatre, music venue or gallery in the area was felt to be a real problem. What venues and galleries did exist were perceived as small and poorly funded, and of insufficient quality to attract 'big name' performers and artists to the area. While several individuals commented on the recent improvements to the arts scene in Folkestone with the development of the creative quarter, and the emerging literary festival, the lack of facilities in Ashford was highlighted as a particular problem.

It was felt that without these sort of venues and facilities, there was no draw for either media and creative businesses, or big businesses with marketing departments (potential clients of the media sector) to base themselves in the area. This was largely because of the difficulty of attracting employees to relocate to Kent. The lack of entertainment facilities (hotels, restaurants, bars and nightclubs, as well as good venues and galleries) was felt to be a disincentive for big production companies when considering whether or not to use the studio facilities in Maidstone. While the facilities on offer at Maidstone were felt to compare very favourably with studios in other locations, Maidstone Studios had often found that they lost out to studios in other locations simply because of the more developed entertainment infrastructure in other areas.

There was also widespread criticism of the lack of promotion of Kent as a place to live and work. Several interviewees commented on the fact that, apart from Leeds Castle advertising material, they rarely saw any publicity of Kent as a business or tourism location, even in London. It was felt to be a wasted opportunity as in theory, there are many benefits to the area – transport links to Europe, countryside, sea, history, low property prices and so on.

The following suggestions, from postal survey respondents, for future local council and business support strategies illustrate these points.

“Continue development of local cultural sector and arts. Provide places for people to go. Support and encourage a wider range of business and leisure opportunities to attract a wider variety and more diversity of residents capable of supporting creative and media industries. PROMOTION of area and its locational / environmental strengths. Join up their thinking”.

“You have some good design colleges in Kent - Ravensbourne etc, but little social life ... or safe accommodation for students. The best 'designery' places in the UK for students are Bath/Bristol, Coventry etc - they all have good youth culture. Canterbury is the nearest I've found it in Kent”

“Excluding Canterbury, to improve towns' appearance and improve facilities to attract weekend and short break holidays”.

“A venue for creative people to meet and network that could also be an exhibition space promoting creativity in Kent. Educating the general business sector, that excellent creativity exists in Kent, and the value effective creativity can have on their business. Promote local artists”.

“A centre that is a hub of activity for people to come to in each major town is an enormous help. This should be aimed to encourage professionals as well as others interested in the arts. Maybe a gallery space charging modest commission, coffee shops (with light lunches for ladies who lunch), live music from quality players and quality workshops open to artists who are area-based”.

The full set of suggestions, from postal survey respondents, for future local council and business support strategies, can be found in the Appendix.

6 Research Summary

- In comparison to other parts of the Creative Super region, Channel Corridor Media businesses are relatively weak in terms of Content Origination – the driving force of the creative economy.
- Most Media and Creative Industry businesses are small with low turnover and few full time employees
- The media market in Channel Corridor is weak and businesses need to trade outside Kent to gain in order to survive
- Business support and promotion need to be directly relevant to creative businesses.
- Access to broadband needs to be improved particularly in rural areas.
- Education and training needs to be more business friendly
- The lack of cultural facilities restricts scope for professional interaction and has a detrimental effect on the quality of life in the area.

7 SECTION THREE - Building Creative Enterprise, Developing a Creative Culture

This final section proposes a number of initiatives to develop a stronger media sector in the Channel Corridor. Moving forward with these will help position the Channel Corridor so that it is able to benefit from the economic growth of the media and related creative industries. These recommendations flow from the analytical work and research carried out in the first two sections of the report. The main proposals relate to:

- A Specialist Support Agency for the Creative Industries
- Access to Broadband
- Building Production Capacity in Maidstone
- A Digital Media Centre
- The importance of Further and Higher Education

The Channel Corridor is a picture of combined and uneven development in media and related creative industries, and a similar pattern stretches across Kent. Pockets of relative strength like the studios in Maidstone exist alongside places like Folkestone or Margate which have proposed ambitious plans. In other areas considerable strategic work is needed before proposals can be developed let alone projects start to turn into reality. The position is not unique. Many comparable counties or smaller areas exist across the United Kingdom. Most of these areas have ambitions to build a stronger creative economy but none are as well positioned as the Channel Corridor and Kent. The county is likely to grow at a phenomenal rate in the next decade as the travel times to London fall and commuters relocate to a more rural lifestyle. Growth on the predicted scale puts pressure on scarce resources and it may be difficult to argue the case for culture when health and education are also a priority. However, there is a danger that key urban centres could turn into what one individual called 'the largest and dullest dormitory town in Europe' if the creative economy is not given the support it needs. Action is needed to put in place the building blocks needed to create a stronger media and creative sector.

There is clearly potential for economic growth in the media and throughout the creative economy of the Channel Corridor. A number of new initiatives could be taken forward with a sense of purpose if the right delivery mechanism is put in place. Without this there is a real danger that localised planning may lead to a situation where similar projects are competing for a limited pool of funds. The proposals need to be knitted together to form a coherent plan. With this in mind, this study is taking the unusual step of recommending additional media related consultancy and the development of a specialist agency for the creative industries in Kent. The sole purpose is to build stronger, mutually supportive projects across the county. Kent is distinguished by the absence of a logical central point and this can undermine strategic planning in complex industries. A new agency could act as a junction box for the structured development of mini creative industries clusters across Kent. The outcome should benefit creative businesses in the Channel Corridor and across the county.

In other parts of the UK, policy makers have successfully addressed weakness in the creative industries sector by establishing agencies charged with building sector specific economic and cultural strength either within a localised area, or for a particular sector or subsector. One such area based agency is the Cultural Industries Development Agency (CIDA) based in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Another media sector specific, example is provided by the Yorkshire Media

Production Agency (YMPA) in Sheffield. Plans are in place for Creative Kernow, a comparable agency in Cornwall.

7.1 CIDA⁵²

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets established CIDA as a specialist business support agency to support the growth of the cultural industries in the borough. Additional funding partners include Cityside Regeneration, City Fringe Partnership, European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Leaside Regeneration and the London Development Agency.

CIDA is based on the recognition that creative industries share a raft of common interests and problems that can be addressed at a generic level. The agency is able to offer or signpost clients towards more specific forms of advice for particular sub-sectors, but the primary interest is the provision of support and advice for local businesses. To this end, CIDA distributes information, provides training, supplies generic business advice to startups, micros and SMEs, acts as a fundholder and hosts regular networking events for local businesses. Economic growth is the driving force and to this end CIDA supports the following sectors:

- Film and Media
- Fashion and Design
- Visual arts
- Performing Arts
- Festivals
- Music
- Publishing
- ICT

Tower Hamlets is home to a wide range of artists and creative businesses. Many of these operate outside formal business support mechanisms. CIDA is successful because:

- It is providing a service for a relatively large group of related businesses in a confined area
- Its independence also lends it an authority which might be denied if it was based with a larger organisation
- It addresses supply chain issues by facilitating the creation and distribution of wide range of product, services and partnerships

7.2 YMPA

Sheffield City Council supported the development of a number of media specific initiatives that saw the City develop a substantial, new media infrastructure in the 1990s. The availability of significant funding opportunities through the National Lottery and South Yorkshire's Objective One Status combined to facilitate the growth of a cluster of activity in central Sheffield. Policy makers developed an integrated approach and forged a range of partnerships to encourage new and incoming productions and create new opportunities for the exhibition of films.

Key developments established the following in Sheffield:

- A large film fund targeted at incoming productions
- A smaller fund targeted at emergent local companies
- Location of Yorkshire Screen Agency as an inward investment agency

⁵² Full details on CIDA can be found at www.cida.co.uk

- A partnership with Sheffield Hallam University to deliver a sector specific MA
- Managed workspace at the Workstation
- A new four screen cinema
- Creation of Sheffield Documentary Festival and Showcommotion Festival for Young People

The combined effect of this was to establish Sheffield as the strongest media economy in England outside the M25 in the period 1997-2000. The advent of the Film Council and the subsequent restructuring of both National Lottery support and European structural funding ruptured the funding base of YMPA and the agency has struggled to re-establish itself in a different financial and political climate. A number of the filmmakers have relocated to London or elsewhere.

The rise and fall of a strong media economy in Sheffield is attributed to:

- Availability of public sector finance and its importance in developing projects
- Creative use of available finance to support an integrated programme of film activity
- Importance of a strong connection to Higher Education
- Importance of long-term partnerships at regional and national level
- Need for a plural funding base
- Narrow focus of moving image and particularly film sector

8 A Creative Industries Development Agency for Kent

Kent County Council and the partners supporting this strategy should commission a further study to investigate the potential of an independent Creative Industries Development Agency for Kent. There are clearly a number of ambitious projects across Kent; some of these are in the Channel Corridor and others beyond it. There are also some 1500 companies operating in the sector in the Channel Corridor and research completed as part of this study indicates a need for specialist business support and something with the capacity to act as a voice for the media sector and related creative businesses. One simple way to bring greater strategic coherence and provide specialist support is to establish an agency with a brief to move a complex portfolio of creative industries projects forward whilst simultaneously strengthening the support provided to relevant businesses. Research completed as part of this study would cast doubt on the suitability of any of the existing partners to drive these plans forward with the wholehearted support of those currently active in the media and related creative industries.

The two examples show how a specialist Creative Industries Development Agency in Kent could work to:

- Define a vision for the Creative Economy in Kent. This should encompass a vision for the role the media and related creative industries could play in each administrative part of Kent
- Draw connections within a complex matrix of economic and creative activity so that the sector is positioned for growth across Kent
- Utilise public sector finance as a tool to galvanise the growth of media and related creative industries in the Channel Corridor and across Kent
- Bridge the gap between public authorities and the creative industries
- Build a broad based partnership to deliver training and networking opportunities for media and creative industries businesses in Kent
- Establish a range of partnerships to identify and nurture entrepreneurial talent in the media and related Creative Industries
- Coordinate capital investment in the Creative Industries in Kent

- Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy so that Kent becomes known as both a prime location for media and related creative work and as a home to an emergent media and Creative Industries Sector
- Be a conduit for the development of a comprehensive skills development partnership⁵³ encompassing HE, FE, LSC, CPD and the needs of media and related industries
- Lobby for the development of infrastructural improvements to enhance the suitability of the Channel Corridor and Kent as a location for media and related creative industries

A new Creative Industries Development Agency in Kent would need to develop a comprehensive, countywide programme of work. The balance of this report identifies a series of opportunities related to the specific development of media and related creative industries in the Channel Corridor. It is not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive. The new agency will need to be skilfully positioned in relationship to Kent County Council and the SEEDA. It will be the interface for the relationship between these key public authorities and others such as Kent LSC and practitioners, businesses and institutions involved in the creative industries in Kent and beyond. It is essential that it has the capacity to engage directly with key national organisations such as PACT, the Film Council, NESTA and the Arts Council. A new agency should become the repository of sector wide information and a focal point for inward investment from the public and commercial sectors. Working in this way will enhance the strategic position and economic strength of the media and related creative industries in the Channel Corridor and across Kent as well as supporting locally derived initiatives such as the plans for a Creative Quarter in Folkestone.

Significant further work is needed to build the capacity of the media and related creative industries in the Channel Corridor and across Kent. This includes a specific address to existing agencies whose brief overlaps with some of the work of the proposed agency – primarily Wired Kent and Kent Hothouse. One possible route is to delay this work until discussions have taken place and a Creative Industries Development Agency is in place. The media and related creative industries are a relatively underpowered element of the economy in the Channel Corridor so it is important to build an agency with sufficient capacity to drive the sector forward. This needs to be considered at a strategic level by Kent County Council and partners from across the sector including Higher Education and local authorities. Initial funding for the agency could come from a combination of partners including public authorities in Kent and specialist sources such as the European Social Fund. It may also be the case that the long term home for some existing initiatives are best located in the new agency. However, the study team has concluded that there is a real danger of momentum being lost and is therefore recommending that a number of key studies are completed while the agency is brought into being. These studies will create a raft of detailed analysis and projects which can be taken forward by the new agency. A number of these are long-term and to delay at this point will simply force them further into the future. Others are current opportunities which might be lost without quick, decisive action.

⁵³ The work of the Thames Gateway Creative Skills Partnership is a comparator. TGCSP (established in 2002 under the auspices of TGLP, and funded in its development period by LSC London East with the active involvement of LDA, local authorities, H&FEIs etc) is an intermediary body providing high quality research, information, planning and strategic support. This will be provided to LSCLE, LDA and workforce development, training and business support agencies to enable them to meet the needs of the creative and cultural sector on the TGL area. It holds a grants budget to enable a small number of innovative training activities to be developed by individual practitioners and micro-businesses.

The notion of Creative Industries Development Agency for Kent needs to be taken forward by all the District Councils, Kent County Council, SEEDA, Screen South, Southern and South East Arts, LSC, Business Link Kent and HEIs. Putting in place a powerful strategic agency will benefit the needs of all the funders and lay the groundwork for a stronger creative economy in Kent.

8.1 Access to Broadband

Access to high quality well maintained broadband links is key to developing a stronger media economy. As already noted, a number of consultees commented on the absence of a supportive infrastructure in the Channel Corridor and the county has one of the lowest take up rates for broadband in England. SEEDA's Broadband project will be rolled out across the South East and this will provide low-cost broadband services to a limited number of businesses, mostly in rural areas of the South East. Led by Wired Sussex, it aims to reduce the cost of satellite broadband installation for businesses, as well as reducing first year running costs and raising awareness of the benefits of satellite broadband. Kent's strategic agencies will need to work with Wired Sussex to ensure that these strategic policy and delivery approaches generate synergies which in turn result in real benefits to the business community. The particular needs of this sector are such that access to a high capacity broadband connection is becoming a basic requirement for a successful business in a sector dominated by SMEs and micro-businesses.

Kent County Council, Business Link Kent and the District Councils should actively promote the availability of broadband for media business, especially in rural areas where access is poor.

9 Building Enterprise, Developing Talent in TV, Film & Media in Maidstone

Maidstone Studios is a principal focus of professional media activity in the Channel Corridor. It is a high quality industry resource and the new owners are looking to position it to face the challenges of the contemporary media economy. One possibility is to combine the current activity with a series of strategic partnerships with the capacity to expand into a major network of television, film and ancillary media activity. This sort of public-private hybrid typifies the contemporary media economy. It also sits comfortably alongside strategic priority to lend support to developing companies through Enterprise Gateways. These would nurture entrepreneurial talent across the South East, but priority is given to areas where levels of achievement are relatively low.

The development of an Enterprise Gateway centred on a partnership between Maidstone Studios, KIA, Maidstone Borough Council and local businesses is a real opportunity. It could lead to the development of a locus of activity for the more professional/commercial aspects of the media industries drawing together established industry companies, media professionals, emerging small and medium enterprises, post graduate courses, F/HE provision, incubator schemes, industry technicians engaged in continuing professional development and commercial investors.

Other parts of the UK have used the creation of a Media Incubation Programme to develop a stronger media economy and culture. Examples include Leavesden Studio in partnership with West Herts College, The NMK Incubator scheme at Westminster University, The Sussex Innovation Centre - a collaboration between the public, academic and business sectors set in the Sussex University campus and the Workstation in Sheffield. The current shift in broadcasters' commitments to the regions, and schemes like the Channel 4 Creative Cities and the BBC's work with a Digital City suggest there is the opportunity to develop centres of production activity outside London. It is conceivable that a well structured programme of work could attract the support or participation of one of these national players.

A feasibility study is needed to create a development plan to set in place the foundations for a Television, Film and Digital Media Enterprise Gateway in Maidstone. The starting point is a triangle of activity between Maidstone Studios, The Oakwood Park Campus in Maidstone and the proposed Eclipse Business Park next to the M20. This is a long-term project with the potential to make a valuable addition to the media production, education and training facilities available in Kent. A series of proposals are set out in Appendix Two.

10 Enhancing opportunities & improving the quality of life for media professionals

10.1 Digital Media Centre

In DPA's report for SEEDA Saga's Chairman Roger De Haan argued that culture and its vibrant and energising effect on the quality of life in an area are important to companies seeking to recruit and retain skilled staff, and that they can be effective tools in the regeneration of run down areas. "We recognise that the creative and imaginative life of our staff is important to the success of our business and that of the district in general. The Metropole has the potential to play a key role in supporting the development of a genuinely creative community." Pfizer, another major East Kent employer, also shares this assessment.

This central importance of a building to act as a place to meet, show and discuss work has already been noted in this report. A feasibility study is needed to develop this notion and explore the possibility of a home for digital media activity in a landmark building in a major urban centre in Kent. The intention is to provide access to a dynamic and inclusive digital media culture for the people of the Channel Corridor and Kent. This groundbreaking development will be a focal point for the County's filmmakers, artists, audiences, users and creative industries acting as catalyst for economic and cultural growth in the Kent's digital media sector.

Other parts of the UK have used the creation of a specialist Media Centre as a catalyst for developing a stronger media economy and culture. Examples include the Broadway in Nottingham, home to the Broadway Cinema and Intermedia, a production and training resource and a range of workspaces; Sheffield Media Exhibition Centre comprising the Workstation (production facilities including a small studio, office space), the Showroom (a four screen cinema) and the newly opened FACT Centre in Liverpool housing a three screen cinema operated by the commercial company City Screen, a digital arts centre and a networking space for creative industries professionals from across the city. All of these examples are

taken from an urban context and there have been few attempts to create similar centres in more rural areas such as Kent.

Beneficiaries from these projects have included:

- Media Professionals
- Cinema Audience
- Community Groups

A number of successful filmmakers gained their initial support from Nottingham Broadway and the Sheffield Media Exhibition Centre.

Critical Action

A feasibility study is needed to investigate the potential for a new Digital Media Centre in the Channel Corridor and Kent. This is a long-term project with the potential to make a valuable addition to the cultural facilities available in Kent. A draft brief covering areas, which need to be addressed in this study, is attached at Appendix Three.

11 The Creative Quarter in Folkestone

Shepway District Council has ambitious plans to develop a Creative Quarter in Folkestone. These are set out in a substantial document completed by Locum Destination Consulting⁵⁴. It is not the role of this report to comment directly on the plans but it is worth pointing out that a significant number of them overlap with the recommendations contained in this strategy. A number of areas of duplication were unearthed during the course of this study and this underlines the importance of a strategic agency to develop and implement plans in the Channel Corridor and across Kent.

It is clear that there is considerable potential and ambition for a stronger creative economy in Folkestone. The presence and influence of Saga adds weight to the proposals. Media will undoubtedly play an important role in the regeneration of Folkestone and the development of the Creative Quarter though, despite the presence of Screen South on the outskirts of the town, there is currently little activity in Folkestone and it may be that a diverse economy develops around the work of Morcheeba and Strange Cargo as well as Screen South and Bedford Row.

This demonstrates the importance of a well-resourced, carefully planned approach to the development of a stronger cultural infrastructure and this is an example that Ashford Borough Council draw on in determining local plans

⁵⁴ Folkestone Creative Quarter and Regeneration Masterplan - Locum Destination Consulting (November 2002)

12 Education - Building skills, nurturing talent, creating opportunity

Further and Higher Education has a key role to play in the expansion of the media and related creative industries in the Channel Corridor. Post-compulsory education has a pivotal role to play in contributing to the consequent education and skills agenda and it is a key driver for investment and expanding employment opportunities. There are key issues and critical actions that need to be considered to stimulate a healthier labour market. Improved educational opportunity for young people and adult learners in existing and new communities is critical to the establishment of regenerated and sustainable communities.

12.1 The key issues that are considered are:

- The importance of education as a central enabler for regeneration.
- The role of Further and Higher Education institutions as significant economic and cultural drivers within their immediate areas.
- The supply and demand factors affecting the growth context for Further and Higher Education.
- Widening participation in Higher Education.
- The creation of seamless progression routes through post-compulsory education to better enable both individual students and employers.
- Devising means of delivering continuing professional development
- Providing long term strategic planning and research structures
- Meeting the education and training needs of the creative industries sector through the establishment of Centres of Excellence.

12.2 The critical actions could be:

- To commission research to examine the expansion of FE & HE provision in the Channel Corridor.
- Establish a set of milestones towards the Governments' target 50% HE participation rate.
- To work with local Learning and Skills Councils' and HE planning teams to maximise funding for training and education in the creative industries in the Channel Corridor.
- Further and Higher Education institutions should work together to establish clear, accessible and seamless progression routes through all levels of post-compulsory education.
- A process should be established for working with public sector education and training commissioning bodies to ensure that appropriate targets are given to education providers in the Channel Corridor.

Any programme should be complementary to plans for post-compulsory education that are being constructed for the Thames Gateway⁵⁵. The questions raised over how the Thames Gateway plans dovetail with the concept behind the Channel Corridor is a key issue. Currently the creative industries do not appear to be a driver for economic development within the local LSC agenda. Four sectors have been identified by the LSC⁵⁶ as important to growth in the next five years:

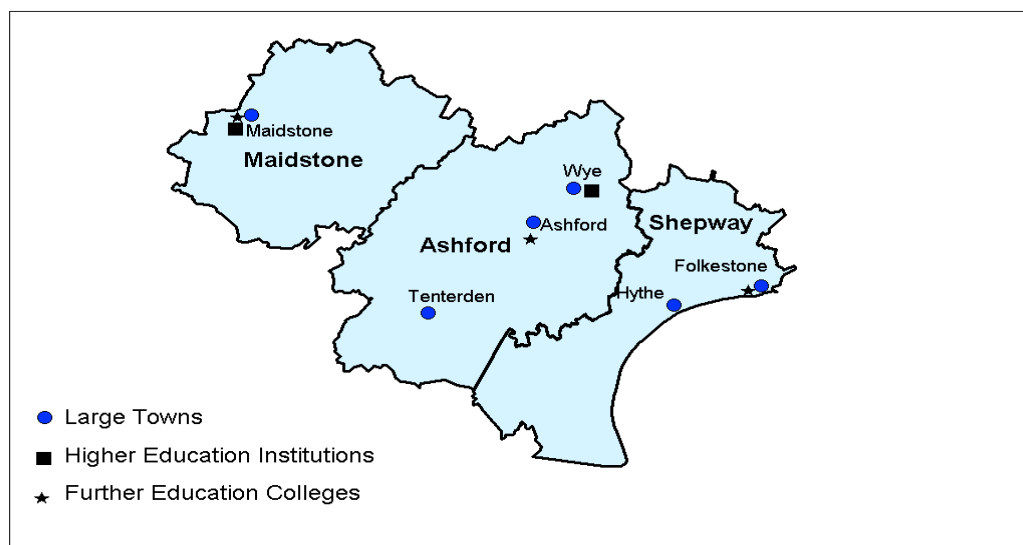
- Business and financial services
- Public administration
- Tourism and hospitality

⁵⁵ Thames Gateway Post Compulsory Education Scenario 2002

⁵⁶ Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council Local Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005, K&MLSC, 2002

- Transport, distribution and wholesale

12.3 The Channel Corridor⁵⁷



12.4 Education as a central enabler for regeneration.

For the regeneration of the Channel Corridor to truly succeed a well educated workforce is vital. This means much more than educational institutions contributing to the economic well being of their region, albeit important as this is. High-levels of participation in education and training activities create both human social and cultural capital. Human capital is crucial to the ability of the region to attract new investment from employers and make the Corridor a place to work as well as live. Social capital is crucial to the development and sustenance of both new and existing communities. Cultural capital is essential to the quality of life in the Channel Corridor.

12.5 The role of Further and Higher Education institutions as significant economic and cultural drivers within the Channel Corridor

Universities and colleges act as cultural as well as economic drivers within their local communities by initiating and engaging in projects and activities that reach out into the community. The five higher and Further education institutions⁵⁸ in Kent operate as significant economic drivers. For example, providing public access to library and information resource technologies, by creating public gallery and exhibition space or developing research outcomes that have an impact on local communities health and social wellbeing.

The absence of a commonly accepted definition of the Creative Industries⁵⁹ hampers development on a number of levels and complicates analysis and comparison between the Channel Corridor and other comparators like the Thames Gateway scenario (which overlaps) or the Sussex Workforce development study⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ Map from Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council Local Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005

⁵⁸ The 5 F/HE institutions include: University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury Christchurch University College, Kent Institute of Art & Design, Mid Kent College and South Kent College.

⁵⁹ See The Creative Class – Richard Florida (2002) for a reflection on the difficulties involved in defining the creative industries

⁶⁰ Sussex Workforce Development Study – Culture and Creative (2002)

12.6 The supply and demand factors affecting the growth context for Further and Higher Education

The expansion of higher education student numbers in the Corridor will be stimulated by both supply and demand factors. On the demand side there is the prospect of a significantly increased population living within the Corridor. On the supply side, all universities and colleges within Kent have planned for growth over the medium term.

In broad terms the two approaches to developing the creative industries through F/HE provision could be, (1) top down proposals using the projections on the market from the various think tanks or, (2) a bottom up evaluation of what is already in place within the region and the systematic nurturing of that activity. Both options require a coherent infrastructure to guide the activities through the market place as it evolves. Developing existing activity is the preferred approach. F/HE institutions need to consider why they should reconfigure their output to fit with the DCMS creative industries agenda. There are clearly costs and benefits but also complex intra-institutional negotiations that would be necessary. A Further Education/Higher Education Symposium is one possible way to tackle some of these issues.

In addition, it will be helpful to look at the evolving structures and programmes which are being pilot tested in Thames Gateway London (Thames Gateway Creative Skills Partnership) to establish an intermediary body between (inter alia) F&HE training providers, business support agencies, the LSC and the creative sectors themselves.

12.7 Widening participation in Higher Education

As with most regions in the UK, the biggest challenge for universities is to both widen and increase participation. This is to meet the needs of existing communities with unacceptably low levels of participation and new communities where new employment will require a steady supply of qualified and professional workers. Yet the challenge is not for universities alone. Further Education colleges will be crucial partners as a significant increase in the amount of higher education taught in Further education colleges is anticipated if the government target 50% participation rate is going to be met.

Universities, in particular, need to open themselves up to non-traditional students and their local communities. The popular image of the university as a cloistered building is one that has a real negative affect on the ability of the institutions to communicate with potential students or local employers without a background of higher education. In short, universities need to convey a physical image that is open, inclusive and welcoming to the communities in which they are based and not 'posh' or elite and exclusive. The New Technology Institutes that are in the process of being established choose satellite community/town centre locations for the delivery of their courses. The urban expansion at Ashford has the scope for innovative thinking around ways in which educational provision can be integrated into the new community.

Increasing participation in higher education requires significant numbers of adult learners to return to education. Further and Higher Education institutions are well placed to respond to an increase in adult learning at both advanced and basic levels, but more programmes will need to be offered in flexible modular formats and delivered by both part-time and work-based learning modes. Universities in particular will need to work closely with the proposed creative industries development agency and employers in developing and designing new courses and curriculum.

Improved achievement amongst Kent school pupils should stimulate an appetite for increased participation in both Further and Higher Education. Increased participation

in tertiary education will have immediate impact on the way in which the corridor and wider Kent is perceived in terms of skills and employment. More employment opportunities will come through a more skilled and educated populace and in turn more graduates will be retained within Kent if there are more employment opportunities. Therefore the overarching strategy to increase participation in higher education must be holistic and engage with all aspects of the lifecycle that generates educational opportunities in people's lives. For example, actions to support early years education can have a significant effect in positively supporting adult participation in Further and Higher Education, by both stimulating parental educational aspiration as well as providing the childcare support that enables adult learners to return to study.

12.8 Creating seamless progression routes

The lack of transparent and seamless progression routes into higher education from schools, Further Education and Adult Education colleges or the workplace is a further factor believed to affect the rates of participation across Kent. Employers' surveys frequently cite the complexity of Further and Higher Education qualification frameworks as a barrier to them investing in education and training. A mechanism for articulating and promoting a transparent, credit-rated qualification framework to potential students and employers within the Corridor and across Kent is required.

There is a need to widen participation beyond the further and higher education sectors to bring about the step change that is required. Implied levels of under achievement in schools tend to feed a lower demand for Further and Higher Education. Thus the strategic thrust of any widening participation initiative within the Corridor and Kent must embrace the secondary school sector as well as the tertiary sector and ensure that accessible progression routes are established between differing education providers. For example, the universities of Kent and Greenwich are both engaged in a Kent County Council backed initiative called the 'Children's University' which seeks to build partnerships and initiate activities which bring Primary, Secondary and the Further and Higher Education institutions and their students closer together.

12.9 Meeting the education and training needs of the creative industries sector through the establishment of Centres of Excellence

The Thames Gateway study proposes that a lead university be identified for each of the key sectors. This study proposes a similar approach and in this case the sectors are under the creative industries banner. It is also proposed that these institutions will co-ordinate the contribution of other universities and colleges to establish either physical or virtual centres of excellence in each sector in the HE and centres of vocational excellence in the FE institutions.

12.10 Currently the breakdown of provision (FE & HE) taken from the courses published by each of the institutions is:

Institution	advert	architec	software	photo	Publish	Design	Films	RadioTV	Lit & art
Kent University			X				X		X
Canterbury Christ Church	X		X				X	X	X
KIAD	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
South Kent College			X	X		X	X	X	X
Mid Kent College								X	X

There is clearly a key role for FE and HE institutions to expand post graduate study and continuing personal development in these key areas. There are very positive examples of HE institutions being key agents in business startups and incubator

schemes. Examples include Canterbury Christ Church University College in Kent Innovation Centre in Thanet, the Sussex Innovation Centre at University of Sussex and COBWEB at City University which is an example of CI targeted short courses and on line learning provision.

The principle of collaboration over competition is key to establishing centres of excellence in the media and related creative industries along the Corridor. By drawing together the disparate elements of expertise located in the key universities and colleges surrounding the Corridor it is proposed that recognised centres of excellence could be created. These sectors provide a focus for the development of Academies that seek to meet the education and training needs of individuals and employers in the Corridor and surrounding Kent. By clarifying and maximising the learning offer that Further and Higher Education institutions can make, the Academies will have a vital role in promoting links between employers and universities and colleges, not only to inform the design and demand for programmes, but also to promote knowledge transfer and provide a forum for innovation. This initiative can naturally link to post graduation incubator schemes, innovation centres and the general entrepreneurial activity that lies at the heart of creative industry clusters. Continuing professional development programmes aimed in particular at micro businesses and individuals will also be required. Graduate retention is key to sustaining the creative industries sector in the region.

12.11 The current provision in either FE or HE along the Corridor is:

Location	Advert	architec	software	Photo	Publish	design	Films	RadioTV	Lit & art
Folkestone SKC			X	X		X	X	X	X
Ashford SKC									
Maidstone KIAD			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maidstone MKC								X	X

Clearly provision needs to be expanded within the corridor if it is going to work. In broad terms it is felt that FE provision should cover all areas of the creative industries in each location in order that students can live at home whilst studying. The HE provision and Continuing Professional Development more easily fit into the centres of excellence model. Initial observations suggest that Literature and Art could be based in Folkestone, Film, Radio and TV based in Maidstone, Publishing, Advertising and Architecture in Ashford. Software, Design and Photography appear to span all three areas. Ultimately the working party that emerges from the symposium in March would do a more detailed evaluation and set of proposals.

As with the Gateway Scenario a lead university should be identified for each of the key sectors in the creative industries, and these institutions would co-ordinate the contribution of the other universities that surround the Corridor. They would identify the critical actions required to establish, either physical or virtual, centres of excellence in the subject areas. The Centres of Vocational Excellence would be established in the further education sector by the local Learning and Skills Councils which should complement the development of centres of excellence in HE.

Recommendation
 These proposals are designed to ensure that the Channel Corridor has an educated and skilled workforce able to access new jobs generated in the media and related creative industries. Capacity building within existing communities must take place if the Corridor is to be successful as a place to live, work and learn. Accessible, high quality education and training will be key attractors to both inward investors and new homeowners.

13 Sector Specific Training - The Demand for Skills

The LSC identifies a skills mismatch across all sectors of industry, this is highlighted in sectors like Media and the related Creative Industries. The LSC report goes on to suggest that the demand for workers to fill newly created jobs represents only a fraction of total recruitment demand. The large majority is replacement demand, which occurs because new entrants are needed to fill existing jobs when post-holders leave through retirement or change of occupation. Estimates based on national figures suggest that replacement demand in the Channel Corridor will be around 33,000 by 2007.⁶¹

This level of replacement demand impacts greatly on the skills needs of the corridor. The LSC identify the potential of expanding industries like the media and related creative industries, but in this case choose to not include them in the report⁶². It is recognised that new workers changing occupations and entering the labour market for the first time must have the right skills for the economy. For a further Learning and Skills Assessment it seems necessary to look at the skills that are needed for the creative industries sector.

National Training Organisations like Skillset⁶³ have produced workforce development plans, which include analysis of recruitment problems and skills issues in their respective industries that in turn highlight the employment and skills issues for future years.

Following completion of this current phase of the Channel Corridor project, the driving force behind in the media and related creative industries within the corridor needs to be identified. Following from that should follow a detailed audit of current provision in each of the creative industries areas. This is clearly a complex task as variations of provision and custom and practice will emerge in the areas of: advertising, architecture, software consultancy and supply, photography, publishing, design activities, motion picture activity, radio and television and other literary and artistic creation. Alongside the current provision should be an audit of need related to business. The resulting data would then form the foundation of a comprehensive plan for training in the creative industries across the region. It should incorporate links between employers and education including Higher Education, Further Education, Sixth Forms and specialist colleges. Examples of ways forward include work placements and mentoring schemes.

As with education the plans should be linked to a wider strategy for Kent and the Gateway. Plans for training in the creative industries in the Channel Corridor should also integrate with national provision and individual industry NTO's plans. The key players are local authorities, LSC, Industry NTO's, HEFCE, local education authorities. A concerted response to the skills gap crisis that is ticking away will benefit the growth of the Creative Industries in the region and make a major contribution to plans for regeneration in the Channel Corridor.

14 Immediate Prospects

Three immediate actions could improve the lot of businesses operating in this sector in the Channel Corridor and across Kent. These are simple suggestions which could be implemented relatively quickly.

⁶¹ Inferences drawn from BSL forecasting model data for the UK, based on the proportion of national employment in the Channel Corridor

⁶² Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council Local Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005, K&MLSC, 2002

⁶³ AV Industries Census (Skillset 2001), Skillstrain, Snapshot in time.

14.1 The Creation and Promotion of a Directory of Media and Creative Industry Companies

Businesses contacted as part of this project expressed an interest in a sector specific business directory. Wired Kent did introduce a Kent wide CDI on-line Directory in June 2002, but has encountered difficulties identifying relevant freelancers, SMEs and micro businesses for inclusion. A jobs section was launched in December 2002. Both could represent an invaluable resource, although research completed as part of this study showed that the sector was largely unaware of the facility and a new agency may be the best means to address this and expand the database. This would draw on the work of Business Link Kent and could act as a resource for businesses in Kent, and as a promotional tool to develop business beyond the county boundary. It should be available on line and as an annual publication. An example of an equivalent on line database is the Talent East website⁶⁴ which provides a comprehensive listing of creative industries in East London. Talent East allows business to network, advertise and recruit staff for projects and can be easily accessed by people from East London and beyond. A database like this gains credibility by the accuracy of the data it holds so there is an obvious need to create and maintain a database if it is to build currency among the industries it is supporting. As well as acting as a promotional tool for individual businesses, Talent East has worked to establish the notion of East London as a creative area. A similar database could cast Kent in a comparable light.

14.2 A seminar to look at prospects for developing the sector in the Channel corridor and across Kent

Kent County Council and partners in the Channel Corridor should consider holding a one off seminar looking at how to move the creative economy of the Channel Corridor forward. This should tackle two primary issues:

- Role of sector specific support mechanisms including a Creative Industries Development Agency
- Quality of life and the infrastructure needed to support a dynamic creative economy

Speakers should be invited from comparable developments in the UK and abroad. If possible, the presentations from the event should be collated, published and distributed to interested businesses in Kent and across the UK.

14.3 A programme of visits for those concerned with developing a stronger media infrastructure in the Channel corridor and across Kent.

Comparable media strategies have frequently looked to other projects as a means to draw on the experience of others and build a pool of knowledge to take the local economy forward. Individuals from the public and private sector in Kent should be encouraged to visit a raft of projects in the UK and Northern Europe. Possible examples include the Watershed in Bristol where a state of the art digital media centre is operating, the Workstation in Sheffield which is home to significant cluster of

⁶⁴ See <http://www.talenteast.net/>

media related businesses, Brighton where private and public sector initiatives have combined to develop a healthy creative economy and Le Frac Nord in Dunkirk.

14.4 A Champion for the Creative Industries

Finally, the agencies supporting this study should work to identify a Media and Creative Industries Champion for Kent. Such a person would act as a focus for driving the proposals in this strategy forward and would be expected to be the chair of the newly established Creative Industries Development Agency. In the first instance, the Champion could act as a host for the proposed Media and Creative Industries Conference. The high profile of the Folkestone Creative Quarter is just one illustration of the importance of a strong champion for cultural projects. Other examples include the work of Fred Hasson who was seconded to SEEDA for two years as a Media Broker and, on the national stage, Alan Parker who worked to establish the Film Council. In each case, the successful work of a champion is dependent on the supportive, dedicated work of a committed executive.

Appendices

1. Regional Television Production in the UK
2. An Enterprise Gateway centred around Maidstone Studios
3. Brief for Digital Media Centre
4. Methodological Note on the Research
5. Acknowledgements
6. List of Consultees
7. Bibliography

Appendix One

Regional Television Production

Television is the main market for independent production companies and regional production across the UK is currently pretty static. Information gathered by David Graham Associates for PACT⁶⁵ shows that 77.7% of independent production hours commissioned by the main broadcasters came from London. The second highest region was the North West with 6.2% but this almost entirely due to the success of Mersey Television, makes of BROOKSIDE AND EMMERDALE. The South East was in third place with 178 hours or 3.6% of total independent commissions. Intriguingly this reflected a diversity of programmes including documentaries, light entertainment, drama and children's programmes. This suggests a plurality of expertise with little of the specialisation found in other regions.

Most regional companies are relatively small independent companies depending on commissions from regional or national broadcasters. Research completed by the Independent Television Commission in 2002 painted a bleak picture for regional independent production companies. Most of the producers who spoke to the ITC predicted that a third of existing independent companies could be out of business in the next five years⁶⁶. Factors underpinning this pessimism include:

- Strain placed on a distinctive tradition of regional broadcasting following the consolidation of ITV
- A drop in the ITC regional programming requirement for ITV (Channel Three) franchise holders
- Falling audience share for ITV, traditionally the home of regional production
- Downturn in advertising and a consequent reduction in programme budgets

Producers in the ITC survey felt a pressure to make programmes of direct significance to local lives. Quality and relevance are becoming key determinants of broadcasting policy, and key broadcasters have responded accordingly.

The vast increase in broadcast space available through digital broadcasting is the basis for an alternative viewpoint arguing that economic and cultural opportunities are greater now than ever before. A profusion of channels means new material will be needed to attract audiences. Consumer expenditure on television and related material is likely to increase in the next decade, and public policy is likely to be directed towards supporting diversity within programme making. This will inevitably encompass more production from across the country and the Channel Corridor Media Strategy aims to put in place the foundations needed to deliver programmes from within the M20 corridor and across Kent. Companies need to position themselves to plan for the future and the main broadcasters are currently working on strategies to take advantage of opportunities emerging in the digital age.

- The BBC has a target of 33% of its programming budget to be spent outside the M25⁶⁷ and the new BBC3 is required to find 33% of its broadcast programmes outside the M25.

⁶⁵ See Cluster Muscle in PACT Magazine, 125, October 2002. PACT is the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television and represents over 1000 members across the UK.

⁶⁶ See Page 39 Television in the Nations and Regions (ITC, 2002). Also, cited in PACT Magazine Issue 126, November 2002.

⁶⁷ In 2001/02 the BBC spent 38% of its budget outside the M25 according to the BBC's own Annual Report and Accounts. This may be accounted for by large budget productions from outside the M25 and does not necessarily correlate to 38% of broadcast programmes coming from outside the M25.

- Carlton/Granada has announced a £2m jointly financed fund for 2003 open to in-house and independent producers for new regional programming

The most significant development for the Channel Corridor Media Strategy is the Channel Four's Creative Cities strategy. The aim is to build a sustainable cluster of local business and talent pools outside of London by working alongside public sector agencies including local authorities, HEIs, RSAs, LSCs and RDAs to support the development and growth of stronger regional production economies across the UK. Stuart Cosgrove, Head of Nations and Regions at Channel Four has spoken of the importance of 'active creativity rather than passive subsidy' and argues that 'success should be built on ideas and innovations, not on the politics of grudge and obligation'⁶⁸.

The creation of the Regional Screen Agencies is part of this wider trend towards developing support for regional media economies. There is no doubting the commitment of the Film Council and the RSAs, however, these agencies are small and relatively underbudgeted so their ability to make a significant economic and cultural impact on the local production economy is limited and their primary role may well be to act as catalysts for future development. With this in mind, Screen South should be able to catalyse the development of a stronger media economy in the Channel Corridor and across Kent.

By way of comparison, it is worth pointing out that prior to the creation of Liverpool based Moving Image Development Agency (MIDA) in 1993 there were only two PACT registered production companies in the city, one of which was Mersey TV. By 2000, there were 15. The root of MIDA's success was the ability to support the growth of the production economy by ignoring traditional distinctions within the media sector and focussing on the social and economic benefits of a stronger media production sector. MIDA took advantage of funding opportunities available through Objective One to create a production fund which aimed to attract large-scale productions to the city, but it also supported local businesses by building skills and developing a more entrepreneurial culture. Incoming production provided valuable work experience for local people. MIDA has now been folded into North West Vision, the Regional Screen Agency in North West England. However, a similar approach is being developed at Liverpool Film Studios⁶⁹ established as a Company Limited by Guarantee in Kirkdale, Liverpool and the Liverpool Film Academy, based next to the studio. The intention is that the success of the studio will support the work of the Film Academy in developing local talent. The hope is that production companies from around the country will send their staff for education and training to the Film Academy. Liverpool is being positioned to use the success of MIDA as a catalyst for future development.

Similar possibilities exist in Kent. Maidstone Studios is a well-equipped resource which stands to benefit from its recent acquisition by Dovedale Associates. The new owners are committed to keeping the facility open as a television studio and are looking to create a media village housing a television related businesses around Maidstone. PACT membership in Kent currently stands at seven, though this includes the studios and there is clearly potential to build on this if a cluster of activity grows around Maidstone. Public policy could be directed towards support for a broadly based public-private partnership around Maidstone Studios to build skills, encourage talent and raise the profile of Kent as a home for media production.

⁶⁸ See Stuart Cosgrove – Creative Cities speech to Television in the Nations and Regions Conference –December 2001. Full text available on <http://www.pact.co.uk/>

⁶⁹ See <http://www.liverpoolfilmstudios.co.uk/>

Appendix Two - Feasibility Study to Support the Development of an Enterprise Gateway centred around Maidstone

Studios Concept Definition

- Setting agreed aims and objectives for the Cluster
- Identify production activity, project development and business expansion
- Determine frameworks for expansion, investment, building partnerships and business support
- Develop the role of Education, training and continuing professional development
- Establish an enterprise gateway for the Channel Corridor

Market Research

- Audit of existing commercial activity in Kent and Thames Gateway
- Potential partners and participating companies for the enterprise
- Prospective opportunities for media professionals
- Prospective access and benefit for education and training
- A development plan for attracting companies, individuals and investment funding
- Test the viability of an Innovation Centre

Location

- The study will include an analysis of the viability of the proposed triangle of activity between Maidstone Studios, The Oakwood Park Campus and the proposed Eclipse Business Park next to the M20
- Research the viability and costs of access to the broadband node in the area
- Explore scenarios for connections between the different sites
- Establish whether it can work as a cluster and will serve the aims and objectives of the project
- Evaluate quality of life assets in the Maidstone area including travel times, access to transport, hotels, restaurants and nightlife etc.

Programme of Activity

Maidstone Studios activity could include:

- Television studio operations and production
- Film Studio operations
- A Media Village housing:
 - Production companies
 - Post production facilities
 - Screening facilities
 - Broadband connection
 - Studio ancillary services design, construction, equipment etc
 - Online digital services and web design etc
 - Creative Industries Development Agency for Kent Business Link
- Post Graduate Screen School (led by KIAD)
- Studio facilities for a raft of training courses for continuing professional development (Skillset & KIAD)
- Business development and incubator unit

Proposed Eclipse (Technology) Business Park conceived to house a series high end technology companies connected to Broadband and drawn from a wide range of creative industries.

Oakwood Park Campus activity could include:

- Mid Kent College delivering a wide range of FE and HE courses aligned to the creative industries and with a focus on television, film and digital media.
- KIAD running an undergraduate programme with a focus on television, film and digital media (a possible pathway to the postgraduate Screen School at the Maidstone Studios.)
- Entry point and advanced training in television, film and digital media for community and continuing professional development
- Workspace and Networking Facilities
- Technical facilities for media professionals and community groups

Potential Partners

- Maidstone Studios (Dovedale)
- Kent College of Art and Design (KIAD)
- Mid Kent College
- Eclipse Business Park Developer
- Maidstone Council
- Kent County Council
- Screen South
- SEEDA

Legal Issues

- Governance
- Organisational Structure
- Partnership Options

Business Plans

- Establish Capital and Revenue Budget for the cluster project
- Income and Expenditure forecast to include exploration of public and commercial sources of finance
- Establish relationship between legal and financial systems and partners

Fundraising

- Create a realistic financial picture with a broad funding base
- Build relationships with potential partners and identify relationship between the various partners

Technology and Equipment Strategy

- Determine Equipment requirements that are key to the Cluster
- ICT strategy to facilitate connection within the Cluster
- Special requirements related to the installation of any new technology

Access and Cultural Diversity

- Establish a wide-ranging Access Strategy to buildings, resources, programmes and trading issues.
- Research and advice on developing specific policies and plans
- Develop a Cultural Diversity Action Plan and Disability Action Plan

Achieving the Stages of the Project

The study is in two stages:

1. A feasibility study to determine the viability of the cluster, create a development plan, make applications to the clusters fund and any other potential funders.
2. To appoint an executive to broker the partnerships and take the project forward on the basis of the recommendations of the feasibility study.

Next Steps

A steering group should be created to oversee the development of this project and this should include representation from all potential partners. The Steering Group may approach suitably qualified consultants and ask them to submit a proposal, including:

- Track record
- Proposal of how you intend to pursue the work
- Methodology / Associates
- Budget breakdown
- Time scales
- Daily rates of consultants

Appendix Three - Brief for Digital Media Centre

The study should address the following issues:

Concept Definition

- Setting agreed aims and objectives for the new Digital Media Centre
- Project Development, Training and Business Support
- Exhibition and Archival work
- Scope for Community Activity and related outreach work

Market Research

- Audit of existing activity in Kent
- Audience Potential for a Digital Media Centre
- Prospective use by Media Professionals
- Prospective use by Community Groups
- An audience and user groups development plan

Location

- Identification of preferred location (i.e. town or city)
- The Study will include an analysis of different sites and will justify the most favoured site option.

This analysis should include:

- research into available sites
- comparison of the advantages/disadvantages of each proposed site
- outline of the procedures necessary for securing a suitable site
- identification of the site considered most suitable for the Project, giving detailed reasons for this
- an explanation of how the site of the new building will fulfil the ambitions of the project
- The study will then go on to provide outline design (to RIBA Stage C or below) and costing for preferred site from a quantity surveyor

Programme of Activity

- Develop the blend and range of programmes within the Digital Media Centre to include:
 - Film Exhibition
 - Training
 - Production Activity
 - Community use
 - Workspace and Networking Facilities
 - Technical facilities for media professionals and community groups

Legal Issues

- Governance
- Organisational Structure
- Partnership Options

Business Plan

- Establish Capital and Revenue Budget for the project
- Income and Expenditure forecast to include exploration of public and commercial sources of finance
- Identify suitable staff complement

- Facilitate cash flow forecast, identify financial accountability
- Establish relationship between legal and financial systems and Steering Group

Fundraising

- Create a realistic financial picture with a broad funding base
- Build relationships with potential partners and identify relationship between the various partners

Technology and Equipment Strategy

- Equipment specification
- ICT strategy to facilitate an intelligent building
- Special requirements related to the installation of any new technology.

Access and Cultural Diversity

- Establish a wide-ranging Access Strategy to address building, resources, programme and trading issues.
- Research and advice on developing specific policies and plans
- Develop a Cultural Diversity Action Plan and Disability Action Plan

Education

- Establish Education Strategy and Programme
- Investigate the potential for collaborative educational work
- Identify potential partnerships and opportunities for educational work in all sectors
- Researching the potential of technologies to deliver innovative Education work (including on-line education)

Bar/Restaurant

Proposed as a public access facility will be a bar/restaurant that will provide a social hub both for the users of the building and for the local community in which the Project is situated, and will attract people into the area from outlying districts. The viability of operating this will need to be tested by the Study.

Achieving the Next Stages of the Project

The Study will need to outline and cost a realistic follow-on strategy, or action plan, once the Study has been completed. Recommendations should be made as to how the immediate work of the six months or so following completion, as well as the Project itself, can be financed, and its likely costs.

Next Steps

A steering group should be created to oversee the development of this project and this should include representation from artists and practitioners from the outset. The Steering Group may choose to approach suitably qualified consultants and ask them to submit a proposal, including:

- Track record
- Proposal of how you intend to pursue the work
- Methodology / Associates
- Budget breakdown
- Time scales
- Daily rates of consultants

Appendix Four – Methodological Note on the Research

Business Database and Survey Analysis

At the outset of this study, we were keen to explore the possibility of conducting a quantitative survey of businesses in the Channel Corridor, although the scope of any such survey was greatly limited by the size of the research budget. In designing a quantitative survey of this sector, the key issue was to establish whether or not it was possible, within the constraints of the budget and timescale, to put together a representative sample of cultural and media industries.

As part of the early stages of the project development, we were provided with the following databases and directories by members of the Client Group:

- Business Link Kent business database
- Ashford Council business directory
- Shepway Council business directory
- Maidstone Council business directory

It became clear from early investigations of these databases that although a good starting point, they were not going to provide a comprehensive picture of media and creative businesses in the area. There was an inevitable bias towards larger, more established businesses (as a result of the directories being largely compiled from VAT records or business rate registration records) and therefore a likely under-representation of very small businesses operating under the VAT limit, and individuals operating from home addresses.

Given greater time and budget, ideally we would have supplemented our database further with a search by postcode and SIC code of the Yellow Pages Business Database which has a somewhat wider coverage. (Indeed, the Maidstone directory businesses had been partly sourced from Yellow Pages). A comprehensive search was not possible for this study. However, we were able to supplement the four business directories listed above with a search of the Kent Hothouse contact list, the Knowledge (a directory of businesses and individuals working in the TV, commercial, film and video production industry) and local Chamber of Commerce directories. In this way, we were able to include individuals and small businesses in the postal consultation exercise.

A search of the main directories was conducted for businesses located within the Channel Corridor postcodes, and falling with SIC categories (Standard Industrial Classification) that had been identified as of relevance to this study. These SIC categories are appended to this report. In addition, in order to ensure we were not missing any relevant creative/media businesses that had been incorrectly SIC classified, or had not been allocated a SIC code, we also searched the databases by key words.

As a result of these searches and supplementation from the Kent Hothouse and Knowledge lists, about 1,540 media and creative businesses / individuals were identified, 840 of which were involved in 'content origination' in the media and creative industries. Content origination includes the following activities: publishing, software consultancy, PR consultancy, architectural activities, advertising, photography, design, motion picture production, radio and television activities, live theatrical and other artistic or literary creation, and news agency activities. 430 of these 'content originators' were selected at random, as the postal survey sample.

A brief postal questionnaire (appended to this report) was developed in conjunction with the Client Group. The questionnaire included questions about the main activity of the business, number of employees, use of freelancers, type and location of clients, annual turnover, benefits and problems associated with being located in Kent, and suggestions for strategy development to boost the creative and media sector in the area.

86 completed questionnaires were returned, which represents a response rate of 20%. (Given that seven questionnaires were returned by businesses that had moved or closed down, the response rate might be slightly higher among existing businesses, but it is impossible to tell without up to date information about the full sample).

The responses to these surveys have been summarised in the main body of the report. Detailed response tables for each question have been included in the Appendices.

Depth Interviews with Businesses

Sixteen depth interviews have been conducted with a range of businesses. Eleven of these interviews were conducted in person, and five by telephone. Businesses interviewed covered a range of different creative and media activities, and a range of locations throughout the Channel Corridor. The individuals or businesses were either recommended for interview by the Client Group, identified through a search of local business databases, or made contact with the researcher in response to a local press release about the study.

Those taking part in interviews were assured that their comments would be treated confidentially. For this reason, we have not listed the businesses individually in this report. However, below is a summary of the types of businesses involved in this part of the consultation:

- Photography and graphic design business (sole trader)
- Local radio station
- Medium size printing business
- Full service marketing and advertising agency
- Small video production company
- 2 x Local newspapers
- Television production facilities
- Web design company (8 employees)
- Specialist exhibition design company
- Video and multimedia business
- Local arts promotion organisation
- Entertainment agency
- 2 x Freelance commercial and screenwriters

Content of depth interviews

Business Database Analysis: SIC Codes used to identify creative & Media Businesses

4	5 digit Activity
digit	
2211	Publishing of books

2212		Publishing of newspapers
2213		Publishing of journals and periodicals
2214		Publishing of sound recordings
2215		Other publishing
2221		Printing of newspapers
2222		Printing not elsewhere classified
2223		Bookbinding and finishing
2224		Composition and plate-making
2225		Other activities related to printing
2231		Reproduction of sound recording
2232		Reproduction of video recording
2233		Reproduction of computer media
2464		Manufacture of photographic chemicals
2465		Manufacture of prepared unrecorded media
2955		Manufacture of machinery for paper & paperboard production
3002		Manufacture of computers & other information processing equipment
3210		Manufacture of electronic valves etc
3220		Manufacture of TV and radio transmitters and apparatus for line telephony
3220	32202	Manufacture of TV/radio transmitters etc
3230		Manufacture of TV/radio receivers etc
3340		Manufacture of optical instruments & photographic equipment
3340	33403	Manufacture of optical instruments etc
3622		Manufacture of jewellery and related articles nec
3630		Manufacture of musical instruments
5143		Wholesale of electrical household appliances, radio and TV goods etc
5143	51431	Wholesale of gramophone records, audio tapes, compact discs and video tapes and of the equipment on which these are played
5143	51432	Wholesale of radios and televisions; wholesale of electrical household appliances not elsewhere classified
5147		Wholesale of other household goods
5245		Retail sale of electrical household appliances and radio and television goods
5247		Retail sale of books, newspapers and stationery
5248	52482	Retail sale of photographic, optical and precision equipment, office supplies and equipment (including computers etc)
5248	52489	Retail sale in specialised stores nec
5250		Retail sale of secondhand goods in stores
6420		Telecommunications (includes radio & TV programme transmission, image & sound transmission)
7134		Renting of other machinery & equipment nec (inc. audio-visual and radio equipment)
7140		Renting of sporting & recreational equipment (inc. camera / photographic equipment / musical instruments / sound equipment)
7220		Software consultancy and supply
7260		Other computer related activities
7414		PR / financial / general / business management consultancy
7414	74149	Business & management consultancy activities not elsewhere classified
7420		Architectural / urban planning / engineering design activities
7420	74201	Architectural activities
7420	74202	Urban planning and landscape architectural activities
7440		

7440	74402	Planning, creation and placement of advertising activities
7481		
7481	74819	Photographic activities nec
7481	74812	Other portrait photographic activities
7484		
7484	74842	Speciality design activities
7484	74843	Activities of exhibition and fair organisers
7484	74844	Activities of conference organisers
8022		Technical and vocational secondary education (includes dance/music schools etc)
8042		Private training providers / other adult & other education nec
9211		
9211	92111	Motion picture production on film or video tape
9211	92119	Other motion picture and video production activities
9212		Motion picture and video distribution
9213		Motion picture projection
9220		
9220	92201	Radio activities
9220	92202	Television activities
9231		Live theatrical/other artistic & literary creation etc
9231	92311	Live theatrical presentations
9231	92319	Other artistic and literary creation and interpretation
9232		Operation of arts facilities
9234		Dance halls, discos... other entertainment activities NEC
9234	92341	Dance halls, discotheques and dance instructor activities
9234	92349	Other entertainment activities NEC (includes circus, puppets)
9240		News agency activities
9251		Library and archives activities
9272		Other recreational activities NEC

Business Database Analysis: Post Codes used to identify Creative & Media Businesses

CT15 7	ME13 0	ME5 8	TN25 4
CT18 6	ME13 9	ME5 9	TN25 5
CT18 7	ME14 1	ME7 3	TN25 6
CT18 8	ME14 2	ME9 0	TN25 7
CT18 9	ME14 3	ME9 7	TN26 1
CT19 4	ME14 4	ME9 8	TN26 2
CT19 5	ME14 5	TN12 0	TN26 3
CT19 6	ME15 0	TN12 5	TN27 0
CT19 8	ME15 6	TN12 6	TN27 8
CT20 1	ME15 7	TN12 9	TN27 9
CT20 2	ME15 8	TN17 4	TN28 8
CT20 3	ME15 9	TN18 5	TN28 9
CT20 6	ME16 0	TN23 1	TN29 0
CT21 4	ME16 8	TN23 3	TN29 2
CT21 5	ME16 9	TN23 4	TN29 9
CT21 6	ME17 1	TN23 5	TN30 6
CT28 8	ME17 2	TN23 6	TN30 7
CT4 5	ME17 3	TN23 7	TN31 7
CT4 6	ME17 4	TN24 0	
CT4 7	ME18 5	TN24 8	

Business Database Analysis: Key Words used to identify Creative & Media Businesses

Key words

advertising
architect
archive
art
audio
audio-visual
book
broadcast
cinema
design
distribution
DVD
exhibition
film
games
graphic
internet
media
multimedia
music
net
news
photograph
print
printer
publisher
publishing
radio
sign
software
studio
television
TV
video
virtual
visual
web

Postal Survey Responses

Type of establishment (Q1a)		
	Frequency	Percent
One of a no of different workplaces in UK	9	11
Single independent estab	76	88
unclear	1	1
Total	86	100

Type of business (Q2)		
	Frequency	Percent
Design services - often multi-media'	24	28
Architecture etc	15	17
TV/film/video production	13	15
Photography	8	9
Publishing	6	7
Other e.g. visual artists, interior designers	13	15
E commerce	2	2
Unclear	5	6
Total	86	100

Number of employees (Q3)		
	Frequency	Percent
One permanent employee	24	28
Two	19	22
Three	10	12
Four to nine	17	20
Ten to fifteen	6	7
Sixteen to twenty-five	4	5
More than twenty-five	4	5
Not answered	2	2
Total	86	100

Current number of freelance staff (Q4)		
	Frequency	Percent
No freelance / casual staff	38	44
One	9	11
Two	8	9
Three to five	16	19
Six to ten	5	6
Eleven to twenty	3	4
21 or more	4	5
Unclear	3	4
Total	86	100

Number of freelances used over past year (Q5)		
	Frequency	Percent
None	23	27
One	8	9
Two to five	31	36
Three to nine	6	7
Ten to nineteen	4	5
20 – 49	8	9
50 or more	3	4
Unclear	3	4
Total	86	100

How much business done with Kent? (Q6)		
	Frequency	Percent
All Business	6	7
Most	15	17
Three quarters	7	8
Half	13	15
Quarter	4	5
Less than quarter	25	29
None	7	8
Unclear	9	11
Total	86	100

How much business done with London? (Q6)		
	Frequency	Percent
All Business	4	5
Most	1	1
Three quarters	4	5
Half	8	9
Quarter	16	19
Less than quarter	37	43
None	2	2
Unclear	14	16
Total	86	100

How much business done with other parts of South East? (Q6)		
	Frequency	Percent
Most	2	2
Half	3	4
Quarter	17	20
Less than quarter	32	37
None	9	11
Unclear	23	27
Total	86	100

How much business done with other parts of the UK? (Q6)		
	Frequency	Percent
Most	3	4
Three quarters	3	4
Half	9	11
Quarter	11	13
Less than quarter	24	28
None	10	12
Unclear	26	30
Total	86	100

How much business done with other parts of Europe? (Q6)		
	Frequency	Percent
Half	4	5
Quarter	5	6
Less than quarter	20	23
None	23	27
Unclear	34	40
Total	86	100

How much business done with other parts of the world? (Q6)		
	Frequency	Percent
All business	1	1
Most	1	1
Half	2	2
Quarter	4	5
Less than quarter	19	22
None	26	30
Unclear	33	38
Total	86	100

How long has the business had premises in Kent? (Q7)		
	Frequency	Percent
1 - 2 years	11	13
3 - 5 years	8	9
6 - 9 years	19	22
10 - 14 years	16	19
15 - 24 years	16	19
25+ years	11	13
Unclear	5	6
Total	86	100

Has the business always had premises in Kent? (Q8)		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes, always in Kent	68	79
No	15	17
Unclear	3	4
Total	86	100

Main benefits associated with being located in this part of Kent? (Q9)		
	Frequency	Percent
Good transport links to London/SE	44	51
Good transport links to Europe	23	27
Low property costs	19	22
Good links with local businesses	19	22
Good supply of skilled workforce	14	16
Other benefits	11	13
Low salary levels	8	9
Good supply of local grads	7	8
Strong creative & media sector	6	7
Good business support	5	6
Good access to broadband	3	4
No benefits	5	6
Total	86	100

Main problems associated with being located in this part of Kent? (Q10)		
	Frequency	Percent
Poor access to broadband	24	28
Poor supply of workforce	21	24
High property costs	21	24
Weak creative & media sector	20	23
Poor transport links to London/SE	13	15
Poor links with local businesses	12	14
Poor supply of local grads	9	11
Poor transport links to other parts of UK	9	11
High salary levels	8	9
Poor business support	8	9
Other problems	8	9
Low salary levels	1	1
Poor transport links to Europe	1	1
No Problem	13	15
Total	86	100

Annual gross turnover of business (Q11)		
	Frequency	Percent
Less than £100,000	40	47
£100k - £499,999	23	27
£500k - £999,999	7	8
£1m - £4,999,999	10	12
£5m or more	2	2
Unclear	4	5
Total	86	100

Responses to Q12 Business Postal Survey

Q12: We would welcome your comments on the direction you think that Kent, Ashford, Maidstone and Shepway Councils should take, in developing a future strategy for growth in the creative and media industries in Kent.

- *“Broadband access. Faster train links to London. Affordable office space for sole traders”*
- *“Promote more public exhibitions. Build more facilities for the visual arts”*
- *“A centre that is a hub of activity for people to come to in each major town is an enormous help. This should be aimed to encourage professionals as well as others interested in the arts. Maybe a gallery space charging modest commission, coffee shops (with light lunches for ladies who lunch), live music from quality players and quality workshops open to artists who are area-based. If I can be of any help on these, just ring. I would only be too happy to help.”*
- *“More supporting industries - particularly manufacturing. Ban on Phoenix companies and fly-by-night directors”*
- *“Have good public / media links. We are at the moment doing at Ashford Future Plan. I understand that we need to plan but I believe that some urgent things need to be done now. I believe this affects businesses. Parking in Ashford. We can go on planning Ashford for the next 5-10 years, but parking will not go away. We must have some sort of park and ride. This has got to help.”*
- *“From my experience, the field of courses run by local colleges don't have NVQs for my profession. So I cannot train a local person and get funding because it only applies in a radius of your business. The nearest college that has a NVQ is either Thanet or London”*

- *“Have had a very poor experience in dealing with BT to have ADSL installed. Councils could perhaps liaise more to ensure that business parks have priority in having access to new technology such as this. If new housing estates were built with broadband or its successor in mind, there could be more home-working. Gave up on BT, and had a radio link installed to access internet! This was a critical issue for our business with the volume of emailed images/text increasing all the time”*
- *“I do not think there is room for growth in the photographic sector of the industry. It is already over-subscribed with pressures from a recessing industry and new technology. Many photographers I know are struggling. Over-output from colleges does not help if the industry is not there to support them! The standard of college learners seems to be falling as colleges taken on greater numbers (foreign) of students to subsidise courses. On the premises front, more scope for live/work property would be helpful for many”*
- *“Lobby Granada to maintain or increase its level of local output on Meridian. Develop and encourage new media companies at Maidstone studios, currently a wasted resource in the county town”*
- *“More PR”*
- *“Work through Chamber of Commerce - the recognised voice of private business”*
- *“Do not over develop. Restrict expansion of the smaller towns. Improve direct links to the North. Kent is susceptible to unemployment.”*
- *“There is a lot of poorly designed material about, and little realisation of cost and importance of strong identity / brand awareness / marketing. The feeling is very much "I can knock it up myself / get it done cheaper". The level of design about is of poor quality generally, which may be driven by the fact that people aren't prepared for the better stuff: the whole sector is rather "in the sticks””*
- *“More help to SMALL businesses, especially with expansion and employing staff”*
- *“Be MUCH MORE proactive in creating opportunities - have people dedicated to actively promoting and selling the talents and expertise of local professionals. Get to know us - call us - visit us - to learn what we can do, individually and collectively. Pool our resources as groups who can actively tender for major contracts (which would be difficult to do individually). Get out there and get active! We can't do it alone.”*
- *“Increase funding, facilities and venues”*
- *“As we develop we shall need new premises. Provided terms are sensible, a Maidstone media centre may be a choice for us”*

- *“1) more funding 2) wider events coverage 3) larger range of research facilities 4) graduate training schemes 5) benefits for research, arts festivals and support for creative sources 6) free lease time for short periods for performance pieces at arts venues 7) larger access to Kent Arts support services 8) directory for contacting other similar businesses for networking”*
- *“1. Promote better transport links in S.E, 2. Make it easier for small businesses to buy freehold business properties, 3. Put to government the need for more effective competition in the legal and accounting professions to reduce the heavy costs of these on small businesses”*
- *“1) Our experience as a business is generally limited to work we do for KCC. We have enjoyed our relationship with KCC and find your in-house team easy to work with. 2) Regarding future strategy, I would suggest that students should be encouraged to work within local business during holiday periods. perhaps an incentive could be given to companies to encourage more of this type of activity. Students whilst educated within various colleges usually find the working environment within marketing organisations a big shock. Companies could help with this. 3) There are times when we would like to demonstrate skill sets we have developed e.g. multimedia which we think councils should be interested in.”*
- *“I am happy to meet and discuss in detail if required”*
- *“Encourage more design-led projects using local expertise. Avoid using big name London practices for the design work, just because of the name. Encourage open competitions for major projects”*
- *“Encouraging more people into engineering, maybe developing a return to the apprenticeship system by providing support to companies who take on apprentices. We have 2 trainees at the moment”*
- *“It is VITAL to improve rail transport links. It is important to nurture the struggling media-related industry in Kent, particularly E.Kent where Maidstone offers a natural hub.”*
- *“Remove the current practice of shutting the M20 and using it as a truck park. Channel funding to LOCAL businesses to employ LOCAL people via a local initiative. Set up a committee of Kent directors to come up with viable local initiatives”*
- *“Start by introducing everyone together”*
- *“We need BROADBAND!! I am currently having to look at a satellite connection because BT won't enable ADSL in this area”*

- *“A venue for creative people to meet and network that could also be an exhibition space promoting creativity in Kent. Educating the general business sector, that excellent creativity exists in Kent, and the value effective creativity can have on their business. Promote local artists.”*
- *“More public works of art. Look at successful councils and adapt their strategies for growth. The potential is present but lacks any pro-active input from local councils, government too long winded for any projects to come to fruition. Stuck with same old apathy.”*
- *“Personally having approached Maidstone, Dover, Shepway, Ashford and Canterbury Councils since relocating from London to Maidstone, and receiving the same comments from each of "No Budgets" to up creative profiles, and seeing the poor standard of existing work produced, I would be amazed that they could do anything to develop creative and media industries!”*
- *“Encourage co-operation between the sectors. I work with KIAD for public art for example. I would like to find a good graphic designer for a book I'm doing but I don't know how to. Local authorities must be proactive in promoting quality instead of dictating mediocrity as they do now, in the planning and design process. Do it - don't waste time on surveys like this.”*
- *“More recognition of our industry as a 'profession'. The TV and Media has helped enormously. But we need more skilled staff out of colleges, more courses available for practical skills - stonework, bricklaying, more management and business skills”*
- *“Improving road infrastructure and looking at how the county can cope with the increasing traffic using Kent as a corridor from/to Europe, and other parts of the UK. Continued (and enhanced) support of KIAD.”*
- *“Continue development of local cultural sector and arts. Provide places for people to go. Support and encourage a wider range of business and leisure opportunities to attract a wider variety and more diversity of residents capable of supporting creative and media industries. PROMOTION of area and its locational /environmental strengths. Join up their thinking.”*
- *“I think Councils should use business more in the Kent area, rather than outside of Kent, thereby helping to develop and grow a closer working relationship with business in Kent, which can also be more cost effective”*
- *“Need to get much better facilities – encourage companies down from London with bait of offices and cheap rents. Develop media centres where like minded companies will congregate - don't waste money on 'seminars' and such like - put your efforts into offering better facilities!”*

- *“To make available realistically priced property. We are only where we are because the rent is so low, but then obviously it's not where the general shopper goes. Suggest a creative co-operative centre. E.g. when/if ever the Army & Navy in Maidstone becomes vacant, it might/could be a suitable venue”*
- *“Access to broadband would help us personally and encourage the use of more creativity in the design of web material on a worldwide basis. Public awareness of "Art" by the provision of more galleries, theatres etc”*
- *“There's no one source of information for professionals based in Kent - either a book directory or website. The sector is very fragmented and London-focused. It's no longer a question of facilities. Contacts are the lifeblood of the business and anything to increase that flow is going to help develop more of a sense of a media community.”*
- *“I find the biggest problem in Kent is letting possible clients know what I do. Perhaps a database or website on which designers/companies could have space to show what they can do. If this was advertised on a national/international basis, it could generate a substantial amount of work.”*
- *“Better broadband coverage by BT lines. Better road system (or rail). Transport out of the area v. difficult. EASIER to have customers in Europe and deal via email etc.”*
- *“A major problem in Maidstone, which will inhibit growth businesses locating here, is the traffic. There are several bottle necks in the town which could be alleviated by some fairly inexpensive alterations. Also, whenever there is a major incident on the M20 between junctions 5-8 then the whole town seizes up.”*
- *“Folkestone needs a focal "destination" function, such as a Turner Centre etc with associated activities / even if it is cinema. Better leisure facilities etc. With major focus on its unique location near and above the sea”*
- *“Parking - in major towns to hamlets seems to be difficult. Maidstone desperately needs a cohesive architectural plan. You have some good design colleges in Kent - Ravensbourne etc, but little social life (sorry sweeping statement - probably inaccurate) or safe accommodation for students. The best 'designery' places in the UK for students are Bath/Bristol, Coventry etc - they all have good youth culture. Canterbury is the nearest I've found it in Kent. I don't generally think Kent has any particular problems design wise, except like everywhere else in the country, getting commercial companies to invest in design. Apparently 75% of growing industries rate design as a key issue as opposed to 17% of static ones.”*
- *“The local art colleges appear to have few links with creatives in the area, and there is no design community within the Maidstone area as such”*

- *“We feel that the most important factor is to develop an infrastructure and atmosphere that will allow and encourage the propagation of creative skills. A coming together of people with high tech and "out of the box" creative thinking. Every town in the survey has areas of boarded up shops in interesting and potentially attractive locations that are crying out to be converted into centres for interactive commercial creativity. We need to have the public involved and invite them to be part of the project, be seen to do it there, within the community. Get the people fired up and everything else will fall into place.”*
- *“I have no knowledge of what the council's strategy is at present - liaison must be paramount, surely. Understanding of our industry. Subsidised work placements. More appropriate training - education courses are impractical and over-ambitious (probably not in the council's gift but the proliferation of media related courses available across all levels of education are misleading and most irrelevant!)”*
- *“Excluding Canterbury, to improve towns' appearance and improve facilities to attract weekend and short break holidays.”*

Appendix Five – Acknowledgements

This study was completed between October 2002 and January 2003. the process was overseen by a Steering Group and the Consultancy Team would like to thank for their valuable support and guidance throughout the study.

Members of the Steering Group

Tony Bartlett – Business Link Kent
Sally Campbell – Shepway District Council
David Hawkins – KIAD
Chris Inwood – Ashford Borough Council
Jim Mckenzie – Kent County Council
Andrew Osborne – Maidstone Borough Council
Dave Shore – Shepway District Council
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Appendix Six – List of Consultees

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Chris Campbell – Shepway District Council
Dan Chadwick - GOSE
Chris Chandler – Film Council
Clive Cooke – South Kent College
John Cross – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Kerry Culbert – Ashford Borough Council
Nick Ewbank – The Metropole Galleries/Creative Folkestone
Gina Fegan – Screen South
John Foster – Shepway District Council
Karina Gormet – International South Kent College
Grenvill Hancock - Canterbury Christ Church University College
Peter Hobbs – Shepway Business Centre
David Hughes – Kent County Council
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Geoff Miles – Dovedale
Simon Mohr – Creative Folkestone
Jo Nolan – Kent Hothouse/Screen South
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Miranda Pearce – SEEDA
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Kate Reid - ITC
Alf Smyth - Canterbury Christ Church University College
Jean Young - ITC

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**Digital Science
A Collaboration between
The Wellcome Trust and NESTA**



Evaluation by DS Media



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Executive Summary

Digital technology is becoming progressively more important in formal and informal education. Young people enjoy using it and educationalists are keen to develop tools which can enable learners to engage with difficult subject areas in an unconventional way. Recent years have seen a growth in the economic power delegated to individual schools and the market for e-learning resources has increased exponentially.

Through the Digital Science Initiative, the Wellcome Trust and NESTA worked together to explore the potential to create new digital tools to teach science. The impetus for this programme came from revisions to the core Science Curriculum. DS Media Consulting Limited was engaged by the partners to evaluate the initiative.

The Digital Science initiative ran from August 2004 to May 2006. It started with a PAL Lab in rural Kent and teams from the Lab developed a series of ideas some of which were turned into educational tools as part of a development process overseen by staff from Wellcome Trust and NESTA.

This report is focussed on the operational processes within the Digital Science initiative. It draws a number of conclusions and makes a series of recommendations about how a comparable initiative could operate in the future. These include:

- Reworking the Lab Process to include more constructive preparatory work
- Establishing clear lines of responsibility within the Lab to avoid any perceptions of conflict of interest
- Introducing a transparent recruitment process for the PAL Lab
- Revising the timetable so that a clear schedule of work is in place at the outset of the programme
- Providing additional funds to support the development process
- Appointing a single senior executive to oversee the management of the scheme

Scope of Evaluation

This formative evaluation report looks at the development process pioneered through the Digital Science initiative, and considers whether this is an effective means for developing digital tools for use in education. The report concludes with a number of simple recommendations about how comparable funding schemes or support programmes could operate in the future, but does not concentrate on the merits of the individual projects developed through the programme.

Research was completed over a two-year period from August 2004 to August 2006. The evaluation draws on material made available to DS Media by NESTA, Wellcome Trust and various participants.

Introduction

The Digital Science initiative conceived by Nesta¹ and the Wellcome Trust² ran from June 2004 through to the middle of 2006.

NESTA is the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts. The Digital Science initiative was supported by the Learning Team who was primarily interested in exploring new ways to engage learners with science, inside and outside a formal education setting. Katherine Mathieson, Learning Programme Manager, was appointed lead officer in NESTA.

The Wellcome Trust shared this objective but also added an explicit interest in the ethical questions raised by contemporary scientific practice, for example questions posed by the Genome Project. For this reason the work was supported, as part of a wider portfolio, through the Public Engagement Development Group where primary contact Simon Parry was employed.

The aims were defined in a preparatory document as being to:

- *Develop initiative approaches, including resources and pedagogical strategies, for addressing socio-scientific issues in the classroom*
- *Prototype a number of these approaches and put them through a process of critical review and testing*
- *Support a small number of projects through to dissemination and embedding in practice*
- *Establish links between educators, new media developers and other creative professionals to generate ideas*
- *Establish links between the new projects and the pilot "21st Century Science" GCSE*
- *Develop a creative approach to generating innovative ideas in education*

Source NESTA/Wellcome, June 2004

¹ See www.nesta.org.uk for further current information about NESTA. It is worth noting the organisation has undergone a considerable restructuring process since this project was initially conceived.

² See www.wellcome.ac.uk for material on the work of the Wellcome Trust

- **Expectations**

The commissioning partners were deliberately open in their expectations. No restrictions were placed on the exploration of subject areas, or the digital means of delivery. The ambition was to develop of interactive digital tools including web based tools, internet, DVD, CD-ROM/DVD-ROM, digital video, games consoles, mobile phones, PDA applications and digital installations to teach ethical issues around science. This seems relatively simple but did cause some confusion.

- **Management**

Katherine Mathieson and Simon Parry managed Digital Science on behalf the commissioners. Their responsibilities included working with the participants, the delivery agents primarily PAL and the DS Media Evaluation team.

Digital Science Schedule

The initiative was divided into a series of phases. The timetable slipped badly and the dates below are those when events occurred rather than those in the original schedule. The original schedule was extended at the request of the project teams who needed more time to build projects to reach the level conceived at the outset.

Ideas Generation (September 2004)

Inter disciplinary PAL Lab to create ideas and build project teams to take those ideas forward. PAL Digital Science Lab took place between 5th and 9th of September 2004 at the secluded Bore Farm near Chiddingstone in rural Kent. Twenty four one page ideas were developed at the lab for project teams to work on.

Ideas to Proposal (to Dec 2004)

Support of £2,000 was made available towards ideas developed or inspired by the PAL Lab, so that they could be taken forward to treatment stage. Fourteen proposals were submitted and six were taken forward.

Prototyping (to June 2005)

Support of up to £10,000 to take an idea from treatment through to Prototype. This phase was designed to include concept refinement, development of prototype tools/software and user testing. Three projects were supported at this point; one more than originally envisaged

Piloting (to May 2006)

A fourth phase was added so that selected projects could be tested in the classroom and refined. Support of £20,000 was made available for prioritised projects.

The PAL Digital Science LAB



Overview

The Lab brought together teachers, new media designers (including software/games designers), writers (writer/designer teams), science communicators, performers/artists, philosophers, ethicists and social scientists to discuss the use of digital technology as a tool to aid the teaching of the science curriculum. The stated objectives were to develop a range of projects that address challenging areas of the Science Curriculum in imaginative and engaging ways, thereby utilising the potential of digital technology in teaching and learning.

The creation and structuring of an effective collaborative environment lies at the heart of PAL's process. The setting is an isolated farm in Kent, where participants are able to escape day-to-day pressures and find space to think. The emphasis is on the rapid identification and iteration of concepts for discussion and debate, rather than the implementation of polished prototypes.

Every PAL lab requires a considerable commitment from the different participants. It is not something to be taken lightly. Setting the right framework and finding the right mix of participants are key tasks, which fell to PAL and the Lab Director. Both set the pattern for the subsequent development of the Digital Science Programme.

Defining the Pal Lab

The purpose of the PAL Lab³ was defined in the recruitment material circulated by PAL and the commissioners, as set out below:

The aim of the Lab is to develop a range of projects that address challenging areas of the Science Curriculum in imaginative and engaging ways and which explore the potential of digital technology in teaching and learning. PAL, June 2004

This can be taken as a clear statement of purpose for key developmental activity.

Individuals from science, media and education were invited to a PAL lab which ran from 5-9 September 2004 at Bore Place in Kent.

³ See www.pallabs.org for further detailed information on the background and work of PAL

Our task at this lab is to reflect on key social and ethical questions raised by the forces of science-driven change and to invent imaginative ways to engage our young target audience with the issues that are at stake. Max Whitby, Director, Digital Science Lab September 2004

The lab was the first time most people had met, and was the starting point for the digital science journey. Lab participants formed bespoke teams, and were asked to build projects for further development and support over the course of a period initially estimated to run for 18 months.

During the Lab our primary goal is to consider and develop 20 or so projects that could be used in formal and informal education Max Whitby, ibid

Finding the Right Participants

In June 2004 Susan Benn Director of Pal and Lab Director, Max Whitby of Red Green and Blue⁴ (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL) wrote to selected individuals on behalf of the commissioners inviting them to either apply for a place on the lab or to nominate a colleague. This invitation was accompanied by:

- 1) Objectives of Digital Science and Outline of the Lab programme
- 2) Information about the work of the Wellcome Trust and NESTA
- 3) Nomination Form

A total of 265 expressed interest. 46 applications were received and 22 were selected by Nesta, Wellcome, PAL and the Lab Director



Participants were universally bewildered by the recruitment process. A number received the invitation, and some received personal calls from those involved encouraging them to submit. Some received both. Although one person felt that knowing people were invited was part of the attraction, others were mostly unsure about how or why they had been asked. This is a difficult practice to justify for a public funder such as NESTA, where equality of opportunity and fair recruitment are expected for all funded activity.

Recruitment was also hampered by the timing of the Lab. The academic year starts in September and a number of teachers, young people or educationalists were unable to attend as a result. This influenced the

⁴ See www.RGB/Windfall Digitalco.com for information on Red Green and Blue

shape and content of a number of the proposals and is a key factor in the subsequent development of proposals flowing from the Lab.



Programming the Lab

The programme recognised that creative research is needed to shape science education. New areas of the curriculum (e.g. the Twenty-First Century Science GCSE, AS 'Science for Public Understanding and AS 'Perspectives on Science') require students to think in an increasingly questioning way, and therefore require new, creative approaches to teaching. Alongside this new and existing pedagogical methodologies need to utilise the digital technology, which is second nature to many young people.

RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL's programme for the Lab was devised and developed by Max Whitby and Anna Evans Freke of RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL, with advice from PAL, NESTA and Wellcome. RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL had the skills and experience in the development of interactive science projects needed to set the framework for the Lab. The Director's role allowed Max Whitby and his immediate colleagues at RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL to participate in discussions and set the agenda for the work of the Lab. It also allowed them to develop projects through the Lab. This dual focus attracted comment from nearly all the Lab participants interviewed as part of this evaluation, most argued that RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL's role should have been more clearly defined at the outset so that possible conflicts of interest are evident from the outset. A number of respondents argued that a more collaborative approach to setting the programme would have strengthened a number of projects.



Evaluating the Lab

At the start of the Lab participants were asked four questions:

1. What do you hope to achieve through your participation in the digital science initiative?
2. What do you hope to achieve at the Lab? How will this contribute to your ambitions with the Digital Science Initiative?
3. How are you looking to supplement your skills at the Lab

4. How do you see the output of the Lab being taken forward?

1. Hope to achieve through the Digital Science initiative?

Several participants were not fully aware of what the Digital Science Initiative was. The roots of this fundamental difficulty may be traced to a lack of available time to complete preparatory work in the run up to the lab rather than any particular shortcoming on behalf of the organisers. Responses from participants fell into three areas: meeting people, the benefits of sharing knowledge and the development of project-focused goals.

Meeting and building relationships with a wide range of people with similar interests and ambitions, was a recurring aspiration. The primary goal for networking was to find partners to develop concepts and projects, and to form links with relevant experts for future work. Securing funds to take them forward was mentioned a number of times.

Sharing knowledge and experience with others was seen as a means to develop new, better ideas. Key to this was establishing connections between those with an interest in online learning and digital science technology. Some came with a more selfish ambition and simply wanted to build their own pet project.

Participants wanted to:

- Explore methods of addressing contemporary science topics through digital media.
- Develop ideas in a format which is deliverable in schools.
- Identify new ideas about teaching science through what was characterised as 'multiple media'.

2. Hope to achieve at the Lab?

Respondents wanted to work with people to develop ideas, to gain knowledge, have a meaningful experience, devise practical applications and forge links with funders.

They wanted to meet people from other disciplines with diverse and complementary skills as a means to develop ideas and explore contemporary science. There was an emphasis on working on collaborative project development to crystallise ideas.

Other reasons for attending the lab included:

- An opportunity to focus on specific ideas, to take them further and subject them to more robust scrutiny than would normally be possible in the time available.
- A space to gain knowledge and a better understanding of the new AS+A Level subjects in science, science communications, science history and a clearer understanding of the science curriculum.
- An opportunity for personal development to enhance knowledge of the media and gain a broader awareness of current activity in the digital domain.

- A stimulating week in the country, with fascinating people engaged in exciting discussion that contributed to their own creative abilities and relationships.
- Several mentioned the importance of being part of innovative projects which could attract development investment from NESTA, Wellcome and possibly others.

3. Supplementing Skills

Some attendees were not seeking to supplement their skills, rather they sought to establish new contacts. Others identified building knowledge of science education or acquiring practical media skills. A number saw it as part of their personal CPD programme.

Skills in education included the opportunity to work with teachers and students, to look at how online ideas work within a classroom. The new media participants identified a need for a better understanding of teaching science and science issues. Others wanted to learn about different approaches to traditional educational problems and to explore other methods of delivering material on science, biology, biotechnology to pupils. Gaining new knowledge on curriculum requirements was mentioned several times, and in particular a need to understand more about issues surrounding ethics and its new position within the curriculum.

Personal skills including an opportunity to engage in challenging discussions, develop creative skills, brainstorm, from idea and the ability to quickly turn these into projects. There was a wish to improve interdisciplinary networking by working with others outside particular disciplines to learn new skills through exposure to people working in different fields.

Practical development includes filming and basic media literacy around the digital, communication of ideas to different audiences. To learn about new technologies exploring new digital media forms, and to become aware of resources outside ones own comfort zone.

4. Output of Lab

Some had no idea what the intended output was and appeared to be keeping an open mind. They accepted that the creation of investment ready projects was an ambition, participants had little idea of what this actually meant. Other identified outcomes included creating effective prototypes that will work in schools, digital tools courseware and establishing new professional connections which which could sustain after the Lab.

Access to space and time to develop investment ready projects to secure funding from NESTA, Wellcome and others was a consistent ambition. Participants wanted to turn the best ideas into tangible working prototypes which were strong enough to attract funding but, even at this early stage, were concerned that there was insufficient time and resource to do this.

Educational ambitions centred on a desire to encourage more pupils to be 'scientifically aware', and for more to choose science subjects at 'A' level and beyond. Production companies saw an opportunity to develop prototypes that could be tested in educational settings.

From the outset a number of complementary and overlapping ambitions were apparent, and the trick for the organisers was to reconcile these into a coherent programme. Some designers wanted to explore 'ethics' and the development of digital tools to assist individual analysis of complex technology applications integrated into dedicated courseware. Also the integration of video into course assets was mentioned. A software designer was sceptical that the curriculum-focused outcomes implicit in the set up of the Lab would constrain their engagement with the creative process.



Impressions of the Lab

The content of the Lab included working in group sessions as project teams with presentations and project reports as well as visiting speakers, show and tell sessions, eating together with a rota for domestic chores and night time recreation. It was a full schedule with little time for reflection or contemplation.

The spine of the story of the Lab is the process leading to the projects which emerged. It began with the selection of subject areas for testing in project seminars. This choice was centred on an initial list drawn up before the Lab, which was then refined following expressions of interest from Lab participants. Those expressions of interest were then configured into team workshops across the four days. Depending on how the sessions and presentations went the subject areas were amended, updated and added to. The process was evolutionary, free ranging and iterative but was guided by a significant amount of steerage from the Lab team. The dynamic between these two forces affected the quality, range and number of final projects that emerged in the subsequent phases of the Digital Science Initiative. A number of participants argued that the lab process could have been strengthened by a more discursive approach to programme development so that ideas and the agenda were considered equitably rather than being driven by a small group.

Each of the team sessions addressed the subject area within a specific time frame. One person was delegated to present the ideas generated by the group to the assembled Lab participants, and a second person wrote up the project proposal onto a Lab template.

The team sessions were all very different, and the dynamic of the group was affected by who took part and which discipline took the lead. At one end of the scale project ideas were put in place very quickly, and the session refined them. At the other end of the scale the subject area stimulated wide ranging almost philosophical debates.

The experience of being in a project team session was generally very stimulating, often exciting and the spur of a presentation at the end was a very effective device for generating focussed creative thinking. The presentations were enhanced when visual material was created to accompany performance. Presentations were varied. Some were very funny but all gave a revealing snapshot of how the team session went. At times the interventions from other members of the team added depth to the shape of the discussion that had taken place. As the week wore on these presentations became less formal and more revealing of the process within the teams. This was a positive development. The writing of project reports appeared to be an essential chore, and performed the function of giving effective closure to the team sessions.

The visiting speakers were a combination of providers of information, provocateurs and light relief. They received very mixed responses from the participants. The speakers are clearly an important element in the programme and their contribution punctuated the driven project team sessions. It is also difficult to devise the best menu of science, teaching, creativity and innovations. An element of frustration is almost inevitable in such a dynamic, fluid process.

A real strength of the Lab, in relation to exploring creativity and innovations, was the show and tell sessions. Looking at the work seemed particularly stimulating for the scientists and teachers. It raised their awareness of the huge potential of the digital domain. The digital artists at the Lab were clearly very gifted, and as the Lab progressed they had to be spread more thinly across the project teams to shape and influence discussions.

There was also the impression that the digital artists would have welcomed more contact with teachers working in classrooms. The early school year timing of the lab restricted this, and affected the development of projects. A key relationship between these two worlds was not adequately explored; the frontline of the classroom and the other the digital domains never really met. There was a real sense that an opportunity to constructively share experiences, which could have lead to imaginative ideas was lost because of the scheduling of the lab.

On the other hand the relationship between the Digital Artists and the Science Communicators could be characterised as Science Communicators looking to create tool boxes, whilst the Digital Artists were thinking about toy boxes. That relationship also has huge potential, though the tone was more competitive with each side of the fence promoting their own vision.

The social side was a key aspect during which many of the really important conversations took place. Eating together, and a shared rota for

the chores, gave a strong sense of community, clearly at the heart of the Lab model. The kitchen is where long term working relationships are established.

The schedule was very driven and, given the ambitions in term of outputs the time frame was quite short. Several people indicated that more time for walks and talks would have been beneficial. The evening recreational period gave a much need opportunity to unwind. The accommodation was much appreciated, but technical facilities were a little basic.

Feedback at the end was generally very positive. Suggestions included setting up an intranet to keep everyone in touch. Some wanted more time with the digital artists during the sessions, others suggested having children/young people at the Lab to test ideas out on. It was suggested that PA support be supplied to write up the sessions and the reports.

Immediate post lab criticisms:

- People should have let go of more secrets. All participants with little or no experience of Labs were wary of the process.
- They wanted better mixes in the project teams, specifically more teachers and digital producers
- Better technical support, greater bandwidth and improved phone reception
- Frustration with emphasis on teaching, rather than how messages are communicated and typecasting of teachers.
- More information at start so projects don't begin from scratch
- Lack of questions on digital domains as a learning vehicle
- Lack of design questions around the value of education and Science
- More time: More walking and talking; more flexibility in the schedule
- Not sufficiently vectoral in approach, so too broad in ambition.
- Different groups appeared to end up talking about the same thing.
- That the focus on the classroom and curriculum did not address self guided learning aspects in digital tools, and the emphasis on curriculum was a constraint
- Too much of a rush into visualising rather than researching
- Some projects were not developed or explored adequately
- Not such a good balance between focused projects and experimentation

People clearly left on a high. A Pal Lab can be a very special experience and a number of those involved felt this was one such occasion. Others were more sceptical and questioned the value of the exercise. The sceptics and enthusiasts came from across the lab. However the key questions centre on the level of genuine innovation achievable in such a short period and the quality of the 24 project ideas⁵ which emerged from such a focussed environment.

⁵ A full list is included in Appendix Two

Post Lab Evaluation

Telephone interviews were conducted with lab participants between 24th September 2004 and 12th October 2004. This was a period when participants were developing projects for submission to Wellcome and Nesta to compete for the first tranche of funding. These were based on a questionnaire and followed a format agreed with the NESTA and Wellcome. The participants are an extremely busy group of people and finding time to schedule to the interview was difficult for a number of them. A typical interview lasted between 45 minutes and an hour – somewhat longer than anticipated at the outset and unusual for a project of this type and can be taken as evidence that people clearly had something to say. In a number of cases the interview took more than an hour.

Overall Impression.

The participants are clearly an intelligent and highly motivated group of people. All had interesting opinions, and offered constructive views on the experience of the PAL lab. In general they were extremely supportive of the Digital Science Lab, recognising it was the springboard for a complex development process scheduled to last 15 months. There is an unavoidable overlap between the initial observational findings and the content of the interviews.

Recruitment

A majority of respondents questioned whether the client/managerial group had operated a fair and open recruitment process. Initial contact had been via e-mail, and seemed restricted to a known world of people with common professional contacts. Colleagues included in the e-mailing had nominated a number of attendees. It would be unreasonable to criticise the process as intentionally nepotistic (although one participant did feel this was virtually the case), but all those who raised the issue felt that any process of recruitment should be open and accessible.

*One of my colleagues noted the mailing, and looked into it.
Educational software is an area of interest so we put in application .
Participant D*

*I was invited by an old friend. Seemed like a good opportunity.
Participant G*

The lab had poor regional representation, and there were no BME participants.

Even taking these points into account, the balance of people was praised.

Reasons for Attending

Participants identified a number of common reasons for attending the lab. These were:

- Ambition to develop a particular project, and the implicit funding of selected projects
- Anticipation of a stimulating creative experience and the development and exchange of ideas arising from the experience

- Interest in the focus on use of digital technology as a means to engage young people in the scientific curriculum
- Previous experience of lab
- Opportunity for networking, and to establish professional contact for future ventures
- To take ideas forward in an educational context
- To formulate ideas which could be turned into viable projects to be taken forward quickly

A number had no specific expectations and attended out of intellectual curiosity.

Preparing for the Lab

Attendees requested:

- More background information on the science curriculum and issues around the teaching of science
- An opportunity to meet before the lab, possibly in small sub groups where people shared specific knowledge, skills or expectations
- Better briefing particularly for those attending a lab for the first time
- More background on ambitions of Wellcome/NESTA
- A clear statement of the 'rules of the game', particularly in relation to intellectual property issues

Some of this material was provided, and the concerns raised may reflect the lack of time a number of those involved were able to devote to the preparatory work. All felt that background material should require no research and be provided by the organisers in good time, at least a week beforehand.

Setting the agenda

Attendees identified three particular objectives

- Seeing different aspects of the creative process
- Exploring educational potential of Digital Technology
- General acquisition of knowledge

Consultees felt they were led towards particular topics but this was not necessarily a problem as the variety was good and the subjects were interesting. A number argued that the lab was pushed into subject areas and specific media too early. Those that dropped out of the development process quickly were the strongest critics.

The role of RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL in the process was recognised as potentially conflicted. It was considered unreasonable for the agenda to be set by someone who could be construed as having a commercial interest in the subsequent selection of projects.

"I thought the majority of people there had some tie to RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL. Max is fairly dictatorial. He wanted to muscle in on proposals and shape things. There is a conflict of interest at the heart of this. The development of projects becomes very problematic when the organiser has a potential financial and

professional interest in the outcome. I feel very strongly about this but others do too."

Participant K

This question of impartiality is largely a matter of perception as much as anything and all concerned recognised RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL's expertise in the area. However, it is difficult to operate effectively as facilitator and beneficiary, and a number of consultees felt this helped create confusion in the initial and final stages of the lab. As demonstrated by the quote a number of participants argued that the Lab was tarnished by this, from the moment they realised that the facilitator was also a participant, and because of this their participation and contribution to the Lab was less than wholehearted from the moment they recognised the situation.

Process of Lab

All those consulted commented on the intensity of the process and considered it took time to get used to the pressure. Most argued that there was a need for time to reflect and recharge batteries. Adding in coffee breaks would have helped, but it was generally felt that additional time for reflection would enhance the creative process. Participants welcomed the immersive aspect to the lab, though felt the balance between the creative space and formal structure in the lab would need to be readdressed if the exercise was repeated.

The more critical respondents considered it to be a 'nebulous process which crystallised with a walk through the garden on the final day'. This was a minority view, but was strongly held. Underpinning this view is a sense that the intellectual roots of the lab were shallow and that greater intellectual depth was needed before the process considered projects.

Timetable/Schedule

Max Whitby drove the lab with a real sense of purpose but participants felt more space was needed to stimulate reflective thought. Allied to this critique was a general positive feeling that the intensity kept the energy level high. Understanding the importance of this is key. It relates directly to a decision to quickly focus on specific projects, and an accompanying feeling that potentially strong ideas were discarded too quickly. However, all concerned felt that some strong ideas emerged through the process.

Use of Stimuli

The use of different stimuli was addressed directly in the questionnaire. A couple of respondents felt there should have been a more obvious fit between the speakers and the issues under discussion, but failed to explain how this might have been realised.

"Stimuli didn't really make much difference – speakers were interesting; other bits not especially useful as we didn't take full advantage. No real need or time to do this. It didn't lock into what we were doing at the lab. Good as an atmospheric thing. Storyboard had obvious purpose."

Participant R

Speakers

- Speakers considered to have made an important contribution and all the non-scientists felt they acquired new insights or knowledge
- John Sulston's presentation on ethical issues in Genetic Technology generated a strong reaction and was widely praised
- The clash between the session on nanotechnology and the session on Climate Change meant a number of non-scientists failed to acquire basic knowledge
- The session on Nanotechnology was considered rudimentary by those with scientific knowledge but, informative by non-scientists. Nothing came from the participants out of this session
- Participants would have welcomed an opportunity to question speakers

Storyboard Artist

The contribution of the storyboard artist was widely praised as a means to enable people to visualise an idea. A second storyboard artist would have been a welcome addition.

Actors

Worked very well for one or two groups, but were only available for a limited time. It would have been constructive if they had been there for a longer period – say a day and a night. Those that worked with them were impressed with the quality of their work and considered they 'injected warmth into an idea'.

Young People

- A larger number and a more varied group would have been useful. One possibility raised was to introduce different students at the end of each day as a means to review particular issues. Some felt that the group was too middle class
- The recent A level student made no discernible contribution to the lab

Additional Stimuli

The following were proposed:

- More and earlier Presentation of Participant's work
- Use of three Dimensional Objects as stimuli
- A range of different contributions from teachers
- Involvement of greater number and range of young people

Developing Ideas

Participants agreed that the isolation and intensity of the experience created an environment which sparked ideas. The variety of expertise established an atmosphere of mutual respect, creating an atmosphere where every opinion was valued. One particular concern was the speed with which ideas were turned into products and academic respondents felt basic questions were sometimes sidestepped in a desire to explore the potential of a product as a means to drive the agenda forward. From a different perspective, one commercial developer felt that ideas moved at an alarming pace, so that some of the proposals lacked a certain degree of originality.

Role of Teachers

All interviewees commented on the position of teachers in the lab, and there was no uniform sense on what this should actually be.

- One argued strongly that teachers were superfluous to the process and should not have been invited
- A number proposed that teachers should have been invited to review projects rather than participate
- The majority felt teachers should participate as attendees, one suggested this should be as a distinct group
- A couple felt there needed to be more teachers
- Others proposed teacher participants and end of day contributors

The majority felt teachers had an important role to play helping to define the boundary between fantasy and a realisable project. The key issue is the best way to access the practical educational experience offered by teachers, and this may necessitate a number of complementary approaches.

Acquiring Skills

Participants considered they acquired knowledge rather than particular skills. A number identified networking, presentational and confidence building as unanticipated benefits of the lab.

Building Creativity

Consultees questioned the balance between ethical debate and pragmatism. Making things project focussed avoided debate about educative role, purpose and use of technology. A critical reading would say it allowed the commercial potential of a product to drive the agenda. The lab worked best when it moved beyond the acquired use of media to explore new modes of working i.e. not simply replacing 'x' with 'y' to engage reluctant students

All felt the lab worked well when people were able to find a way to leave preconceptions behind and work more imaginatively. Creativity was forced by the intensity of the pace but this didn't accommodate those who needed additional time for reflection. The majority found the schedule extreme, those used to the pressures of commercial production were less perturbed, and some considered it par for the course.

Developing Knowledge

All felt they acquired new knowledge and this was a primary benefit of the lab. It included scientific knowledge also derived from the shared experience of the lab.

Taking Ideas Forward

The validation offered by a small grant of £2,000 was initially seen as crucial to take ideas forward. It provided a clear indication that something positive might happen with each project and an incentive to move forward quickly. The amount was recognised as largely nominal.

There was no sense of how this should be spent, and a couple commented that this should have been offered as a fee per project participant (e.g. £500 per person per team) rather than as an award to each project. The current scheme, it was suggested, favoured small teams rather than strong projects.

IPR Questions

Participants held differing ideas about Chatham House Rules and a number suggested that PAL, Wellcome or NESTA could develop a simple code of conduct so that all shared the same understanding of the *modus operandi*.

Knowledge and Understanding of Wellcome and NESTA

The group had mixed ideas about the reasons why Wellcome and NESTA supported the Digital Science proposal. The term itself was widely considered to be fairly meaningless, but when pressed participants did recognise it was a generic description for projects intended to explore the use of digital technology as a means to teach science.

Services offered by PAL

Facilities organised by PAL were universally praised. The only serious adverse comment was on the local technological infrastructure, and the absence of mobile phone coverage.

Generic Comments

- Audio Recording or third party minute taking would have facilitated better contributions from all participants
- Holding the lab in early September was a mistake; any subsequent event will need to pay closer attention to the rhythm of the academic year. This caused difficulties for many participants, and a number were deputies for people with senior level educational responsibilities.
- The end of the lab was confusing, and a more concrete sense of what the resolution at the start of the lab would have helped allay this.

At the Lab

Max Whitby's direction clearly provided the Lab with a sense of purpose, and this attracted favourable comment from a number of participants who felt that, without this, it could have descended into a shapeless period of reflection. In contrast, others argued that discussion was limited and that a more open 'pyramid' process would have provided a greater degree of creative and intellectual freedom, which in turn would have led more quickly to refined projects.

It is, however, far harder to reach such a clear verdict on the quality of the projects generated by the Lab process. A number of participants promoted their own ideas with a degree of reticence due to their own uncertainty around the basic rules of engagement⁶ and wariness of the

⁶ PAL, Nesta, Wellcome and RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL make it clear in a number of key documents that PAL Labs exist to encourage the free flow of ideas between participants under 'Chatham House Rules' and that participation in the Lab is considered to be an acceptance of these rules. Consultees did not always understand this point and a number felt that the term betrayed a certain institutional bias within the organising group.

independence of the facilitator. Others tried to promote pet ambitions. The dual representation of RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL as facilitator and participant confused things further.

After the Lab

The organisers of the Lab had aimed for some 20 projects using a range of digital tools to engage with different subject areas. Some 24 projects emerged from the week in Bore Place, therefore if the Lab is judged by this admittedly simple quantitative ambition set by the Commissioners and the producers, it can be declared a success. Participants had a real sense that something could flow from their time at Bore Place.

"I was very unsure about what to expect at Bore Place but was keen to get away from the everyday pressure of work. The Lab gave me a chance to focus on ideas. Four days is a big chunk to take out of the working week but it was very stimulating and exceeded my expectations"

Participant D

Project teams were awarded £2,000 to turn an idea into a treatment in the two months after the lab. Although this was initially seen as an endorsement, the value this placed on the labour of the participants was questioned by most of those involved after a submission had been completed. This is typified by the quote below which comes from a participant working in large institution.

"£2,000 is OK but it put the onus on small groups and institutions. Businesses need to work to budget. The incentive is that it may come to something but is such a long haul and so difficult to prioritise"

(Participant B)

Review Meeting One

Material was submitted to the first meeting of a specially created independent Review Panel comprising Peter Finegold (Wellcome Trust), Grant Bage (NESTA), Vivi Lachs (Highwire), Andrea Mapplebeck (University of York) and Stephen Sayers (Futurelab). This was held in December 2004 at NESTA's offices in central London. Panel members considered 14 submissions⁷ and six were taken forward to the next stage. Two Panel members reviewed each project against the criteria set out below and presented their views to the Panel.

- Project approach can be used to provide an immersive learning experience
- Project approach provides opportunities for developing empathy and understanding of a range of perspectives
- Project approach encourages collaboration and creativity among users
- Project team are likely to deliver a finished product within the timescale of the Digital Science initiative

⁷ A full list of submissions is included at Appendix two.

- Project is innovative and experimental
- Project team will be able to draw down further support from external sources (moral, in kind and financial) to maximise the success of the project
- Project team have links with (or will build links with) people working on the new science curricula

Reality intruded. The Panel was generally disappointed with the quality, range and number of submissions, and it was clear they had expected more substance to emerge between the lab and the Review Panel. Given the ambition of the Lab and the resources allocated to the short interim development period, this was something of a surprise. Few ideas were considered groundbreaking by the reviewers and at least five were dismissed quickly as unfeasible. There was an obvious absence of educational input, and only one project was actually led by a teacher. The Panel concluded there was a clash between educational culture and the commercial media world. However, as noted earlier in the report, this shortcoming probably stems from the limited availability of teachers at the start of the academic year.

In contrast, those involved with devising and writing the submissions felt the time and resources allocated to the process was insufficient to take an idea forward to the point where it could be properly reviewed. In particular, those from small media production companies were highly critical of the demands placed on them by NESTA and Wellcome and felt the development process was seriously under resourced by commissioning agencies who simply failed to understand the nature of development work in small media companies. This criticism recurred throughout Digital Science, and there is simmering resentment and disappointment in a number of participating companies.

This sort of Panel Review is common practice in funding circles. It draws a independence into the review process, and thereby establishes an intellectual distance between the submission and the assessment. It also runs somewhat counter to the more collaborative spirit established at the PAL Lab, or that which is relatively common in the world of TV Commissioning where an empowered Executive works closely with producers to develop and strengthen individual projects. A number of the participants found the experience rather puzzling and indicative of a process that felt rather too unsystematic.

“Our project was turned down in a phone call. It was described as ‘huge’ and inappropriate so it didn’t fit the brief of the ‘product focussed’ Digital Science initiative. I went back to the team and their response, along with mine, was some dismay that we weren’t given the benefit of a discussion or a debate about what an appropriate course of action for this idea might be”.

Extract from an unsolicited e-mail from Participant J to DS Media

Six projects were taken forward at this point and each received an award of £10,000.

- Ethical Emporium

Lead Contact: Ann Evans-Freke (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Ltd)

Team Members: Pam Ferguson (Dollar Academy), *Martin Freeth*⁸ (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Ltd), Angela Hall (National Network of Science Learning Centres), Ben Johnson (University of West of England), Dean Madden (University of Reading), *Philip Read* (NYKRIS), Bronwyn Terrill (Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute)

- SCIENCE SUPREMO

Lead Contact: David Squire (DESO Ltd)

Team Members: *Jenifer Borden* (York University), Tony Sherbourne (Sheffield Hallam University) *Rhiannon Tise* (writer)

- NANOTECHNOLOGY – FANTASTIC VOYAGE OR GREY GOO

Lead Contact: *Martin Freeth* (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Ltd)

Team Members: Tony Sherbourne (Sheffield Hallam University), Barry Gibb (Medical research and Filmmaker), Fiddian Warman (Soda Creative Ltd), Max Whitby (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Ltd), Anna Evans-Freke (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Ltd),

- IS RADIOACTIVITY GOOD FOR YOU?

Lead Contact: *Martin Freeth* (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Ltd)

Team Members: Jane Essex (Keele University), Anna Evans-Freke (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Ltd) *Max Whitby* (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Ltd)

- ANOTHER EDEN

Lead Contact: Fiddian Warman (Soda Creative Ltd)

Andrew Berry (Harvard University), Josh Portway (Artist), Tony Sherbourne (Sheffield Hallam University), David Squire (DESO Ltd) *Sue Hilton* (Cleeve School and Technical College) *Will Wright* (creator of Sim City)

- UNDER YOUR SKIN – GENETICS AND HUMAN VARIATION

Lead Contact David Squire, DESQ Ltd.

Team Members: Andrew Berry (Harvard University), Dean Madden (National Centre for Biotechnology Education, University of Reading), Anna Evans-Freke (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL), Bronwyn Terrill

The Review Panel considered the prominent role of RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL/Windfall Digital in these six projects. The company was the primary contact in three, and associated with a fourth as a team member. There was a concern that too much development money was going into one production company which had played a pivotal role in setting the Lab programme. Panel concluded that it was best to insist another team member should lead at least one of the three projects. It was also notable that nine Lab attendees were no longer actively involved in the Digital Science initiative. Some had simply failed to join project teams while others had only been involved in one or two project ideas. All concerned felt this was higher than anticipated.

⁸ Italics indicate that the named person was not at the PAL Lab.

Selected projects secured awards of £10,000 towards further development costs and the various project teams met with the Projects Managers in early 2005. Unsuccessful team leaders were informed in writing.

The Departed

People who left the Digital Science programme after the first round were understandably disillusioned by a process which appeared to promise so much yet ultimately left them with nothing. As a group they were hard to track and reluctant to participate in the evaluation.

“The product is clearly driving things. It was an intellectual game which seemed good at the time” Participant E

Review Meeting Two

The second meeting of the Review Panel took place at the Wellcome Trust on 18th July 2005. Rachid R’Kaina (Gatsby Charitable Trust) joined the Panel. The second meeting intended to support two projects, but because of the perceived quality of the submissions and the consequent interest in them the panel ended up supporting three, with additional investment from NESTA. There may also have been a degree of pre-emptive caution about this decision to make extra funds available. One leading participant reflected that “a six horse race should have at least one finisher”. This meeting was the key decision making moment in the Digital Science initiative. Projects supported at this point would be supported in further development work before being taken to market by the producing team.

The six development teams submitted individual proposals in accordance with a template provided by the Project Managers. Once again two Panel Members reviewed each project in detail and, because of the sensitive nature of a project dealing with racial stereotyping, extra specialist advice was sought on UNDER YOUR SKIN. The same assessment criteria were applied. However, the Panel also brought two new intertwined questions into consideration:

1. Presence at the PAL lab
To what extent could a project be regarded as something which had it's real genesis in the lab?
2. Additionality
Is it something that would have emerged within a given business without the impetus of the Digital Science initiative?

The declared aim of the meeting was to make awards of £20,000 to projects with potential to reach the classroom. NESTA was able to make an additional £30,000 available, so potentially three projects stood to benefit with a grant of £20,000, with an additional sum earmarked for market research. The initial discussion considered the need to strike a clear, sensitive balance between commercial potential and innovation. The Panel was looking to support activity which fell outside the usual work of the teams. The consensus was that all six lacked a clear business model at this stage, so extra funding needed to be directed towards market research when a workable prototype was in place.

Each Project Team was given an opportunity to present their proposal to the Review Panel. After a lengthy discussion, the Review Panel decided to support three projects with awards of £20,000:

IS RADIOACTIVITY GOOD FOR YOU?

Team Leader Martin Freeth (Windfall Digital)

ETHICAL EMPORIUM

Team Leader Anna Evans-Freke (Windfall Digital)

SCIENCE SUPREMO

Team Leader: Dave Squires (DESO)

As already indicated this Panel Meeting was the key moment when clear judgements were made by the Review Panel about the merits or otherwise of the projects developed in the ten months after the Digital Science Lab. For this reason DS Media asked two experts to review the full portfolio of six projects.

Jerry Rothwell is a Digital Media practitioner with a track record of working on innovative educational projects including the award winning *L8r* series. Angela Macfarlane is a Professor at the Graduate School of Education in the University of Bristol. Both completed a SWOT analysis of the six proposals and their combined opinions are summarised below.

Another Eden

Strengths

- A strong team, including some of the foremost names in the games industry backed up by practical teaching experience
- A genuine multimedia education resource which pushes boundaries in education and practice

Weaknesses

- The actual commitment and involvement of the different team members is unclear
- The pedagogic model needs further development. It is unclear how the potential in the project will be delivered in practice and the complexity of the tool might make it difficult to deploy

Opportunities

- The possibility of interaction between different communities could encourage wider use of the project

Threats

- The huge scale of the budget and the ambitious timetable make it hard to see how this can be delivered

Ethical Emporium

Strengths

- Breadth of scope means it could be adapted to a wide range of new assets and curriculum content
- Clear design of the prototype

Weaknesses

- Similarity to Wellcome funded BEEP project, which is already more advanced

Opportunities

- Flexible tool which could be developed with a wide range of case studies supported by moving image material

Threats

- Requires well structured CPD for teachers and on going support

Nanotechnology

Strengths

- Topical and well thought through
- Possibilities to explore different areas of cross curricular work e.g PHSE, Citizenship, English and Media

Weaknesses

- Lack of sophistication in use of imagery
- Role of students is unclear

Opportunities

- Affordable
- Tool could be developed to explore alternative subject areas within and beyond Science

Threats

- Mode of delivery may need to be updated, and it could be developed into a downloadable resource

Radioactivity

Strengths

- Extensive educational expertise and teaching experience of team
- Use of public website creates an opportunity for broader exchange of ideas

Weaknesses

- Narrow focus on one particular case where findings may be partial or a strange anomaly

Opportunities

- Formula could be developed to explore a range of different cases

Threats

- Lack of impartial funding for further development

Under your Skin

Strengths

- Strong team with extensive experience
- Project focuses on areas that will be close to the lives and interests of the target group: identity, health, etc

Weaknesses

- Different elements do not really hang together
- The use of a crime investigation pushes students towards areas of genetics in which there is the simple connection between gene and trait, because a successful investigation requires certainty.

Opportunities

- Could be utilised by a slightly younger age group

Threats

- Requires substantial additional funding

Science Supremo

Strengths

- Objectives meet current curriculum
- Use of clear gaming paradigm ('management simulation') which will be familiar to many students

Weaknesses

- Limited nature of trials undertaken and consequent need for further testing
- The risk analysis is weak and needs further work

Opportunities

- Potential to incorporate a successful prototype into other areas of the curriculum

Threats

- Timescale, budget and development plan all need updating if the project is to move forward

Summary

The two independent reviewers saw potential in a number of the proposals, but also spotted weaknesses and potential difficulties in all six. The issue for this evaluation is whether these problems can be traced back to some particular flaw in the processes underpinning the Digital Science initiative. It is clear that a number of them relate to the level of resources devoted to the development period. Business planning, fundraising and related development work take time, and require resourcing beyond that made available for the work to take place over the agreed schedule. As a consequence a number of projects were under prepared and needed further work before they could be taken to market. The slow pace may be attributable to other factors in addition to a simple lack of resources and a number argued that preparatory work before the PAL lab could have helped strengthen the ideas. This could have helped overcome the relatively artificial dynamic within teams brought together as part of the Pal Lab. The lack of clarity about the relatively fluid process may also have limited understanding and commitment with the teams.

The Departed

It proved easier to discuss Digital Science with those involved in projects which fell away after the second review meeting. The sense of disappointment was still there yet all involved recognised that this was really something which came with the territory. Independent production companies are regularly disappointed and frustrated and projects often go through 'development hell'. In a similar vein non-commercial participants are used to dealing with the consequences of unsuccessful funding proposals. It is far harder to ascertain whether and how individual projects have moved forward. Interviewees were happy to offer opinions on the Digital Science scheme but were understandably reluctant to say what, if any, plans they had for projects which had failed to secure on-going support through the process.

The Last Mile:

Project Development between second award and final submission

The three projects supported by the Review Panel underwent significant development work in the period between July 2005 and Spring 2006. Final presentations were delayed at the request of the development teams and the process was finally completed in May 2006.

Two of the final three proposals were led by RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL/Windfall Digital who had initially devised the programme for the lab some two years previously. The third was driven by a partnership from Sheffield. There is no doubt that the scheme favoured small teams and those with the capacity to absorb costs across different projects. The larger teams fell by the wayside due to the complexity required to manage them and the additional complexity involved in making a relatively small grant stretch further.

With the advantage of hindsight participants saw clear flaws in the process but were generally supportive. The process could have been quicker, sharper and more focussed. Substantial commitment was required over a long period but allowed successful projects to experiment in a relatively fluid environment. The end of the Digital Science support was something of an anti climax, all concerned commented that there was no clear signposting from the Commissioners, who seemed unsure about what should happen to the projects. One participant commented that there was "no clear exit strategy and the whole thing felt like it simply collapsed at the end".

As part of this evaluation, DS Media attempted to contact all the original participants to ask them to reflect on the PAL Lab and the subsequent experience of Digital Science. Even with the help of PAL and the Commissioning Agencies, it was only possible to get a very limited response from those involved at the outset. The scope of this report is narrower as a result.

The Commissioning Partners were generally pleased with the process and the outcomes from the Digital Science initiative. For Wellcome, it provided a chance to gain knowledge and expertise in the digital

technology and the e-learning world, while NESTA was able to work in partnership with Wellcome and explore the scope for developing new educational tools through a collaborative learning process.

Case Studies

Case Study Number One

My Gene Hand Held Programme

This proposal came from the PAL Lab and was subsequently considered and rejected by the Assessment Panel Meeting in December 2004. The team did not take it forward.

Proposal Summary

The use of hand held mobile devices as a tool to engage young people aged 14-19 with issues in contemporary science, especially genetics. On and off line teacher support material would be made available for teachers. The intention was to use bespoke devices in public venues, such as museums or science learning centres to support educational programmes.

Partners

Nikki Barton, Creative Director, NYKRIS
Bronwyn Terrill, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute

Assessment

The development partners submitted this to the Assessment Panel as a speculative proposal driven by technology rather than scientific content and because of this approach it was rejected by the Assessment Panel. They concluded the scope for collaboration was limited, and the approach was problematic in terms of skills development, critical thinking, and the demands placed on teachers.

The Executive Team passed this on to the development partners and the project was not taken forward.

Case Study Number Two and Three: These two proposals were awarded development funding and were taken to the second meeting of the Review Panel in July 2005.

Case Study Number Two

Under Your Skin: Genetics and Human Variation

This proposal was awarded development funding but rejected by the second meeting of the Assessment Panel. The difficult subject matter made it the most controversial proposal to emerge from the Digital Science initiative.

Proposal Summary

Under Your Skin was concerned with bringing contemporary knowledge and gaps in knowledge of the Human Genome Project to school students aged between 14 and 18.

Genetics is acknowledged as a difficult subject to teach and learn, both in terms of the scientific understanding required and dealing with the often complex and controversial issues that can arise. Science teachers, especially those who do not have training in genetics, seldom have up-to-date knowledge that can help them

make the subject relevant and appealing to students; they can also lack the confidence to tackle controversial subjects in the classroom.

Under Your Skin Proposal, 30th June 2005

The proposal drew on an investigative approach comparable to that popularised through CSI programmes to explore three specific issues:

- Investigating identity: Process and Issues of Profiling DNA
- Variation and Disease: Diabetes
- Race and Genome

Partners Initial Submission

David Squire – DESQ Limited

Andrew Berry – Harvard University

Dean Madden – University of Reading

Anna Evans Frejke - RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Limited

Bronwyn Terrill – Wellcome Sanger Institute

Partners Development Stage

Edward Goldwyn – Goldwyn Associates Limited (Lead)⁹

Andrew Berry – Harvard University

Rashpal Chana – Stratford upon Avon College¹⁰

Ann Evans-Freke – RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL Limited/Windfall digital

Dean Madden – University of Reading

Bronwyn Terrill – Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute

Assessment

The first Assessment Panel considered this to be a bold and brave project which needed considerable scientific input if was to succeed. Members recognised there was reputational risk for NESTA and Wellcome in supporting the project concluding it was a project which engaged forcefully with questions around ethics and science, and therefore merited development support.

Development funding enabled the project to grow, because the potential within the project was hindered by the need to share a relatively small development budget between a large team. The presence of two SMEs in the team increased this pressure.

Material for the second meeting of the Assessment Panel was supplemented by a written report by Dr Deborah Youdell, a Sociologist of Education specialising in race and racism in education based at the University of London. This additional advice flowed from the previously identified need to address this project with a greater degree of sensitivity due to the difficulty inherent in the subject matter.

The Assessment Panel concluded this was a courageous project and the link between the gaming element and the scientific content needed

⁹ Edward Goldwyn did not attend the PAL Lab and joined the team when DESQ left the project.

¹⁰ Rashpal Chana did not attend the PAL Lab and joined the team to support the trialling of the project

strengthening if it was to move forward. The proposition was fragmented and so the Panel rejected it.

Summary

The project had a strong team but required considerable resources to take it forward. These were beyond the current scheme and the project ultimately collapsed. It may have benefited from a simpler, more streamlined approach from the outset.

Case Study Number Three

Another Eden

Another Eden sought to simulate ecological processes so students could acquire a basic understanding of how ecosystems operate. Students would have been able to invent and explore virtual worlds. The project was based on earlier work completed by Soda and was aimed at Ks4 and above.

Partners Initial Submission

Fiddian Warman - Soda Creative Limited

Andrew Berry – Harvard

Sue Hilton, - Cleeve School and Technical College¹¹

Josh Portway – Games Designer

David Squire – Director DESQ¹²

Partners Development Study

Fiddian Warman - Soda Creative Limited

Andrew Berry – Harvard

Sue Hilton, - Cleeve School and Technical College

Josh Portway – Games Designer

Tony Sherbourne – Centre for Science Education

Will Wright – Sims and Spore¹³

Assessment

The first meeting of the Assessment panel supported Another Eden as a effective project for stimulating debate, though had reservations about the projects originality¹⁴, cost and ability to adequately explore ethical questions. The months between the first submission and the second meeting saw the team strengthened, with the addition of a Science Educator. Despite this the Assessment Panel felt this project had not reached the same stage of development as others considered at the meeting and compared it to SIM CITY on an island. Members felt it could be put forward to the National Science Foundation but that, as presented, it was far stronger on technology than science and represented a missed opportunity. Cost was also an issue. In the light of this the Panel concluded it was difficult to know where ANOTHER EDEN was headed without a degree of investment beyond the scope of the Digital Science initiative.

¹¹ Not at lab.

¹² David Squire dropped out of the team due to pressure of work

¹³ Not at Lab

¹⁴ Futurelab had already funded a comparable project called Equilibrium

Case Study Number Four

Ethical Emporium

Description

The Ethical Emporium is a three-part web based resource designed to raise ethical and social issues in relation to modern bio-medical science containing:

- Relevant case studies
- Strategies for tackling issues in the classroom
- CPD resources for teachers

It has wide scope and could be adapted to a wide range of assets and curriculum content.

Initial Project Team

Anna Evans-Freke – RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL

Pam Ferguson – Dollar Academy

Martin Freeth – RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL

Angela Hall – Director, Science Learning Centre,

Ben Johnson – University of West of England

Dean Madden – University of Reading

Bronwyn Terrill – Wellcome Sanger Institute

Development Team

Philip Read – NYKRIS

Anna Evans-Freke – Windfall Digital

Angela Hall – Director, Science Learning Centre,

Ben Johnson – University of West of England

Bronwyn Terrill – Wellcome Sanger Institute

Assessment

The Assessment Panel welcomed this proposal, but recognised that it was functional rather than revolutionary. It could lead to a useful resource providing that good content and regular updates were integral to the proposal.

The second meeting of the Assessment Panel shared the earlier reservations about the conservative nature of the project, and felt it could be sharpened by a stronger, more balanced team. The Development Team used the presentation to argue the limited budget restricted the scope for development work on a large team. Only a limited amount could be done on the available budget and extra resources would have made it a richer emporium.

The Assessment Panel also noted the overlap between Ethical Emporium and a second project funded by Wellcome through the main grant scheme¹⁵ which had benefited from larger investment.

¹⁵ see <http://www.beep.ac.uk/>

Case Study Number Five

Is Radioactivity good for you?

Description

A web based resource inspired by an academic paper which takes a counter intuitive approach to health risks caused by radiation.

Initial Project team

Martin Freeth – RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL/Windfall Digital

Jane Essex – Keele University

Anna Evans Freke – RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL/Windfall Digital

Max Whitby – RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL/Windfall Digital

Development Team

Martin Freeth – RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL/Windfall Digital

Jane Essex – Keele University

Anna Evans Freke – RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL/Windfall Digital

Max Whitby – RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL/Windfall Digital

Assessment

In many respects this was the most straightforward of all the proposals reviewed by the Assessment Panel. Both meetings praised the simplicity of *Is Radioactivity good for You?* It is easy to visualise, yet contains scope to expand in a flexible way.

The Development Team used the presentation at the second meeting to argue the development budget had restricted the scope to take the project forward.

Case Study Number Six

Science Supremo

A management simulation game which allows players to take charge of a scientific laboratory.

Initial Project team

David Squire – DESQ

Jenifer Burden – York University

Tony Sherborne – Sheffield Hallam University

Rhiannon Tise - writer

Development Team

David Squire – DESQ

Tony Sherbourne – Sheffield Hallam University

Assessment

The first Assessment Panel considered this a very strong idea – but felt it needed a stronger ethical dimension and praised its' simplicity.

In contrast the second meeting felt the project had lost a degree of sharpness and had become driven by the games element. It needed to regain the earlier simplicity, however the team is strong and should deliver with guidance.

The case studies show

- Digital science generated a number of good ideas but in most cases was unable to take these as far as those involved would have hoped
- The long timescale mitigated against project development. Participants found it difficult to prioritise work which was not clearly driven by a meaningful deadline
- The teams came together as part of the PAL Lab and in the absence of a comparable dynamic, it was hard to hold them together. The projects were driven by process rather than passion. It is no accident that the successful projects are either in one company or in one location, where the creative industries are relatively small elements within the overall economy. These are points where passion can be generated by the closeness between the different players.
- The funding available for the programme was far lower than that needed to develop projects to the point where they are ready to go to market. The consequence is that good ideas have stalled and that competitors may have moved forward more quickly.
- The close involvement of RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL/Windfall Digital clearly benefited some projects, but probably damaged the overall impression of impartiality and fairness across the programme.

Exploring the Digital Science Model

Cross Sector Collaboration

The use of digital technology in formal education is increasing all the time and different tools have proved valuable across the curriculum. It is a growing area and one which will continue to move quickly. Introducing a long running initiative into such a dynamic area was always going to be difficult. It is understandable that both NESTA and the Wellcome Trust recognised the importance of this area and both wanted to make a positive contribution to a growing field, but it was always going to be hard to make a decisive intervention in a narrowly defined area over a long period. Getting one horse to finish was always going to be tricky.

With the clarity provided by hindsight, it is possible to see that the ambitions underpinning the initiative were pulling in two different directions. Both are quite legitimate goals. The first, a practical desire to explore the use of digital technology as a tool to teach science is simple and calls for sound, practical thinking. The second, a more abstract ambition to explore the teaching of bio-medical ethics. The former flowed from NESTA while the latter came from Wellcome Trust. The medium and the subject are connected by artifice. There can clearly be a point where the two meet, though this is limited and the tensions at the heart of this initiative flow from this dichotomy. An early interviewee picked up on it.

“The focus on product restricted creative thought. I wanted a greater ethical debate; to stretch into a more abstract space. The whole exercise would have benefited from this. Digital science became an intellectual game where product drove process. The involvement of the media at an early stage distorted the science.”
Participant L

The commissioners hoped the lab process would act as a catalyst for collaborative, inter disciplinary work cutting across science, education and creative technology. In certain cases this happened but there is no doubt that good ideas were lost during the initial stage of the PAL lab. The PAL process is important but is not an end in itself. A Lab requires careful planning and ideas from it need support if they are to be taken forward. A number of people felt a real opportunity for collaboration within disciplines and across cultures was missed. The bitterness is captured in the quote below.

“Ill conceived, Ill planned – one of the worst projects I’ve ever been involved with”.
Participant J

“The organisers seemed determined to get the word digital into everything. It seems an artificial restriction. Parts of the process are noticeably none digital.”
Participant Q

Collaborative working requires careful planning. The current Digital Science model is simplistic and any future initiative should explore a more constructive approach involving some sector specific development work in advance of a PAL Lab. In this way people would go to a Lab with some of the preparatory ground already covered. The increased use of digital resources provides a genuine opportunity to explore pedagogy through collaborative, inter disciplinary working along the lines of, say, the development of a television drama series. However, to stretch the comparison further, it is important that the necessary preparatory work is completed at the right moment. Television drama is dependent on a shared understanding of the production cycle where expertise is brought into play at the appropriate moment.

The emergence of a genuine market within schools for digital technology means there is scope to learn from the experience of the digital science work. All concerned had high hopes for the scheme. However, this ambition needs to be tempered with realism about what can be delivered on limited resources. It is now possible to say the expectations have not been fully realised and this is a source of frustration and disappointment to almost everyone involved with Digital Science. The issue that needs to be explored is how can this be rectified in any future programme of work.

Interdisciplinary Working

The complexity of the relationship between the different sectors participating in the Digital Science initiative merits further consideration. Clear differences exist between the participants and on reflection it is clear that the staging of the process needed further thought. A number of participants picked up on this.

“Interesting to meet people from different sectors and see how they operated but I don’t think I learnt anything in the formal sense. Producers needed to be involved at a later stage in the process; the melting pot was wrong.” Participant F

An alternative approach could see the development of robust ideas by a core group and then either an advertised commissioning process for media companies or a bespoke tendering exercise for specialist companies. This would enable the media companies to respond to a specially developed brief and is comparable to the commissioning process adopted by broadcasters.

The funding relationship was particularly fraught and the not for profit participants frequently felt ill treated. In particular, a number concluded that the media companies were poor value for money and held a dated view of the public sector which showed little if any understanding of the financial pressures faced by public sector organisations.

“Media people were driven by financial interest. Charged a lot for bugger all and expected everything else to be done for free. Patronising view of the public sector.” Participant J

Expectations

Involvement in the lab and the subsequent development of projects raised expectations that participants would secure funding for on-going research and development work. Wellcome and NESTA were always explicit that this would not necessarily be the case but the reality is that the development teams simply didn't accept their word. They could see no reason for financing the programme without some sense of on going support. The length of the programme contributed to this viewpoint.

The Commissioning Partners need to think carefully about how the expectations of the participants are properly restrained in any subsequent programme.

Funding

An ambitious programme needs to be resourced to the level that enables the ambitions to be met. The Digital Science programme was under funded and suffered as a result. All the participants felt the level of funding was derisory in relation to the work required to take projects forward. This feeling strengthened the longer people were involved with the scheme and number left feeling that they had been inadvertently exploited. Public sector funding programmes struggle to engage with media based SMEs, which are cash sensitive businesses. Projects rarely move to fruition without a passionate advocate at the centre of the business. The risk with projects or schemes put together by artifice is the cash drives the project rather than vice versa.

"The contrast between Digital Science and EU Innovation Funding is stark. Wellcome and NESTA need more rigour and resources. The amount of money was pitiful, especially when split. There was naivety from Wellcome and NESTA." Participant J

Planning, Leadership, Support and Guidance

The Digital Science initiative was intended to be an iterative process. The timetable across the entire programme was allowed to move so that projects gained the maximum space needed to flourish. This approach is understandable from the perspective of the funders, but given that the primary development bodies were media companies this flexibility was a mistake. These companies are deadline driven. The absence of a clear timetable allowed projects to slip as other more pressing work came through the door. The consequence was a staccato process hindering rather than strengthening long-term project development. A clearer timetable with better preparation and fewer stages at the outset, would have helped drive the process.

All concerned appreciated the commitment and encouragement provided by the officers in NESTA and Wellcome. The initiative would have benefited from a higher-level project champion with the capacity to spot potential linkages and the authority to drive this forward. The absence of such a critical friend attracted comment from many participants. Without such a figure the initiative could be seen as marginalized and criticised as a sideshow alongside the main NESTA and Wellcome programmes. The

absence of an exit strategy puzzled all those involved with the three successful projects. People wanted advice on what to do next.

Pedagogical Importance of Digital Technology

Digital tools offer considerable flexibility and can be used in a variety of different educational settings. They have proved to be very successful in engaging hard to reach or difficult learners and a number of national initiatives have recognised the importance of e-learning resources. Different types of digital tools have been used successfully across the curriculum and, with the support of the DCMS, the BBC operates the high profile but carefully targeted BBC Jam¹⁶ which includes plans to engage with Science Level 5-7 and 7-9 as well as Citizenship at Level 9-11. The e learning market is growing, and has attracted considerable investment from serious media conglomerates such as Pearsons who are pursuing the market opportunity emerging through the provision of e learning credits¹⁷. The complicating factor in the digital science initiative is the explicit link between ethical questions around science and the use of digital technology. The successful ideas worked well where the connection is established with relative simplicity, for example, with the Radioactivity or Science Supremo projects. However, more complex ideas struggled to combine the different worlds. As noted above, a number of participants argued that a more structured process, with early development time devoted to the identification of project ideas rather than the media, would have benefited the entire programme and strengthened the scientific content in a number of proposals.

The collaborative nature of the Digital Science initiative undermined the development of strong content. The relationship between form and idea was always going to be uneasy. A number of scientist participants argued strongly that the early emphasis on partnership working diluted the scientific thought by pushing thinly debated ideas into a product orientated world.

“The whole exercise needed an academic specialist at the heart of it rather than someone running a company. A greater distance from the market would have helped facilitate creative thought. It isn’t about making games for mobile phones which are very crude devices. It is impossible to learn science from a mobile. The whole thing was dazzled by the tools and the market for them. There was no questioning about how to do things; the focus was what can be done.” Participant K

Commercial Media Involvement

The various roles played by independent production companies attracted comment throughout the digital science initiative. The companies considered that the commissioning partners failed to understand the commercial reality of life in such a company while the partners considered

¹⁶ Formerly known as the Digital Curriculum. BBC Jam provides interactive resources across a range of subjects including science for 5-16 years olds. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/info/policies/digital_curriculum.shtml

¹⁷ In the period from 2003-2008 £400m will be made available to schools across England to purchase commercially derived interactive resources relating to the curriculum.

that the company's were reluctant to acknowledge the opportunity for creative development time which had been made available through Digital Science. There is an element of truth in both these perspectives but, given that both sides are unhappy with the position it would seem sensible to review the position carefully before proceeding with a similar programme.

Project development in independent production is often driven by the individual passion of a dedicated producer. One of the fundamental difficulties with the Digital Science programme is that production companies took projects devised through a collaborative process to their development slate. There was no single driving figure within the company moving the project forward. The inevitable consequence was that the individual projects stalled, the timetable slipped and frustration mounted. This frustration was exacerbated by what the companies considered to be the commissioner's parsimony.

An alternative approach could see a particular project being commissioned by either Wellcome or NESTA with tenders being requested in response to a brief. Once again this would ordinarily see a dedicated producer taking the lead on a project with a clear brief to work to.

Independent production is a volatile market where companies need to be fleet of foot in order to survive. It isn't surprising that Nykris, one of most prominent companies in the Digital Science initiative folded during the course of the programme. RGB Windfall Digital is the company which benefited most from it's involvement with Digital Science programme yet it is also a very different company from the one which put together the first programme for the Lab.

The timescale of the Digital Science project doesn't fit well with the independent production sector where things generally move much more quickly. Any successor programme to Digital Science needs to be constructed with considerable care if it is to engage meaningfully with market orientated independent production companies. The conclusion that can be draw from this evaluation is that the commissioners failed to understand or appreciate the *modus operandi* of independent production and the entire initiative suffered as a consequence of this.

Acquiring Skills and Building Knowledge

All the individual participants gained new knowledge and some skills development through their involvement in the Digital Science Lab. Even those who had no subsequent role in project teams found the experience thought provoking.

Considering creativity

The creative impetus gained from the PAL lab was largely stifled by the long timetable and accompanying failure to resource the development process adequately. Project teams were products of the PAL Lab, and the initial energy was lost when the complexity of remote collaborative working sapped the creative energy needed to drive the projects forward. Scientist participants felt the inevitable consequence was that the projects

slid towards the media companies too quickly, and the scientific content was lost to digital toys.

Moving things to market

The long timetable and relative lack of funding undermined attempts to move projects through a complex development phase into the market place. The e-learning market is extremely dynamic, and the resources available within large media players vastly outweigh those in the development teams which emerged through the Digital Science initiative. As an example a company like Immersive Education¹⁸ is able to offer a portfolio of products across a number of different subject areas, including science¹⁹. Many of these are adaptable and can be used in different settings for a range of subjects. It is difficult to see how the teams supported by Digital Science could move to market without securing a strategic partnership with a well-resourced initiative.

¹⁸ <http://www.immersiveeducation.com/>

¹⁹ A demonstration is available at http://www.immersiveeducation.com/krucible/krucible_video_long.html

Conclusions

The Digital Science scheme can be seen as a qualified success. At the core of the initiative was the relationship between the development of an educational tool and a debate around ethics within science. This was never resolved, and a number of potential contributors fell out of the project at an early stage because they perceived a tension between the two elements which they felt was irresolvable within the Digital Science framework. The consequence was the development of a clearer product focus, which inevitably led to a series of market-orientated schemes that can be criticised for an innate conservatism and lack of originality. In part this is down to the failure to set clear ground rules for the operation of the PAL Lab, but a deeper cause is the attempt to bring too many people together too early in the development process. A more constructive approach would have involved scientists and science educationalists coming together to establish a series of ideas which could then be developed into digital tools by media developers.

This report has focussed on the process behind Digital Science. It is clear this could be improved and if the project or a version were to run again DS Media would recommend considering the following mix:

- Identifying reasonable expectations for all participants at the outset
- Staging the initiative so that different contributors were brought on board at specific points across the programme
- Shortening the process to give it a clearer focus so that development work takes place outside the scheme
- Clearer operating rules, specifically around copyright and intellectual property
- Scheduling the Lab at a time when all the required participants could attend
- More structured process, including preparatory group work around scientific content before the PAL Lab
- Shorter timescale with clear deadlines
- Single Champion across partner organisations to raise profile
- Clear procedures to avoid perception of any conflict of interest
- More funding for the development of projects, and a recognition that different projects may require different development budgets
- Introduction of an exit strategy with on-going support for projects

One rather obvious option would be to stop after the first review so the focus shifted to capacity building and networking rather than funding. Participants would be able to take projects forward through all available routes, including funding schemes operated by NESTA and Wellcome. This Shorter timetable would add a sharper focus to the creative development of projects.

Before any decision is taken on whether a comparable initiative, Wellcome and NESTA need to accept that there are broader conceptual challenges involved in the coming together of commercial and non-commercial partners. The rhythm and pattern of work is different in each sector and there is no doubt that the Digital Science initiative as conceived is better

suited to the relatively slower timetable of the non-commercial sector where relationship between donor and practitioners form the essence of working life. A shorter timetable would have helped the commercial end. One possible route forward is to consider breaking any comparable process into constituent parts so that individual components have different factors driving them. In this way the more commercial work could have a constrained timetable with clear goals whereas the collaborative conceptual work could take place over a longer period. A more considered approach on these lines should help counter the dissatisfaction and frustration which is regrettably common across those involved with the Digital Science initiative.

DS Media Consulting Limited
November 2006

List of Consultees

Grant Bage, NESTA
Nikki Barton – Creative Director, Nykris
Susan Benn – Director, PAL
Andrew Berry – Harvard University
Rob Bevan – XPT
Tilly Blyth – The Science Museum
Elio Caccavale – St Martin’s College of Art and Design
Jane Essex – Keele University
Pam Ferguson – Dollar Academy
Anna Evans Freke – Windfall Digital/RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL
Martin Freeth – Windfall Digital/RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL
Angela Hall – Science Learning Centre
Christine Hardy – Manningtree High School
Duncan Jarvies – Windfall Digital
Ben Johnson – University of West of England
Vivi Lachs – Creative Director, Highwire
Dean Madden – University of Reading
Andrea Mapplebeck – National Science Learning Centre, University of York
Katherine Mathieson – Learning Programme Manager
Olivia Neubohn - Nykris
Simon Parry – The Wellcome Trust
Phillip Reed - Nykris
Tony Sherbourne – Sheffield Hallam University
Shini Somarthe – Windfall Digital
David Squire – DESQ
Gavin Starks
Bronwyn Terrill – Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute
Rhiannon Tise – Writer
Fiddian Warman – Director, Soda
Max Whitby – Director, Digital Science Lab and Windfall
Digital/RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL

Project Review Teams

Grant Bage, NESTA
Peter Finegold – The Wellcome Trust (to 2006)
Vivi Lachs – Creative Director, Highwire
Andrea Mapplebeck – National Science Learning Centre, University of York
Martin Owen - Futurelab

NESTA Executive Team

Grant Bage
Katherine Mathieson
Javier Stanziola

Wellcome Executive Team

Sara Candy
Peter Finegold
Simon Parry

Evaluation Team

Mark Dunford – Director, DS Media Consulting Limited

Robert Smith – Director, DS Media Consulting Limited

Jerry Rothwell – Digital Media Consultant

Angela MacFarlane – University of Bristol

Appendix One

LAB Participants

Nikki Barton (NYRIS)
Susan Benn (PAL)
Andrew Berry (Harvard University)
Rob Bevan (XPT)
Tilly Blyth (The Science Museum)
Jenifer Burden (University of York Science Education Group)
Elio Caccavale (Designer St Martins School of Art)
Jane Essex (Keele University)
Anna Evans-Freke (RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL)
Pam Ferguson (Dollar Acedemy)
Peter Gilpin (PAL)
Angela Hall (Science and Learning Centre)
Christine Hardy (Manning Tree High School)
Ben Johnson (University of West of England)
Rose Lejeune (Lab Co-ordinator)
Dean Madden(National Centre for Biotechnology Education)
Jonathan Maris (Storyboard Artist)
Katherine Mathieson (NESTA)
Angela McFarlane (University of Bristol)
Simon Parry (Wellcome)
Joshua Portway (Artist Animator and Games Designer)
Jake Sanson (A Level Graduate)
Tony Sherborne (Sheffield Hallam University)
David Squire (DESQ)
Gavin Starks (Entrepreneur and Media innovator)
Bronwyn Terrill (Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute)
Rhiannon Tise (Writer Theatre Radio and TV)
Fiddian Warman (SODA)
Max Whitby (Lab director and RGB/WINDFALL DIGITAL)
Sarah Al-Bader (Royal Academy of Engineering)
Aja Barber (Assistant Co-ordinator Lab)
Michael Blakstad (University of Glamorgan)
Duncan Dallas (Café Scientifique)
Hilary Durman (Resource Base)
Peter Finegold (Wellcome Trust)
Barry Gibb (Freelance Researcher and filmmaker)
Douglas Gray (Lighting Cameraman)
Nicole Grobert (Royal Academy of Engineering)
Helene Guldberg (Editor of Spiked)
Ralph Levinson (Institute of Education University of London)
Chris McQuarry (Actor)
Catherine May (Opera Singer)
Siobhán Nicholas (Actor)
Robert Smith (DS Media)
Mia Soteriou (Actor)
John Sulston (Human Genetics Commission)
Richard Watson (Oxford University)
Robert Willox (Actor)

Appendix Two

One Page Ideas from the PAL Lab

Title	Lead Contact
What is natural?	David Squire
21 st Century Medicine	Bronwyn Terrill
Cell Cycle Game	Pam Ferguson
MyGene/Igene	Nikki Barton
Science Soap Interactive	Tony Sherborne
Nanotechnology	Fiddian Warman
Climate Change Thingy	Richard Watson
ELVIS	Gavin Stark
Interactive Drama – Stimulus	Ben Johnson
LAB Dilemma Drama	Tony Sherborne
Bioethics	Dean Madden
What is natural 2?	Jane Essex
Science TV	Gavin Starks
Genetic Science	Jane Essex
Animal Avatar	Pam Ferguson
Race and Human Variation	Andrew Berry
Visual Language	Barry Gibb
Genetic Emporium	Ben Johnson
Guerrilla Phone	Nikki Barton
The Food Lab	Rob Bevan
Radio Ga ga	David Squire
The Ethical Emporium	Bronwyn Terrill
Things Everyone Does Anyway	Josh Portway
Another Eden	Andrew Berry

Proposals considered by First Review Team

Title	Lead Contact
Visual Language	Barry Gibb
Cell Cycle	Pam Ferguson
Under Your Skin	David Squire
Science TV	Gavin Stark
MyGene	Olivia Neubohn
Science Supremo (Dramatica)	David Squire
Ethical Emporium	Anna Evans Freke
Nanotechnology	Martin Freeth
Radioactivity	Martin Freeth
Food Lab	Rob Bevan
Another Eden	Fiddian Warman
Wavelab	Tony Sherbourne
Climate Change	Rob Bevan
Stimulus Drama	Ben Johnson

Proposals Considered by Second Review Team

Title	Lead Contact
Another Eden	Fiddian Warman
Ethical Emporium	Anna Evans Freke/Phillip Reed
Science Supremo	David Squires
Radioactivity	Martin Freeth

Under Your Skin
Nanotechnology

Ed Goldwyn
Martin Freeth

Proposals to Prototype

Title

Ethical Emporium
Radioactivity
Science Supremo

Lead Contact

Anna Evans Freke
Martin Freeth
David Squires

Inclusion Through Media by Mark Dunford

Final version from Inclusion Through Media edited by Tony Dowmunt, Mark Dunford and Nicole van Hemert

This chapter provides an overview of the Equal Development Partnership called Inclusion Through Media. Most of our projects are represented in this book, and the intention here is to give a flavour of the work that took place across the full programme. In doing this it describes the ethos of Hi8us, the lead partner in Inclusion Through Media, and the policy context in which we operate. Other chapters throughout the book examine particular projects in greater depth. It is simply an overview and isn't intended to be evaluative or definitive. A full project list is included as an appendix.

Our publicity material describes Inclusion Through Media as precisely as possible.

What will ITM do?

ITM's key ambition is to demonstrate that participatory media work with excluded and disadvantaged people actively helps to combat social exclusion by giving them a chance to make their voices heard, whilst enabling some of our most creative young people to access the industry through 'non-traditional' routes, enriching the talent pool of the UK's world-class audio-visual industry. We want to showcase this evidence to convince policy-makers and employers that our model works, and that the social and economic benefits go hand-in-hand.¹

What is Inclusion Through Media?

We are producing innovative, creative film, video and digital media work made by talented young people from a wide range of backgrounds, who have not necessarily achieved their potential through mainstream education and training. Uniquely, our participants are able to work side-by-side with experienced professionals, resulting in high quality, diverse stories, created by those best placed to tell them.

The ITM programme runs from September 2004 until the end of December 2007. The total budget for ITM exceeded £6.5m.

About Hi8us

Hi8us provides young people across the UK with the opportunity to gain first hand media production experience and to collaborate with media professionals to ensure their own stories and experiences reach the mainstream media.

¹ See www.inclusionthroughmedia.org

Our charitable work has three core aims:

- To reach young people at risk of social exclusion to enable them to articulate their experiences;
- To enable young people to use the experience of creating media as a catalyst for change in their own lives and in their communities;
- To create ground-breaking television, film and new media through a collaboration between professional filmmakers, web-designers and non-professional participants.

Hi8us is now well established as the UK's leading practitioner in collaborative professional media with young people. We have also built strong links with the varied sectors relevant to young people and the media. As an organisation working across the country, and now internationally in partnership with locally based entities, Hi8us has pulled together local projects with media access and outreach organisations, colleges of further education, local authority youth services and regeneration departments, schools and funding organisations, as well as key media players. The differing creative aspirations of excluded young people have been turned into television programmes, short films, websites and DVDs.

The origins of Hi8us go back to 1994 when key personnel from APT and Maverick, two independent television production companies, decided to take advantage of the opportunities offered by affordable digital equipment to work together to make drama with marginalized young people using Hi 8 camcorders. With support from the newly established National Lottery Hi8us was established as a special company, a registered charity and a vehicle to take this work forward. Television dramas, including six films for Channel 4 and one for ITV, pioneered a new style of television fiction made with a wide range of communities with something to express: Protestant East Belfast, Afro Caribbean Coventry, young offenders on Hull Prison's D Wing, homeless people in Manchester and young Asians in Birmingham. Produced through processes of improvisation, shot with people on the streets where they live and performed by new young talent, they are all distinguished by a sense of place, of unheard voices and first hand experiences. The contribution of high level professional involvement enabled marginalized young people to get their voices heard, and set a benchmark of quality which attracted critical acclaim, audiences and industry prizes. Channel 4 transmitted NIGHTSHIFT in February 2000 and it was awarded joint best drama in the CRE's² Race in Media Awards. This followed the Royal Television Society Awards for Best Dramas for BLAZED in 1996 and THE VISIT in 1998.

Policy changes introduced by the New Labour Government after 1997 had a profound effect on Hi8us. Hi8us has always been committed to working collaboratively with community groups and an emphasis on a bottom up approach to renewal meant that the company needed to structure itself to operate at a local and national level. Added to this was an emphasis on building skills, knowledge and enterprise to increase employability across

² Commission for Racial Equality

various sectors of the economy, including the creative industries. This differed markedly from an earlier use of large-scale capital investment as a means of attracting major employers to 'deprived' regions. Regional policy flowed from recognition that regions have different needs, and that most are characterised by uneven patterns of growth. Newly established Regional Development Agencies became the focal point for the implementation of locally derived policies addressing social and economic needs at a local level. New Labour aimed to use 'localism' to build economic performance across all regions³. There is strength and synergy in the unity provided by a simple structure but we had to restructure so Hi8us could operate in this tiered environment. A number of key funding agencies also responded in a similar fashion and the period saw the establishment of a number of regional agencies. We created a network of linked companies based in different regions, overseen by the central charity. This enabled Hi8us to build projects through community based partnerships at a local level, and establish a presence on a national and international stage. A number of high profile multimedia projects like L8r and Edrama started at this time, and they quickly became the creative bedrock of a newly focussed Hi8us network.

In February 2000, after a competitive tender, the Film Council⁴ awarded Hi8us the right to manage national investment in young people's filmmaking. Hi8us established Hi8us First Light, a subsidiary company to manage the annual £1,000,000 budget to support filmmaking by 8-18 year olds, and this became the first fully operational delegated Lottery scheme in the UK. Hi8us managed the First Light programme for five years, and in 2006 First Light was floated off to become First Light Movies, an independent grant making trust.

About Inclusion Through Media

By the start of 2004 Hi8us had a successful portfolio embracing production based activity running through the regional companies, grant giving via First Light and developmental activity overseen by the main charity. Though the individual projects operated successfully, it was still a relatively small company with some fifteen workers and a number of successful partnerships.

Hi8us had looked at the potential offered⁵ by the EC's Equal programme⁵ during Round One of Equal, and had worked as a delivery partner in iCI Equal, a scheme managed by Birmingham City Council. The advent of a second round of Equal, with an emphasis on building local partnerships led by third sector organisations to undertake experimental work intended to influence policy, fell squarely into the charitable objectives of Hi8us.

After careful consideration, Hi8us decided to pull together a partnership of like-minded organisations to deliver a collection of projects with a shared ambition to explore new creative opportunities with marginalized people.

³ See Labour's New Regional Policy: An Assessment Regional Studies Association (November 2001) for a complete description and exploration of New Labour's regional policy

⁴ Now known as the UK Film Council

⁵ See <http://www.equal.ecotec.co.uk/> for detailed information about the full Equal programme. Round One ran from 2001 to 2004 and Round Two from 2004 to 2007

In doing this we were able to attract the support of ten ‘producing partners’⁶ and a group of related strategic partners⁷. All of these came together under the working title Inclusion Through Media. Like many working titles, it was there until someone came up with a better name but it ending up staying.

Although the various Inclusion Through Media projects covered different creative forms including film, music and graphic design, they shared a common ethos around the importance of a collaboration between creative professionals and excluded people. They all started with an acknowledgement that collaborative work guided by talented professionals provided people with a unique opportunity to acquire skills which could enable them to access the labour market or re-enter education. Just as important was recognition that creative work empowered people by giving them an opportunity to express themselves. These concerns are central to Hi8us, and all the producing partners and the funding providing through the Equal programme meant we could explore them over three years through our own ‘action research programme’. The timescale meant that all the partners were able to address the ambition to influence policy that underpinned the Equal programme. Our programme was considered long enough to stand the test of time, and most importantly we had space to fail. This unusual combination of ambition and freedom fitted perfectly with the concerns of the ITM partners.

Policy Context

Inclusion Through Media operated in a diverse sector of the economy, where growth often takes the form of innovation, spin-offs, start-ups, new partnerships and diversification. The media industry is structured around a very small number of very large companies and a very large number of very small companies, an “hourglass” effect replicated across Europe.⁸ In the South East of England 56% of all Creative and Cultural industry businesses turnover less than £100,000 while 73% of turnover is generated by only 2% of businesses⁹.

It is a dynamic fluid world. Young, highly skilled and enterprising people move across and between traditional work and technology boundaries. Creative businesses need to be hooked directly into a global market place and yet are dominated by self-employment, micro and small businesses. Part time, flexible and contract working are the norm and the network is the organisational form most suited to the creative economy. Spaces to meet, network, discuss and exhibit new work are an essential motor of the media economy. This has significant implications on public policy interventions and on the ability of the industry to organise itself. It is an exclusive world dependent on who you know as much as what you know.

⁶ The producing partners are Hi8us Projects, Hi8us Cornwall, Hi8us South, Hi8us North, Hi8us Midlands, Creative Clusters, Musicians in Focus, Goldsmiths, University of London, Mental Health Media and Parallax East

⁷ See www.inclusionthroughmedia.org for a full list of all the partners in Inclusion Through Media.

⁸ For a description of the Creative Industries sector across Europe see *Banking on Culture*, 2000

⁹ For a detailed analysis see Creative and Cultural Industries – An Economic Impact Study for South East England, op cit

Success usually depends on having particular skills and a high level of education. This sector has particularly high levels of degree-level education, in the South East of England c40% of those working in Content Origination hold at least a degree level or equivalent qualification (compared to 19.7% in the South East workforce as a whole). Specialist skills need to be matched with the highly valuable “social skills” (contacts, networking etc) and, although driven by the demand for high skilled workers, the sector could be seen as having the flexibility to attract people of talent and ambition without traditional qualifications and can offer a way out of exclusion. This potential is unfulfilled.

In his seminal study of the rise of the ‘creative class’¹⁰ Richard Florida argues that creative industries are a key driver of economic growth. He highlights the importance of diversity to success, and argues that fostering diversity builds creativity and is consequently a better route to long term regeneration than large-scale capital projects, such as shopping centres. His influential Creativity Index has been widely used as a tool to demonstrate that the most successful urban economies are those which encouraged and supported creativity in a given location. The same methodology was adopted by DEMOS in a 2003 report entitled *Boho Britain*, which identified Manchester as the creative capital of the UK. Florida’s work is primarily concerned with urban regeneration, and has been adopted by policy makers across the globe. Projects like Inclusion Through Media, which are designed to encourage creativity and diversity within regions and specific economic sectors, have attracted widespread political favour.

A lack of diversity in the media industry is a recognised problem and UK policy makers have committed themselves to taking strategic action to address this¹¹. At one level this flows directly from the complex structure of the media and the related creative industries, and is reflected in various programmes designed to improve the representation of particular groups across the industry. However diversity needs to be understood in the broadest possible way, and not simply in terms of ethnicity, gender or sexuality. In a key report The Work Foundation argue that the long-term strength of the UK’s Creative Industries depend on ‘cognitive diversity’, “the capacity of different sets of knowledge when interacting to produce better decisions and outcomes”¹². Developing the means to build and sustain such diversity is therefore an important policy driver. It is the *type* as well as the *range* of people which matters. Inclusion Through Media adopted a grassroots approach to this by providing long-term support so individuals could develop the networks needed to gain access to this complex world, and the depth of experience required to operate

¹⁰ The Rise of the Creative Class and how it’s transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life, Richard Florida (Basic Books, 2002)

¹¹ For example, The [Equalities](#) Charter for Film is a public pledge, developed by the Leadership on Diversity forum, which is led by the UK Film Council and is made up of key companies, guilds, unions and trade associations in the film sector. The charter is a significant step towards an equality standard which will both help the industry realise the opportunities from [diversity](#) in film and provide a framework for action. See [/www.diversitytoolkit.org.uk/](#)

¹² See Staying Ahead: the economic performance of the UK’s Creative Industries The Work Foundation (July 2007)

successfully in it. In this way we sought to combine social and economic outcomes with cultural benefits to the UK's creative industries.

Equal provided Inclusion Through Media with the resources to develop and support unconventional collaborative training. We recognise this is simply a start as the wider problems of access are part of larger social inequalities. Our programme is just a drop in the ocean.

Work and Projects across Inclusion Through Media

Hi8us managed Inclusion Through Media using a 'hub and spoke' model, whereby a small central team worked in partnership with community based organisations in key regions. This built on the model developed and utilised by Hi8us in the years immediately preceding Inclusion Through Media.

By doing this we were able to establish locally based partnership with direct links into excluded communities. Hi8us North provides an excellent example of this approach. Dave Tomalin worked diligently to establish close links with regeneration agencies and representative community groups across East Leeds. By doing this he was able to gain access to a range of different people and work with them to create a remarkable of work.

WHEN I WAS A KID I USED TO DREAM was the first film completed as part of the Inclusion Through Media programme in Leeds, and it simply contrasted the original dreams of twelve young people on ASBOs¹³ with their current situations. The film was made as a collaboration between the young people, the regeneration agency Re'new, the youth service and filmmakers from Hi8us North. The production team faced a number of difficulties in working with young people with multiple problems. Under the complex terms of their ASBOs many of the young people were forbidden contact with other group members.

Policy makers were unaware of the terms and restrictions in individual ASBOs, or of the consequences if these were breached. The film had a profound impact on local youth policy within East Leeds. Councillors and local executives on a whistle stop tour of the city, saw the film which resulted in a four hour discussion on youth policy and how this could be improved to enhance prospects for the young people involved in the film. A Youth Inclusion Strategy was devised in partnership with Re'New and this became part of a larger Safer, Stronger Communities Strategy. The film was also screened to policy makers at an Equal conference and at the annual Creative Clusters Conference. It was also shown in the Leeds International Film Festival and at Cannes. This combination of professional success, policy change and local empowerment sowed the seeds for subsequent work in Leeds, and established Inclusion through Media as an active partner in a range of regeneration initiatives across

¹³ Anti Social Behaviour Orders were introduced in the UK under the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 as means to tackle anti social behaviour such as drunkenness, abusive behaviour and drug dealing. The orders place restrictions on an individual in an attempt to curb this behaviour. These restrictions affect a person's freedom without a custodial sentence.

Leeds. However the outcome was a shift in social policy, rather than the economic impact sought by Equal.

Hi8us's work in Birmingham and East London took a similar route. In each case we were able to build on established links to create new projects which strengthened the initial impetus behind the work. Much of this is described in greater detail throughout this book, and a full list of projects is in the Appendix to this chapter. There are many strong projects, though two in particular can be used to illustrate new opportunities created in the Equal funded research laboratory. Firstly, Hi8us Midlands work in Stoke and secondly the development of a new strand of work in Cornwall.

PROJECTING STOKE is a film production initiative involving some 20 community groups from across Stoke working with professional filmmakers. Participants developed, organised, directed and shot a number of short films in collaboration with professional filmmakers. Through a series of workshops and bespoke mentoring sessions PROJECTING STOKE supported and encouraged community based filmmakers to gain skills and express their experiences through short films. Completed films have been screened in the local community and are available via the project website. PROJECTING STOKE was run by Hi8us Midlands and supported by Screen West Midlands and Stoke City Council, as well as Inclusion Through Media. It was originally developed by Hi8us as a response to a request from Screen West Midlands to look at ways of working in Stoke, a relatively underserved part of the region. This partnership met a number of strategic concerns, as well as the wider policy goals inherent in the Equal programme. Without the flexibility offered by the programme, this initiative would not have happened.

INCLUSION THROUGH MEDIA also allowed Hi8us to work in Cornwall. Extending the Hi8us network had been a long-term ambition within Hi8us and Cornwall represented an exciting opportunity, especially as this was our first chance to work in a rural area. There was also pragmatism in the decision to work in Cornwall, as a number of us had connections in the area and were able to draw on links with Cornwall Film and Creative Partnerships. Working together as a partnership we recruited a Development Director to build and produce creative projects with young people across Cornwall. Denzil Monk took on the role and quickly established a portfolio of projects, including a training scheme supporting 10 trainees on two micro features.

A project that involves a national agency developing local work in a new environment needs to be taken forward with considerable sensitivity. Establishing local connections and appointing a locally based Development Director helped Inclusion through Media establish local credibility which enabled creative work to take place. Parachuting a national team into a new area is a dangerous option which can easily lack credibility in local eyes. However it is also less of a risk. Equal funding allowed us to take a calculated risk, and this paid off in real benefits to the local economy to the point where Hi8us Cornwall is now able to broker local partnerships directly.

A number of Inclusion Through Media projects were led by partner organisations. Goldsmiths University of London produced Converge, a web-based publication designed to enable young people to upload their own video material to websites such as You Tube. A series of workshops were held across the UK so that trainers and beneficiaries could acquire skills. Mental Health Media held responsibility for a number of initiatives, such as the extension of the Open Up Programme, a support programme for users and survivors of mental health services. Inclusion Through Media was also able to support the introduction of a new award at the annual Mental Health Media awards. The Making a Difference Award recognised the contribution of a particular individual to the representation of mental health issues in the mainstream media. The annual Creative Clusters conference provided a forum where the issues addressed via Inclusion Through Media were discussed and debated in the presence of 400 policy makers. This was a key aspect of our 'mainstreaming' strategy.

Shared Work

One of the most important strands within Inclusion Through Media related to work which went straight back to Hi8us's roots in participatory drama with young people, namely a programme of work designed to support the development and production of feature films made jointly by media professionals and marginalized people. This was particularly important, as it was one of the few elements of the overall programme which drew together partners from across Inclusion Through Media to create work together.

Development funding for feature films is notoriously hard to find, and often comes with a hefty premium. It is even harder for edgy low budget work made with people with no direct experience of production. However, changes in the market also meant that many of the entry barriers were coming down. The cost of production has fallen as the ability to access adaptable, digital equipment to make work of a cinematic standard was increasing all the time. Allied to this was the potential to exploit new revenue streams created by the expanding market for feature film material.

Inclusion Through Media established a small Steering Group and appointed an Executive Producer to oversee the development of a slate of ideas from across the Development Partnership. All the elements of the partnership were invited to submit proposals to the Steering Group following discussions with the Executive Producer. A staged development process was carefully managed, and three markedly projects were taken forward. The first of these was HEAVY LOAD, a collaborative documentary feature shot by Jerry Rothwell from APT Films following the fortunes of a punk band including people with learning difficulties as they simultaneously campaign for recognition and attempt to break into the mainstream. The second project was lead by Hi8us South, and involved young people involved with two other Inclusion Through Media Projects – UK Sound TV and Beatz! Camera! Action! The story charts the rise and fall of people involved with the grime music scene in East London. The final

project came through the more conventional route followed by leading UK production company Parallax East. A series of developmental workshops were held with an established writer in Great Yarmouth, and these were used as the inspiration for a script about seaside deprivation.

A second project which established new links across the partnership was Beyond the Numbers Game. This is explored in greater detail in Ben Gidleys' contribution. However it is worth saying that the project initially arose from a frustration Hi8us experienced with the efficacy of the performance measures used by funding agencies in relation to production work with marginalized young people. We wanted to find a way to understand and evaluate the work which flowed from the activity rather than criteria imposed by policy makers. Our ambition was to undertake a project capable of making a straightforward policy intervention, and this ultimately crystallized into the development of digital tool for use by young people participating in media production work. The idea for the project came from Hi8us and the research was driven forward by a research team from Goldsmiths, University of London. The skills, expertise and knowledge provided by Goldsmiths mean all those involved in participatory media work with young people stand to benefit.

Transnational Work

Hi8us had not had an opportunity to undertake any production work with like minded organisations in Europe before Inclusion Through Media. This was something new which we welcomed. One of the consequences of Hi8us's role as the lead partner in a European funding programme was to force us to undertake transnational work.

A specially organised Equal conference in Birmingham proposed two modes of transnational working. The first simpler model looked at the exchange of ideas and experiences through transnational seminars conducted across a series of countries, while the second more complex model focussed on a shared project or work programme taking place in a number of countries. Hi8us was keen to explore the second possibility and we identified a number of prospective partners responsible for art and media related Equal projects in other European countries. Miramedia hosted our initial meeting in Amsterdam, and the partnership quickly decided to focus on digital storytelling. This simple yet effective means of storytelling embraced creative work and training; in many ways it was the archetypal Hi8us project. Completed films were hosted on a special website which evolved into a collage of personal stories from across the participating countries. DigiTales attracted attention from a number of different sources, and only a year after the project officially launched we received approaches from other projects wishing to contribute to the site. Juliette Dyke describes the ambitions and work of the DigiTales partnership in a later contribution to this book.

Fellow Travellers

Work across Inclusion Through Media partnership benefited for the active interest and involvement of a number of key strategic media organisations operating in the UK. The most important of these was undoubtedly the BBC. Staff from the BBC attended Development Partnership meetings and

Lynne Connolly, a BBC volunteer and active member of the Board, played an important role in developing and evaluating the overall Inclusion Through Media programme. The BBC also contributed expertise and resources through their Corporate Social Responsibility programme, and this was particularly important in building the capacity of the partnership. In the longer term we are looking at ways in which we can use some of the work as a springboard so Hi8us and the BBC can work together on key projects.

Staff from the UK Film Council also participated in the development of Inclusion Through Media, specifically through contributions to Beyond the Numbers Game and by taking a wider interest in the quality, range and amount of work taking place during the life of the programme. The National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA) played a similar supportive role. Large Government Departments such as the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills also supported the work of specific elements of ITM.

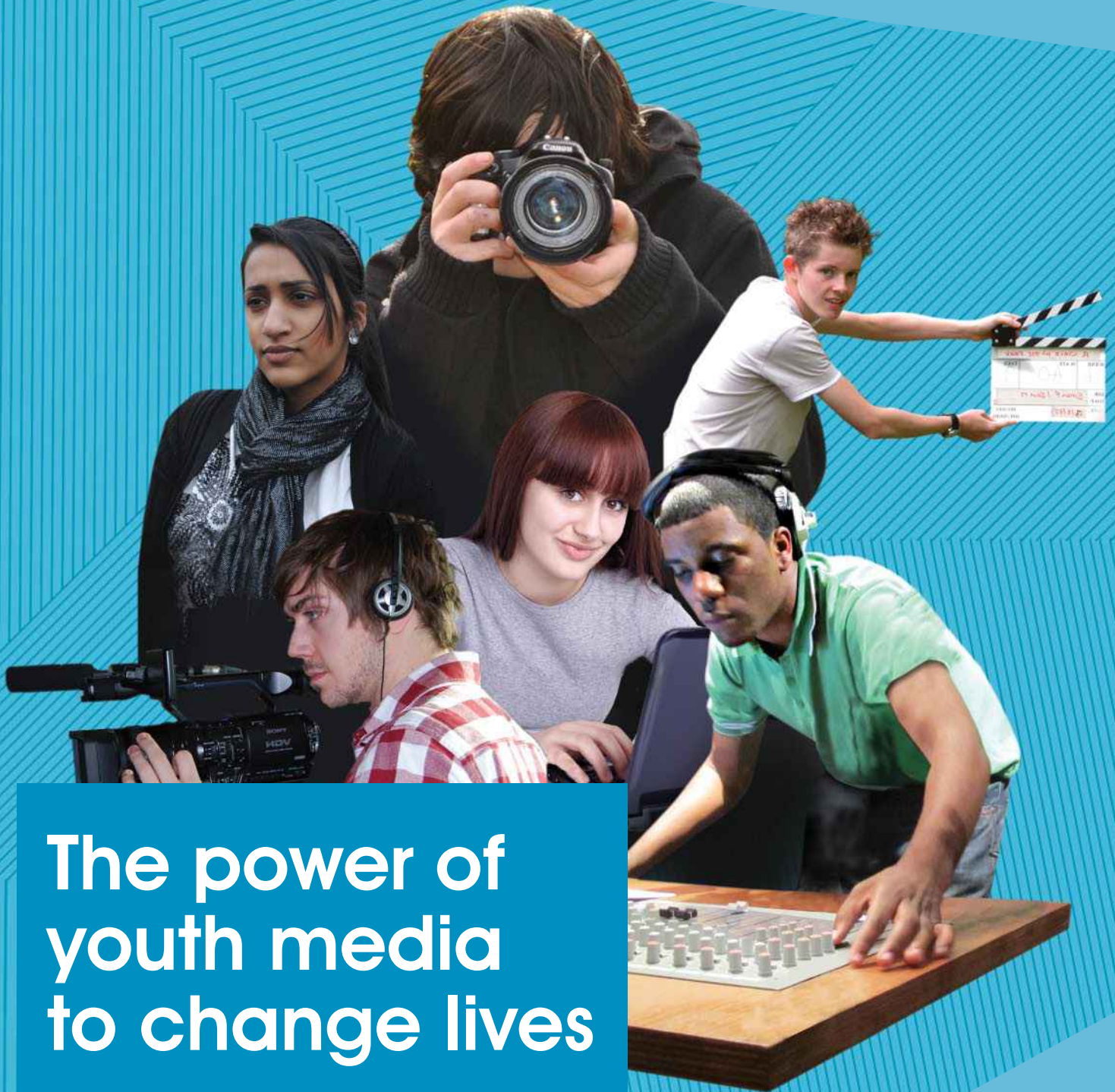
At a regional level the regional screen agencies lent support to developments in the areas where Hi8us had an active presence before 2004, and by the middle of 2007 Hi8us was in active discussions with South West Screen about the future of Hi8us Cornwall. We were also able to forge long-term partnerships with Higher Education, and our work with Goldsmiths, University of London and University of Central England (Birmingham) ensures we are well placed to take forward key projects in partnership with larger organisations.

Policy Implications

The Equal programme is promoted as a space for innovation and experimentation; somewhere that allows people to take risks through an "action research" programme. The longer-term ambition is simply a desire to influence mainstream practice by allowing innovators to experiment, in the hope that policy makers will adopt this experimentation. The University Research Laboratory is offered as a point of comparison, and this leads directly to perhaps the most fundamental criticism of the programme. Universities often have years to undertake research and they do not ordinarily work with 'hard to reach' communities. The Equal ambition is laudable and the creative space is universally welcomed however it is virtually impossible to deliver the desired change in the limited time available. Creative freedom is further diluted by the imposition of a stifling bureaucratic system, though intended to provide accountability it starts with an assumption that every missing bus ticket is evidence of a likely fraud.

The reality is that developing and sustaining creative projects takes time. Industry players may notice when something is adequately proven or acquires a sufficiently high profile, but the reality is that they almost certainly will not adopt an innovation from the public sector in the pilot phase. All the partners in Inclusion Through Media have tried to address this and a number of people have worked across different elements of the programme to provide them with the sustained practical experience needed in a world where you are as good as your CV. These people will

hopefully have enough experience to build careers in the media sector. Policy makers and funding agencies need to recognise that this is a sensible practical outcome. It will marginally increase diversity in the media industry, though regrettably it will not make a sustained difference. The only way to achieve this is to provide programmes like Inclusion Through Media with the same degree of stability as a University Research Laboratory.



The power of
youth media
to change lives

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April 2012

images ©Media Trust



By Jasmine, 20 – involved in a photography project delivered by [Mediabox](#) in partnership with The Guardian.

Introduction

Media Trust believes in the power of media to change lives and works with the media industry to empower charities and communities to have a voice and be heard. This is achieved by providing communications skills and resources, helping access audiences and harnessing creative industry talent. Corporate members include Aegis Group plc, BBC, Channel 4, Daily Mail and General Trust, Discovery Networks Europe, Google, Guardian Media Group, IPC Media, ITV plc, MTV Networks UK and Ireland, News International, Sky and WPP.



Media Trust commissioned a piece of research to explore how media is used as a tool to engage 13-25 year olds, improve their lives and get their voices heard. Independent media consultants Chris Chandler and Mark Dunford undertook the research.

The research team looked at youth media outside formal education including both skills-based accredited training and non-accredited media projects. These provide young people with new practical, technical and creative skills to increase their confidence, raise self-esteem, speak and have their voices heard. These ranged from short to long term interventions engaging young people as individuals or groups. The research included projects delivered by a range of different organisations, including specialist community media organisations and those focusing primarily on youth engagement. The research also looked at the involvement of the media industry and mentoring from media professionals.

For the purposes of the study, youth media is defined as moving image (film, television and animation), game design, radio, print and photography projects designed to engage young people aged 13-25.

As part of the research a literature review, an online survey, interviews and focus groups were carried out. Young people, media professionals and organisations delivering youth media were consulted.



Executive summary

- Youth media is a particularly effective tool for engaging young people from a wide range of backgrounds.
- There are a range of approaches to delivering youth media projects. The majority of projects are moving image and delivered on a short-term basis.
- The combination of technical, educational, social, creative and investigative practices makes media activity an exciting process - even more so as the end result can be communicated to an audience.
- Youth media allows young people to increase their confidence, develop new skills and raise their aspirations.
- In an age of on-going mass unemployment, youth media is one vehicle to provide young people with the skills needed for the work place.
- Youth media provides young people with a voice and creates spaces where their voices can be heard. It also has the potential to address social inclusion by engaging marginalised young people. Because of this, youth media has social and political potential.
- Youth media provides the opportunity to work with industry professionals through mentoring schemes, this could be one route to increase diversity in the media workforce.



Youth media as a tool for change

Youth media is seen as a valuable and vital form of youth engagement and has a number of characteristics that make it especially effective at engaging and retaining young people. These range from the familiarity and allure of the media industry to the opportunity to gain new skills and get their voices heard.

Youth media is able to help young people personally and in relation to specific life choices through a wide range of benefits.

For some it is an opportunity to have their voice heard. For others it is a stepping-stone to their career or a route into higher education.

Youth media provides on-the-job experience, as well as the opportunity to use equipment and work with industry professionals through mentoring schemes. People working in youth media see soft skill development as the primary, immediate benefit for young people. **It develops personal and social awareness, confidence and self-esteem, and raises aspirations.**

Youth media also has the potential to teach basic numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills as well as the disciplines required for employment and enterprise including timekeeping, organisational skills, problem solving and team working. Youth media practitioners often see industry specific skills as a secondary benefit. However, they recognise these skills can be life changing for individual young people who want to pursue a media career.

Youth media work can have clear social benefits. **Many projects address inclusion by providing training for young people not in education, employment or training.** In fact, the media and creative industries are often seen as being able to drive economic growth or regeneration in particular communities.

The creation of a magazine or film underwrites the value of the project for the participants. Public showing or dissemination creates an opportunity to realise their achievement and gain feedback and recognition. **In parallel, it allows them to communicate their opinions to wide audiences through public showcase events or distribution on national or local media platforms.** In all cases, youth media projects leave a legacy in the form of a creative artefact that can be used by participants after the project has completed.



Youth media delivery

There is a great diversity of methods and approaches for delivering youth media projects – the sector has proved itself flexible and innovative in working with different groups and in a range of contexts.

For young people to gain the maximum benefit, youth media needs to be participatory. It needs to be underpinned by good youth work practice and professional media ethics. Young people must also have a central role in the development of their projects.

The majority of youth media projects are short-term. These tend to be diverse, of high quality and fulfil the needs of young people from all backgrounds. However, many interviewees noted that there is an absence of a wider context or ladder of development for individuals and groups involved in short-term work.

Moving image is the most common form of youth media activity, followed by print and photography. There are relatively few examples of game design projects, but it is an incredibly powerful tool when used due to its capacity for interaction. Digital and social media forms part of the distribution activities of many media projects and as these are expanding areas there is huge potential for growth in the creation and dissemination of content.

Accredited training has grown in importance over the past decade, although views differ on its relevance. Some see it as a bureaucratic imposition while others regard it as an enabling mechanism offering routes to employment. There is truth in both views.

It was also found that there is a lack of a national platform or distribution channel for youth media. The absence of a national aggregator makes it difficult to assess the quality, range and amount of projects taking place across the UK. This visibility barrier means work sometimes goes unseen and the inability to reach a wide audience reduces its potential impact. The lack of a national body also makes it hard to access resources, support and information on sector specific developments.

Youth media can provide a way for the media industry to access marginalised communities. However, this is challenging as connections to the mainstream industry are fragmented and often based on personal relationships. **The sector could benefit from structured links such as mentoring, which could be one route to increase diversity in the media workforce.**



What are the drivers of youth media?

- Youth media is seen as a valuable and vital form of youth engagement and has a number of characteristics that make it especially effective at engaging and retaining young people on youth media projects. These range from the familiarity and allure of the media industry to the opportunity to gain new skills and get their voices heard.
- Youth media offers valuable training for life. It develops personal and social awareness, confidence and self-esteem and raises aspirations.
- Skills related to employment and enterprise are also learnt through youth media projects. These include numeracy, literacy and ICT as well as teamwork, timekeeping, organisational skills and problem solving.
- In a more practical sense, youth media can provide the experience and qualifications to help young people go on to employment or further education through accreditation and the development of a portfolio of work.
- Social inclusion is also a benefit of youth media projects. Many participants feel isolated and the projects are a means to re-engage them in society.

Reasons for engagement



Youth media is seen as a valuable and vital form of youth engagement.

It sits within a wider pool of youth activity projects including sport, arts and music. At their best, all of these can draw in young people, provide them with enjoyment and opportunity, and offer ways to ease the transition into fully independent adult life.

Youth media is seen as having a number of characteristics that make it especially effective at engaging and retaining young people. The young people consulted as part of this research gave a wide range of reasons for becoming involved in youth media projects. The familiarity of media and its allure, the desire to develop skills, the opportunity to get their voices heard and the lack of expectation of previous experience were all contributing factors. Some young people initially attended because a friend was interested. Those already involved in a general youth project found the influence of youth workers to be a significant motivation.

Previous experience

For almost all, and especially young people with a history of disengagement, the fact that many youth media projects do not need previous experience was found to be useful in encouraging first steps.

Perceptions of needing established and proven talent are rarely present, unlike joining a sports team, art class or playing in an orchestra, and the skills-gradient is comparatively gentle. Talent and ability is allowed to emerge over time and across a range of creative and technical roles.



“The mentors from the BBC made me realise there are more opportunities out there than meets the eye. You just have to look deeper and look far and wide – they are out there; you just have to look.” Young person

A familiar environment

Young people are more immersed in digital media than any previous generation, especially with the emergence and continuous growth of social media and the almost universal use of mobile phones. This makes media projects attractive to participate in.

Media skills

Some participants in the focus groups noted that **involvement in media projects looked good on their CV for college, university and employment** or for involvement in other media projects. For young people wishing to enter the media professions specific skill development was seen as a driver to participate in youth media projects as it provides a greater understanding of the inner workings of the industry and helps with future aspirations. The prospect of working with media professionals through mentoring programmes or other structured support is also attractive to those that want to access the industry.

Plenty of variety

Media projects **offer a multiplicity of roles both creative and technical**. This appeals to a wide range of young people as it allows them to take on numerous roles, which not only introduces new skills but also keeps things exciting and maintains interest throughout the process. Many of those consulted who had been involved in a film project took on more than one role, including on-screen as well as working

behind the scenes writing scripts, shooting and editing. A member of Glasgow's [Castlemilk Youth Complex](#) has gained experience across a number of roles from hosting a weekly radio show on [Cyclonefm.com](#) and booking interview subjects and programming the music to maintaining the show's presence online. This approach allows young people to **“own”** their projects, which contributes to their dedication and continuous engagement.

Personal development

Focus groups found that some young people became involved with media projects to increase confidence or improve their self-esteem. A participant in the focus group in Manchester got involved in his project because it was good for **“building self-image”**, saying that he **“needed to change and this was the type of thing that would help (him) change”**. This sentiment was shared with a participant in the focus group in Glasgow whose involvement with her local [Prince's Trust](#) project helped her to **“come out of her shell”** and combat a shyness that existed prior to her involvement. After working on a film project that required work in front of the camera she felt more comfortable expressing herself around people.

“I’ve really enjoyed it and have noticed a real change in myself. I feel more proactive and energetic and am looking forward to learning more through taking up any challenges given to me.”
Young person

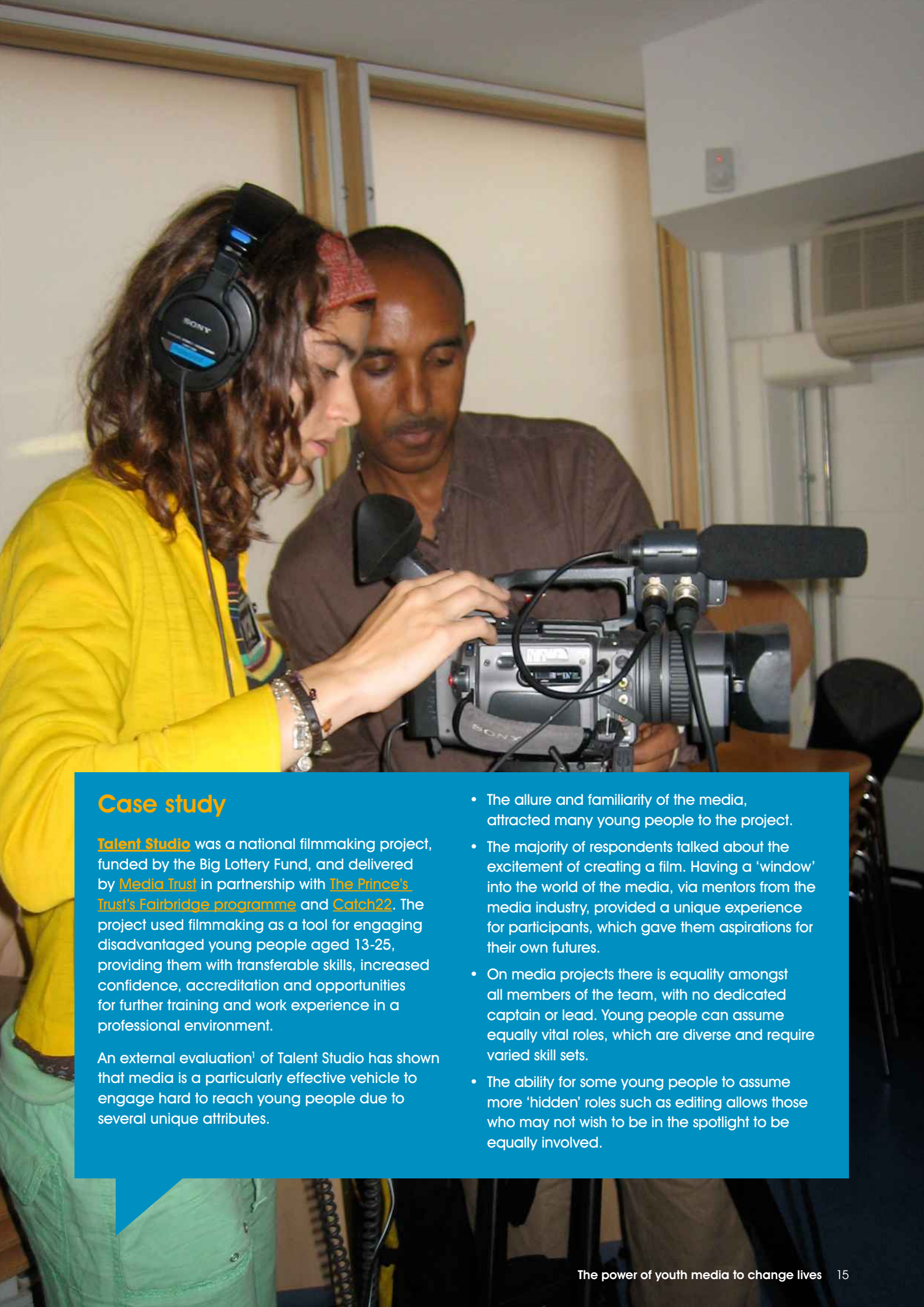
The ‘fun factor’ encourages engagement

The fact that media projects are enjoyable, creative, relaxed, non-school like and allow freedom of expression are clearly important factors in engaging and retaining young people. **“Fun”** was one of the key factors mentioned by participants in the focus groups as a reason for engaging in media projects and staying involved until completion. A participant in the Bristol focus group had dropped out of college because he lacked interest. He became involved in a radio and photography project because he **“needed something to do”**, but maintained his interest in the project because it was **“fun”**. A 15-year-old member of [Bristol’s Creative Youth Network](#) said he **“started it for fun”**, but stayed with it because he now looks at it as a foundation for what he wants to do.



Getting their voice heard

Youth media can allow young people to explore, discuss and disseminate their views to wide public audiences. Focus groups found that this was a key driver to engaging in youth media. Young people feel it is important to contribute to the local and national media and get their voices heard. They see youth media projects as a route to achieve this.



Case study

Talent Studio was a national filmmaking project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, and delivered by [Media Trust](#) in partnership with [The Prince's Trust's Fairbridge programme](#) and [Catch22](#). The project used filmmaking as a tool for engaging disadvantaged young people aged 13-25, providing them with transferable skills, increased confidence, accreditation and opportunities for further training and work experience in a professional environment.

An external evaluation¹ of Talent Studio has shown that media is a particularly effective vehicle to engage hard to reach young people due to several unique attributes.

- The allure and familiarity of the media, attracted many young people to the project.
- The majority of respondents talked about the excitement of creating a film. Having a 'window' into the world of the media, via mentors from the media industry, provided a unique experience for participants, which gave them aspirations for their own futures.
- On media projects there is equality amongst all members of the team, with no dedicated captain or lead. Young people can assume equally vital roles, which are diverse and require varied skill sets.
- The ability for some young people to assume more 'hidden' roles such as editing allows those who may not wish to be in the spotlight to be equally involved.

Motivation for delivery

For many providers, the motivation to deliver youth media projects is to provide the tools young people need to change their attitudes and behaviours, raise their aspirations and enable them to participate in society in a more active way. By doing this it challenges apathy and isolation.

There are three key factors that drive youth media activity: skill development, progression routes and social inclusion.

Practitioners see the benefits as mutually reinforcing and most projects share elements of all three. The research

corroborated these factors as drivers and outcomes of youth media. In the literature, there was empirical and quantitative evidence of the outcomes, with case study and qualitative assessments commonplace. Interviewees did comment that the demonstration of these outcomes was often based on qualitative evidence and many agreed that a longitudinal impact analysis of youth media activity was needed, to assess the impact of youth media.



Skill development



A valuable learning experience

Training for life is an essential component of youth media activity and the different types of projects offer a range of life skills for young people. **Youth media provides on-the-job experience, as well as the opportunity to use equipment and work with industry professionals.** This enables the development of soft and hard skills and raises aspirations.

Soft skills

In general terms these are often classed as 'life skills' and include:

- Confidence and self esteem
- Social development
- Ability to adapt to change and face challenges
- Anger/attitude management

- Sense of direction
- Decision making
- Communication
- Teamwork.

These were universally identified as the most important, immediate benefits of youth media projects. They were seen as essential in underpinning the acquisition of hard skills and valued as they are transferable into any situation. **These are clearly important in terms of social inclusion, raising aspirations and opening doors to future opportunities.**

“The filmmaking project I was part of took me out of my comfort zone, boosted my confidence and changed my perspective on everything. It has given me faith in my future.” Young person

By Emma, 17



“It helps them to identify skills that they never thought they had. There are a lot of young people here that have just been told that they’re rubbish and it’s all about education, education, education. Through working with Media Trust, what I’ve seen is that kids who weren’t confident with writing and were told that they couldn’t, actually find out it’s more their confidence that’s holding them back.” Developmental Tutor, The Prince’s Trust Fairbridge programme

Hard skills

In general terms these are classed as tangible skills and include:

- Numeracy
- Literacy
- ICT
- Technical (industry specific).

Youth media can prove especially effective when it comes to engaging with hard to reach young people. For these groups **youth media can teach basic numeracy, literacy and ICT skills and the disciplines required for regular work or employment** (including timekeeping, organisational skills and problem solving). These are clearly valuable in terms of social inclusion and employability or access to new opportunities in education. This is especially important for young people who have fallen outside the mainstream education system.

In addition to numeracy, literacy and ICT skills youth media projects also offer the opportunity to develop technical skills. Although youth media practitioners often see industry specific skills as a secondary benefit, they recognise these skills can be life changing for individual young people who want to pursue a media career.

Case study

Hannah, 15

Hannah's been in and out of care since she was five years old. In school she was struggling with literacy and numeracy. Her school recommended she joined [Eclectic Productions](#) for some positive extracurricular activities and consistency outside of school. She got involved with Sounding Out, a project that provides young people with skills to become a radio presenter whilst exploring a wide range of topical issues such as domestic violence, unemployment and gangs. As part of this, Hannah received two AQA accreditations. She was extremely proud of this achievement as she often feels embarrassed about not being able to write and read very well. Hannah has recently joined [Reprezent](#) 107.3 FM as a Broadcast Assistant, which she is really enjoying and it has given her the confidence to engage better at school.

“Hannah comes across as being confident and cocky, but it’s to hide how she finds other things difficult. She often gets involved in the wrong crowd, but when she goes to the radio project I know she will be safe and it’s showing her how to be a good person. Hannah is happier and more focused in school.” Tasha, Hannah’s Carer



“Young people enjoy having a role within a media group as it encourages them to be responsible and increases their confidence.” Survey respondent

Creative skills

Typically, creative projects involve activities that build creative skills. These are not specific to a particular media form and they include:

- Identifying and developing ideas
- Experimentation and curiosity
- Storytelling
- Imagination
- Reflection
- Performance
- Expressive writing.

Creative skills allow young people to find new ways to communicate and express themselves.

Learning Skills

Developing an ability to learn by stimulating curiosity and imagination or simply altering attitudes was a recurrent theme in the research. **Youth media is seen as an unconventional but effective way to achieve educational ends.**

Media literacy is the ability to understand the quality, range and amount of media produced. It is fundamental for those that want to pursue a career in the industry. While youth media provides young people with an understanding of media production, the pace of change in the media industry is swift. This means that learning how to learn is also an essential part of youth media activity.

Case study

Kieran, 15

The City of London Academy referred Kieran to [Eclectic Productions](#) Off the Streetz's radio project as his school life has been troubled. He had been excluded for violence and his brother was in prison. When he started the project he was shy and quiet with no motivation.

Kieran made a complete turnaround. He found some hope for the future and realised he had time to make a change before he leaves school. His attendance and discipline at school improved significantly.

“I didn't have much confidence when I started. The radio presenting has helped me speak out a lot more when things are annoying me. Because I'm better at speaking I don't need to get so angry all the time.”
Kieran

“One of the main benefits I believe the course has is raising confidence and self esteem. Public speaking, presenting and being recorded is something many students fear, but it has really helped bring Kieran out of himself. He has been encouraged to get involved in a positive activity after school as well as providing another qualification. It provides material for his CV, which is valuable as young people are finding it increasingly difficult to find employment.” Angela, Kieran's Support Worker

Skills for success

In 2009, the [Young Foundation](#) published [Grit: The skills for success and how they are grown](#). Based on in-depth sociological, psychological and economic research, this report argued that there were four clusters of competencies that were essential for modern life. These were seen to be particularly important for young people if they are to develop fulfilled and successful lives.

The report does not mention youth media other than in passing, but these broad competencies were described throughout the research as the main outcomes of youth media projects.

The four competencies were aligned under the acronym SEED:



Social and emotional

Including self-awareness, social awareness and social skills.



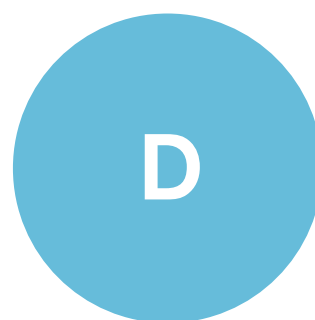
Emotional resilience

The ability to cope with both short and long-term shocks and rebufs.



Enterprise, innovation and creativity

The ability to shape situations, imagine alternatives, remain open to new ideas, problem-solve and work in teams.



Discipline

Both the inner discipline to defer gratifications and pursue goals, and the ability to cope with external discipline. Discipline, motivation and its driver, persistence or grit, can encourage a child to go further... it can push open the door to opportunity.

Progression routes

Providers active in youth media describe a range of progression routes from youth media projects, these include:

- Re-entry into mainstream education
- Access to Further and Higher Education
- Access to employment – including jobs within and outside of the media industry.

Providing concrete proof of skills

Articles, films, podcasts and other pieces of media produced by young people play an important role in helping individuals progress from a youth media project. Many interviewees stated that finished products

were invaluable in giving young people a portfolio to show to employers or (especially) for further and higher education admission. One interviewee noted that a great number of applications for the [Skillset Media Academies](#) quoted an involvement in youth media as having inspired them.

Accreditation

“Our work enables young people to build their future by finding them new routes to training or employment.”

Survey respondent



“The majority of the participants are actively looking for creative opportunities using film, as a direct result of taking part in this project. Some individuals have applied for college placements on photography and film courses, several have approached individual photographers and film makers directly for mentoring and work experience.” First Light funded project The Eternal Now²

Accredited training has grown in importance in recent years with funding increasingly tied to the delivery of specific qualifications as well as the development of individuals. Some interviewees noted that particular funders, such as local authorities, increasingly insisted on accreditation as a condition of investment. This study found ambivalence about accreditation in youth media circles.

Organisations not offering accreditation for some or all of their activities frequently mentioned that:

- It might put off some young people as being too ‘schooly’
- Accreditation was not suitable for extremely excluded young people from the most difficult backgrounds
- It was impossible to deliver in the limited time available on shorter projects.

Many providers felt the focus on qualifications forced their activity to take on a particular form, which emphasised the individual trainee rather than the collaborative process. Also, some organisations felt they did not have the administration support required to process the paperwork.

At the same time, providers recognised that some young people valued the sense of achievement associated with gaining a qualification and accredited training can also aid parental support.

Many organisations that focused on vocational or employment outcomes

noted the importance of accreditation to progression. [Eclectic Productions](#) reported that over 90% of the young people it worked with successfully achieved an accreditation. Interviewees commented on the importance of accreditation in validating project work in the face of prospective employers and Further and Higher Education providers.

Shorter courses appear less likely to offer accreditation than longer-term projects. Accreditation routes ranged from [Arts Award](#) (for basic level activities) through [Open College Network \(OCN\)](#) to accreditation offered in partnership with Further and Higher Education institutions.

“The OCN accreditation has acted as a carrot to help parental support. Parents from this community do not always see the benefit of activities like this without any qualification. The accreditation has helped to illustrate the project as an added bonus to their children’s formal learning.” Mediabox funded youth film project targeting the BME community in Leicester³

² Helen Corkery Research and Marketing, 2011

³ GHK, 2008



Creating opportunities within the media

Many interviewees were enthusiastic about the need to help able young people to work in the media and felt the creation of alternative pathways into the media industry to be a key part of their work.

The creative industries are an area of growing economic and political importance, seen as one of the sectors capable of driving economic growth or regeneration in particular communities.

The media and the related digital sectors play a key part in this sector, which is larger in the UK than other European countries.⁴

Entry to the media industry is highly competitive and often depends on a combination of high qualifications and a strong portfolio. Prospective entrants are increasingly asked to work for free in the early stages of their career and, too often, they need pre-established contacts within media companies. This makes the industry less accessible to some groups of people.

Developing technical or industry skills can be a route into relevant Further or Higher Education courses and, for some, the media industry. For example, participants working with the [Rural Media](#)

[Company](#) have moved on to the [Skillset Media Academy](#) at Bournemouth, while others from [Watershed](#) have secured places at University of West of England. Employers value these skills as they enable employees to demonstrate that they can perform specific tasks.

“The aspirations and needs of young people from disadvantaged communities are not necessarily different from those of any talented young person trying to develop a career in the film industry. However, they do not necessarily have the benefit of coming from a similar cultural background as most of those currently working in the industry and it can be difficult for them to have access to both formal and informal mentors who can provide both emotional and practical support over a sustained period of time.”⁵

⁴ The Creative Industries Mapping Documents of 1999 and 2001 define 13 sectors within the creative industries accounting for 7.3% of GDP. This is substantiated by the Work Foundation in *Staying Ahead: the economic performance of the UK's Creative Industries (2007)*. In contrast the average size of the sector across the EC is 2.6% of GDP according to *Unlocking Potential of the Creative and Cultural Industries*, a Green Paper published in 2010

⁵ Sarah Macnee, 2007

Case study

John

John did a couple of internships with local papers and radio stations. None of them were paid and he struggled to find employment. He wanted to find a course that could provide the contacts and opportunities that would give him a shot at a career in the media industry.

He joined [Catch22 Academy](#), an organisation that offers a 14-week Introduction to Multimedia Journalism Programme for those seeking a bridge into journalism. The course is taught by

leading industry professionals and provides learning through experience. As a result of this project he gained placements with Trinity Mirror and John Brown Publishing. He then went on to gain his NCTJ diploma and secured a job as the Showbiz and Arts Journalist for the Evening Standard.

“Catch 22 taught me a basic journalism ‘tool kit’, which helped me to make the most of my placements with the Trinity Mirror and John Brown Publishing and ultimately to get a dream job with the Evening Standard, via an NCTJ course.”
John

Large media corporations often see youth media as a route to reach young people who may not otherwise have the opportunities to work in the industry. For example, BBC and Channel 4 both have schemes that establish sustainable links and connections to many different community groups.

Participants on some youth media projects can move to being volunteers, trainees, apprentices or staff within the organisation. The identification and opening of alternative pathways into the media industry is a priority for youth media and industry professionals alike. [Skillset](#) is delivering the Creative and Digital Media Apprenticeships and sees the need to work with the youth media sector to reach young people from all backgrounds engaged with youth media projects. [Skillset](#) has also raised the need for joined up and better access to careers advice for the creative industries.

Creating opportunities outside of the media

For many providers, the focus for delivering youth media projects is not to provide a route for young people into the media industry but to engage them in society. The skills gained through youth media projects allow young people to raise their aspirations, reach their potential and supports them to re-engage with education, employment and training.

“Youth media helps directly train the journalists, social media and creatives of the future. It offers a chance for young people to develop their critical thinking and to meet and work with different people across gender, age, ethnicity, economic background and class. It improves life chances and has a very powerful impact on employability.” Survey respondent

“Since completing a filmmaking course it’s opened so many doors for me. One of the biggest differences and something I value so much is now being a paid youth worker. Having done the course myself and gaining knowledge and experience within media through work experience and work placements, I am seen and respected as a role model to other young people. I like helping and passing on my experience to the young people and I’m now in a job that I enjoy and find very rewarding” Young Person now Youth Worker at Catch22 Nottingham

Case study

Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) is a media arts charity and limited company that aims to develop and support cultural, social and economic regeneration. It supports communities to engage with, and benefit from, digital technologies and the arts. The support offered by KWMC empowers young people, enabling them to acquire the skills, knowledge and experience needed to take on more responsible roles.

Katie, aged 17, first engaged with KWMC through a photography project, N'large. This project allowed her to build her confidence and gain new skills. Katie's experiences at KWMC gave her the confidence to apply for an internal post. She is now working at KWMC as the Pro-found Media Leader.

“The Pro-found media post was advertised and my past experiences at KWMC gave me the confidence to apply and show what I could bring to the team. Finding out I had the job was brilliant. I was very proud of myself for achieving something like this and was ready to get going. It has really helped me gain experience and knowledge needed for the “real world” and possible jobs in the future.” Katie



Social inclusion

The idea of social inclusion is central to much youth media activity. Youth media is seen as a means to reach and engage young people who are often excluded by their background, gender, ethnicity or disability. Youth media projects often work with groups who are perceived as alienated or in danger of being marginalised. Projects such as [Radio Youthology](#) or [Reprezent](#) 107.3 FM are excellent examples of successful work engaging directly with social inclusion. One project leader, worked with a group of hard to reach young people from a marginalised estate who had no experience of the city centre two miles away. By the end of the project the young people involved had made their own film and shown it at a screening in the city centre. Making the film had provided the young people with new confidence and a connection to their community.

Marginalised groups are thought to have a restricted representation in mainstream media. Many interviewees noted that young people often wanted to make films addressing and challenging stereotyping. Through distribution and dissemination youth media projects are often used to get beyond negative stereotypes, illuminating some of the myths and misunderstandings of young people.

“I really enjoyed my time at ITV. One of the highlights was when I made suggestions on three edits and they took on my suggestions and implemented them. When I watched the show the following morning I saw they had actually put my suggestions in – this gave me a sense that I was part of it. It was a wonderful feeling to have your ideas acknowledged by senior professionals. That meant a lot to me”. Young person, now a Production Assistant with The Garden Production Company

It is also believed that there is a need for people from a greater diversity of backgrounds to work in all parts of the media. Efforts to support the early careers of these groups have a double benefit: it helps the individuals to achieve a successful course in life and it broadens the diversity of the media, which has the potential to address the representation of these groups in mainstream media. Youth media activity becomes one means to redress the balance.

“We work with excluded young people, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, unemployed, those with disabilities, marginalised young people, those from LGBT community” Survey respondent



"I enjoyed having people value my input when they are a lot more experienced and have a lot more knowledge of the industry than me." Adika, 25

Voice of young people

- The creation of a tangible media product is one of the defining features of youth media. It distinguishes it from most other youth focused activities.
- Youth media is powerful. The product is proof of the process and provides young people with a voice and the ability to communicate their voice to large audiences and be heard in the national debate.
- There is no national aggregator for youth media output. The sector would benefit from more investment in 'agency' services which can aggregate and promote youth media messages within the local and national media.

“Youth media has proven to be a powerful tool in capturing the natural talent, creativity, stories and views of young people today. Young people often feel that they need to be heard and listened to, so the work has played a key role in facilitating this by giving them a new accessible opportunity to make films which have been distributed.” Survey respondent

Content creation

The creation of a tangible product - a film, podcast, magazine or comparable piece of media – is one of the defining features of youth media. It distinguishes it from most other youth focused activities. In these other activities the emphasis is primarily on the social and creative processes underpinning it rather than the output.

The combination of technical, educational, social, investigative and creative elements within a youth media project is unique. Here, the product is proof of the process and it is this that provides young people with a voice, as there are opportunities for distribution on national and local platforms.

Project completion is often marked by a screening or community based event in a cinema, town hall or other public venue. Working in this way provides participants with a clear sense of a journey so an initial workshop can be seen as something leading directly to a shared public event.

As important for some projects is the ability of youth media work to present the views and opinions of young people in national media, and to allow young people to take part in the national debate. For many this is an important balance to the sometimes disparaging view of young people that the media can project.



“I realised that all of these young people have so many stories to tell and so much to say about their views on things and also their view on how other people view them. This doesn’t really get that much of an outing and it’s just made me really conscious of that when I am thinking about what stories to cover. The media tend to ignore young people as a source of opinions or stories but they shouldn’t.” Presenter and Journalist, ITV and mentor on a youth media project

Evolving technology

In the past decade, technology has moved on rapidly. Online publishing and radio are now relatively simple and inexpensive, and any young person can easily make, edit and show a film. Everything is geared towards individual production and the issue of voice in media has moved on because of this.

The rise and contemporary power of social media is both an opportunity and a barrier for youth media. The public space has been transformed as technologies have converged to provide multiple points of entry to different media experiences. **Social media platforms to distribute work are accessible to a wide range of people but the key challenge is to avoid work vanishing in the proliferation of channels and outlets and get it seen by wide audiences.** Practitioners have responded in a number of different ways and many of these are led directly by young people. **There is no coordination around this area of work and the sector would benefit from more investment in 'agency' services that can aggregate and promote youth media messages within the local and national media.** Working in partnership with the media industry to achieve this is vital.

It can be argued that organised youth media work has diminished in importance upon a national stage over the past ten years. Technology now allows young people to make their own work without the support of intermediary organisations. However, access to that work has also been individualised to a point where it is scattered across the country and remains unconnected and in many cases unseen.

[Mediabox](#) funding offered a way to address these issues by providing an overall framework and specific support for the dissemination and distribution of projects supported by the fund.

Case study

Watershed is a cross-artform venue and producer, sharing, developing and showcasing exemplary cultural ideas and talent. It uses digital production to build digital media literacy and cultural engagement with a particular focus on young people. This is achieved through a collaborative partnership based practice and involves working with diverse partners - from community organisations, youth groups, schools and individuals to industry partners, artists and creative practitioners.

A portfolio of engagement projects, screenings and events provides young people with opportunities to develop and realise their creative, economic and social potential in and out of formal education with a view to developing the producers, artists and audiences of the future. In this way, young people are able to move from production to exhibition. In addition, a number of participants have secured roles in the industry, including film and television animation company, Aardman.

Getting opinions widely heard

The idea of 'voice' was discussed by the young people's focus groups as part of this research. Young people saw youth media work as more than a means to create a product. It was an opportunity to express themselves in the mainstream media.

Many youth media practitioners work to help young people to use their voices in a way that expresses their particular concerns and as a result often challenges perceptions.

It is important to distinguish between voice as a process (the means of speaking and giving an account) and as a value (the spaces where a view or opinion can be heard).⁶ The most successful youth media work often flows from projects where the parameters are most clearly defined by young people – where they have a central role in the development and direction of the project. In short, those projects where the voice of the young person is embedded in the process and the value.

For young people and the adults who work alongside them, distributing a finished product can have a number of different (though interconnected) roles. The creation of a magazine or film underwrites the value of the project for the participants. Public showing or dissemination creates an opportunity to realise their achievement and gain feedback and recognition. This can be done by simply uploading material to YouTube, through public showcase events or the distribution on national or local media platforms. **In all cases, youth media projects leave a legacy in the form of a creative artefact that can be used by participants after the project has completed.**

“Our work enables self expression, allows young people to voice their opinions and gives them power to campaign on causes close to their heart.” Survey respondent

A public launch, where the product could be viewed by peers, parents and the local community, was a high point for many young people. The involvement of local amenities such as cinemas and town halls in giving launches a sense of occasion – and making them take place in public spaces – was frequently mentioned.



6 Nick Couldry, 2010

Column Idol finalists – a project run by The Sun in partnership with Media Trust to get positive voices into mainstream media.

“THIS IS A FANTASTIC CHANCE FOR ANYONE WHO LIKES WRITING AND HAS AN OPINION”

JESSIE J

COLUMN IDOL SPOKESPERSON



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To enter you must be aged 18-25 and be a resident in England or Wales. Entries must be submitted at www.thesun.co.uk/columnidol or posted to Column Idol, The Sun, 3 Thomas Moore Square, London, E9 8 1XY and must be received before midday on 20 June 2011. You must complete the required information and answer the questions in full. A panel of judges will select the final six, who must be available to attend the workshop during the day on 5 July 2011 in London and the final panel in the afternoon or evening on 13 Sept 2011 in London. The finalists must also be available to attend at least three mentoring sessions between 6 July 2011 and 2 September 2011 in London. Reasonable travel, accommodation and food costs for attendance to workshops and meetings will be agreed with you prior to attendance. Finalists will be notified by phone or email on 24 June 2011 and must confirm their attendance within 7 days. All finalists and winner agree to take part in publicity relating to the competition and experience at the reasonable request of the Promoter. The winner will have their final article published in The Sun newspaper and online in the autumn of 2011, subject to editorial discretion and news of the day. Please see www.thesun.co.uk/columnidol for full terms and conditions of entry. Promoter: News Group Newspapers Ltd and Media Trust.

Local effectiveness

Many youth media products are distributed locally and primarily seen by the families, peers and immediate community of the young people making them. Even when shared via Facebook and other social media, **the lack of a youth media aggregator or any other mechanism to draw attention means that their primary audience is one that seeks them out.** These local effects can still be substantial. In some youth media projects young people set out to analyse an issue of concern to them and are able to change minds and attitudes, in some cases working with local media.

In one project, delivered by [Headliners](#), care leavers focused on the availability of supported housing. They made a film as the core of a campaign and as a direct result the local authority increased supported housing numbers by 25%. Projects created to explore and communicate young people's views on an issue are, in some instances, commissioned by local authorities and other public agencies. Such projects can be seen as more effective than direct methods of seeking a youth view as they allow for an explored, analysed and structured view, relatively unmediated by observer bias.

Youth media is especially powerful in helping young people to consider, create and disseminate to a large audience, messages which matter to them.

Case study

Latimer Creative is a social enterprise that prides itself in delivering educational innovation direct to young people. An integral aspect of their work is a commitment to social and digital media.

They believe that giving young people genuine influence over local services is the most effective way of ensuring greater access and increased participation.

'*Kim*' is a contemporary drama about domestic abuse, which was developed in partnership with and performed by young people, many of whom have direct experience of the issues explored. The project led to the production of an accompanying education toolkit that addresses the issues raised in the film and will serve as a valuable learning resource for young people nationwide.

"The young people respond really well to the DVD [created as the result of a partnership with young parents] and they pick up on the issues not only around physical violence but power, control and isolation. I think it really is the best learning resource I have come across covering this topic area." Workshop facilitator, Women's Aid

Grabbing the attention of the national media

The absence of a national aggregator for youth media output was mentioned throughout this research. Many interviewees felt that it was difficult to distribute content made by young people on national media platforms and for young people to have a voice in the political arena.

However there are examples of projects and intermediaries that succeed in placing youth media voices directly in the national media. **Media Trust has been successful in placing young people's stories on national platforms including, BBC, Sky, Channel 4, The Sun and The Guardian.** It also airs many youth media films through its digital television channel [Community Channel](#). Other projects put substantial efforts into getting the national

press to pick up either directly or as part of other reporting on youth media voices. [Livity](#) in South London has been successful in placing youth voices **“up front and central”** in national product marketing campaigns and [Headliners](#) has been successful getting young people's voices in the national press.

“The current platforms are too small and grab too little attention in the national consciousness and debate.”
Survey respondent





Case study

Breaking into News was a competition launched by ITN, Media Trust and ITV News. Fronted by BAFTA award-winning ITV News at Ten presenters Mark Austin and Julie Etchingam, the competition sought to discover new talent and get the voices of young people heard by wide audiences. Six 18-25 year olds were mentored by experienced broadcast journalists from the ITN newsroom in writing, presenting and production skills to create their own piece of news.

Mentored by the Features Editor at ITV News, the winner produced a compelling report about the true extent of homelessness in London and how those sleeping rough on the streets are just the tip of the iceberg. Sophia's piece told the story of Sadie, who at just 13 found herself homeless and sleeping on the night bus in her school uniform and was broadcast on London Tonight.

"The aim was to identify talent who wouldn't normally find a way into somewhere like ITN. Breaking Into News has opened that door for them." Robin Elias, Managing Editor, ITV News

The youth media landscape

- There is no authoritative directory of organisations delivering youth media projects. The range of organisations includes specialist media organisations, those focusing primarily on youth engagement and charities and organisations from unrelated sectors.
- For many organisations the involvement of media professionals is an essential part of youth media activity.
- There is a genuine depth of talent in youth media. However, when youth media is compared to (in particular) theatre and music, opportunities for the most talented are comparatively weak.
- The youth media sector is lacking coordination and a regional, national and UK wide strategy. A lead strategic agency working in partnership with the youth media sector and media companies would have the capacity to tackle this.
- Both independent and mainstream media companies support youth media and there is evidence that media professionals benefit from being involved.

Organisations and networks

There are a wide range of organisations that deliver youth media projects. The multiplicity and diversity of the sector makes it difficult to collate this network and as a result there is no single authoritative directory. **In addition, there is not a strategic agency for the youth media landscape to coordinate this approach.** This makes it difficult to arrive at a firm estimate of numbers, but the range of organisations includes:

- Community youth charities and organisations
- Specialist media organisations
- Media and arts centres
- Charities and organisations from unrelated sectors which use media as part of their youth offer (for example heritage, conservation and international development).

All of the above organisations have been considered as part of the research other than charities and organisations from unrelated sectors due to the size and diversity of this group.

By Miles, 18

 join the conversation @Media_Trust

Film courses run in partnership with the Media Trust are fantastic. They enable young people to develop their personal and social skills through media, which is a really powerful learning tool. Many young people use the skills that they have learnt, including the Arts Award, to move onto other projects or as a evidence of their ability to achieve.” Operations Manager, The Prince’s Trust Fairbridge programme

Community youth charities and organisations

A wide range of youth media projects are delivered by community youth organisations as part of their broader youth work programme to engage and develop young people. Youth media projects develop personal and social awareness, build confidence and self-esteem and this supports the subsequent acquisition of skills.

Specialist media organisations

These organisations specialise in the production of professional standard content. Staff members ordinarily have an expertise in media production and a relationship with media industry outlets, such as broadcasters or publishers. This is combined with outreach and educational youth media programmes.



Case study

Chocolate Films produces high quality documentaries for cinema and broadcast as well as video content and promotional films for a wide range of clients. In addition, they run an extensive programme of educational and community filmmaking. The majority of their projects are for children and young people. Their projects are facilitated by skilled filmmakers who are experienced educators.

“Youth media is a really important area of youth work and, with the growth of creative industries, there are more and more opportunities for young people to work in the media. There is also a greater need for young people to be able to develop the skills to get into that industry without going down a formal education route, which simply isn’t for everyone!” Survey respondent

Media and arts centres

Media and arts centres have a broad arts remit which can include media. They have the capacity to act as specialist hubs, delivering their own mix of activities and providing a locus for networking and exchange. In this case youth media forms part of a far larger programme, which involves community engagement, audience development and work with media professionals.

Supporting talent

Even the most casual appraisal of youth media output reveals the depth of talent involved. **When youth media is compared to (in particular) theatre and music, access to provision for the talented is comparatively weak.** The UK has a National Youth Theatre and National Youth Orchestra, but lacks a National Youth Film School and other provision for talented young people across the media spectrum. However, in early 2012, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, announced the creation of a new film academy for young people, to be run by the [BFI](#).

The Department for Education committed £3m to the film academy to give 16–19 year olds a unique talent development experience working with the film industries and film professionals. The academy will initially work with 5,000 young people. That number will be whittled down to 200 selected for a pioneering elite residential filmmaking course, which will teach them technical, curatorial, business and marketing skills. Teachers will include UK producers, filmmakers and technical experts as well as academics. The course will be free for participating students.

Case study

The [Tyneside Cinema](#) is Newcastle’s only full-time independent cultural cinema, specialising in independent and world productions. It offers a range of youth activities as well as a membership scheme focusing on developing a young audience.

Northern Stars is a programme for young people aged 15-18 from across the North East who are passionate about filmmaking. Run by industry professionals, Northern Stars gives young people an introduction to every aspect of film production and provides the opportunity for them to make films and become inspired.

Tyneside Cinema offers young people from Northern Stars the chance to get involved in making commissions for organisations and companies nationwide. Several of their films have gone on to win awards and many graduates go on to study film and media-based courses at university. Participants also benefit from jobs and placements on feature films and TV productions.

“Working with Media Trust has enabled our youth workers to see the huge opportunities for inspiring development in young people through film. The project has enabled them not only to engage and have fun, but also to come out with a high quality accreditation and a broadcast quality film, being shown internationally. This has raised the bar of expectations that youth workers have and has expanded their repertoire of interventions from sport, cooking and outdoor activities into high quality creative media activities. Specifically, staff have gained skills in the film development process, in technical skills and in supporting young people to obtain the Arts Award accreditation.”

Head of Local Public Sector, The Prince’s Trust

Partnerships

A common feature of interviews and focus group discussions was that partnerships for project provision were common. These were diverse but many took the form of media specialists working with youth sector providers. These ranged from youth clubs and community groups through to government agencies, such as those within the youth justice system, pupil referral centres and the care system.

Many youth media projects use industry professionals - either freelancers or staff from media organisations – who are either contracted to deliver youth media activity or volunteer their time. This combination of skills allows youth workers to provide on-going holistic support to young people and the media professionals bring their specialist knowledge and expertise. For projects led by speciality media organisations and media and arts centres, a partnership with a youth charity or organisation enables them to reach a diverse group of young people.

For many organisations the involvement of media professionals is an essential part of youth media activity.

Some organisations fulfil both roles and, by virtue of their base with a particular community, act as a community resource and a repository of professional expertise.





“The majority of activity-based interventions tend to engage greater numbers of males than females (typically at a ratio of around 70%:30% in favour of young males). This is especially the case in programmes that use activities which are, or have been, viewed as being more or less ‘male preserves’ (including various sports), but it is also the case in more ‘inclusive’ activity programmes such as those using music”⁷

Number of delivery organisations involved

There has only been one systematic audit of organisations delivering participatory youth media activity outside of formal education. This research was commissioned by [21st Century Literacy](#). It shows 392 delivery organisations active in moving image youth projects in the UK. A significant proportion of these also deliver other youth, media or arts activities. Providers included venues (e.g. cinemas), production companies and film archives, theatres and youth arts companies. There were providers in all of the nations and regions of the UK. Taking population and demographics into account the spread was uneven, as can be seen in the table opposite.

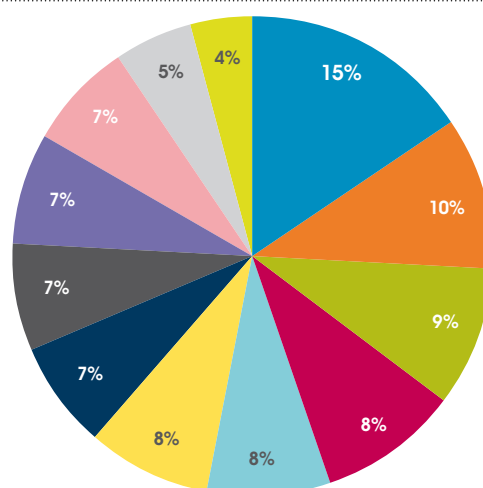
The [21st Century Literacy](#) audit did not include community youth organisations that deliver moving image projects as part of their broader youth work remit or charities and organisations from unrelated sectors (for example heritage, conservation and international development) which use moving image as one component of their offer to young people.

In addition, the definition of youth media is, of course, much broader than just moving image projects and includes game design, radio, print and photography projects.

An overall audit has not been undertaken for all organisations and charities active across all areas of youth media. This will require a methodical audit of providers active across the youth media footprint and would benefit from a lead strategic agency to join up this area of work.

Youth media organisations audit 2011, analysed by nation and region⁸

Region	Number of organisations
London	59
Scotland	40
West Midlands	37
East Midlands	36
Wales	32
Yorkshire & the Humber	32
Northern Ireland	29
South East England	29
South West England	29
North West England	27
North East England	19
East of England	14



The interviews and focus groups give strong supportive evidence that the table above is an accurate reflection of the true picture in terms of geographical representation. Other than a few examples, market town and rural locations are poorly served.

⁷ GHK, 2008

⁸ 21st Century Literacy

Case study

The Engine Room is an accessible community media centre run by Somerset Film. It gives the general public access to equipment and expertise through free 'drop-in' sessions and covers a range of subjects including filmmaking, animation, web design, graphic design, digital photography, scriptwriting and VJ-ing.

One of the most innovative developments from [Somerset Film](#) over the past few years has been the Young People's Film Council (YPFC). It's an informal, self-help network of young people engaged in filmmaking, animation and digital media and has become a dynamic and effective vehicle for mutual support and self-expression.

Numbers of young people involved

It is difficult to estimate the total number of young people participating in youth media projects each year. [First Light](#) reports 5,100 participants in the period 2008-2010. [Mediabox](#) in its first year of activity (2007-08) supported 12,334 beneficiaries and more than 20,000 throughout the whole period of its existence (2007-2010). It seems likely these figures represent a small minority of the total benefiting from youth media projects.

There is both anecdotal and statistical evidence of the gender split in participants. By the end of March 2008 (roughly the mid-point in the project), Mediabox worked with 46% females and 54% males.⁹ [Media Trust's](#) Youth Mentoring project reports a similar gender balance.¹⁰ In interviews, one project, focusing on radio, reported a 60%:40% female to male split, and that special efforts had recently been made to attract boys into the project. **This comparatively even gender split is not typical of participatory youth projects as a whole, where males tend to outnumber females, often by a considerable margin.**

Evidence regarding the proportions of males and females attracted and the reasons for this is inconclusive not only for youth media projects but across all youth activities.

The difficulty in achieving a total figure for the numbers engaged in youth media projects and a true picture of these young people is certain to continue. **Achieving this would require a register or network of youth media delivery organisations and a longitudinal input and impact study.** It would greatly assist advocacy for the sector if a methodology for estimating numbers of participants could be agreed and implemented. This is one of a number of developmental factors identified throughout this report that can only be properly addressed through action at a strategic level.



9 GHK, 2008

10 IPSE, 2010

Why does the media industry get involved?

Independent production companies, such as Maverick TV and mainstream media companies such as BBC and Channel 4 run programmes designed to work with young people. These activities form part of their commitment to diversity, corporate social responsibility agendas and employee volunteering initiatives. In turn, this increases their access to charities and understanding of particular communities.

Personal and professional development

There is some evidence (primarily from mentoring projects) that media professionals can gain a lot from being involved with youth media. Benefits include developing professional skills in areas such as communication and motivation, and a reminder that the media has a wider social and cultural potential.

There is also evidence that media professionals gain personal development opportunities through mentoring projects. Benefits include increasing confidence and gaining an understanding of people from different social backgrounds.

Media professionals can find it difficult to engage with young people who often have no previous experience of media production or the professional attitudes required for sustained creative activity. Projects - such as the mentoring projects run by [Media Trust](#) – offer training and support for the mentor to ensure everyone gets the most out of the experience.

Mentoring schemes are mutually beneficial; not only are they beneficial to the mentors but they are appealing to young people. The prospect of working with media professionals is attractive to young people wishing to enter the media professions and to young people from backgrounds which are under-represented in the media industry.¹¹

Other creative industries have also provided structured mentoring opportunities for talented young people from under-represented backgrounds.

“Half the time I think ‘what’s the point of television?’ You know, it all seems a bit frivolous and a bit ridiculous. But what this has made me realise is that your skills are useful and there are loads of things that I can give back. So I suppose in a funny sort of way I feel a bit better about what I do and what I can do with what I’ve got. Things just seem a bit more worthwhile.” Media professional and mentor on a youth media project¹²

¹¹ Institute for Policy Studies in Education, 2011

¹² Substance, 2008

¹³ Substance, 2012

“We’ve benefitted from our staff working with young people and engaging with them, particularly people that may be from a different social background to themselves. And so it’s been personal development for our staff as much as it has been development for the people that come through the scheme.”
Talent Coordinator, BBC Birmingham, commenting on Media Trust’s filmmaking and mentoring project¹³



Looking for a more joined up approach

There was an almost complete consensus in interviews and focus groups that the youth media sector lacked coordination at a national level and many noted that local coordination was piecemeal. Delivery organisations by and large had a clear sense of their own corporate strategy but felt that this was lacking in regional, national or UK wide strategy. **There is currently no lead strategic agency for the whole of the youth media footprint.** The challenges this gave rise to were identified as:

- Difficulty in identifying or exchanging good practice
- Lack of externally verified delivery standards – which could give rise to weak project work
- Difficulty in coordinating local and regional provision to optimise the use of resources
- Too much competition between delivery organisations
- Lack of an information source for young people or groups looking to get involved in media projects
- Lack of easily identifiable 'ladders of progression' for individual young people, especially outside of Higher and Further Education
- Lack of recognition of the benefits of youth media activity, to demonstrate impact to government and funders.

Whilst [Skillset](#) has no direct remit for youth media, its priorities overlap in the area of 19+ training and entry to employment. Skillset recognises the value of the youth media sector having direct relationships with pre-vocational and entry-level training providers and in particular sees the sector as an engine for diversity in the industry. However, Skillset sees a need to promote the Creative and Digital Media Apprenticeships to the young people from all backgrounds engaged with youth media organisations. The difficulty lies in finding a way to address the multiplicity and diversity of organisations in the sector.

Skillset has been advising the Creative Industries Council on skills needs for the creative sector. One key point made was the lack of reliable careers advice which is currently unconnected, partial and isolated. In their [report to the Creative Industries Council](#) they recommend that this advice needs to be joined up and there should be better access to information about delivery bodies - especially support organisations for young people. Skillset itself is aware of the potential benefits of working in partnership to develop this approach. If adopted, this has the capacity to tackle some of the strategic issues facing the youth media sector.

Alongside sector organisations interviewees mentioned that major media companies should be potential key players to coordinate a strategy for the sector. Some organisations felt that [21st Century Literacy](#) had gone some way to pulling together a strategy for moving image youth projects, although the primary focus of this was media education in the curriculum. The [BFI](#) will take direct responsibility for moving image education strategy but, interviewees had varying views on the scope of this strategy in terms of informal youth activity and of course the definition of youth media is much broader than moving image. However, there has been a small trend amongst strategic agencies toward a broader area of interest nearer to the youth media footprint.

There is, however, a comparative absence of non-commercial/industry strategic leaders in game design, radio, print and photography. For example [TIGA](#), the trade association representing the UK's games industry, focuses its education strategy entirely upon the curriculum and graduate/post-graduate provision. Several interviewees felt the development of wider youth media provision in games, apps and interactive media was likely to be hampered by the lack of a pool of freelance industry professionals to form a body of trainers, skills and expertise. They noted that the structure of the print media and moving image sectors lent itself to freelance employment and that a significant group of industry freelancers had added youth media to their portfolios.



The youth media picture

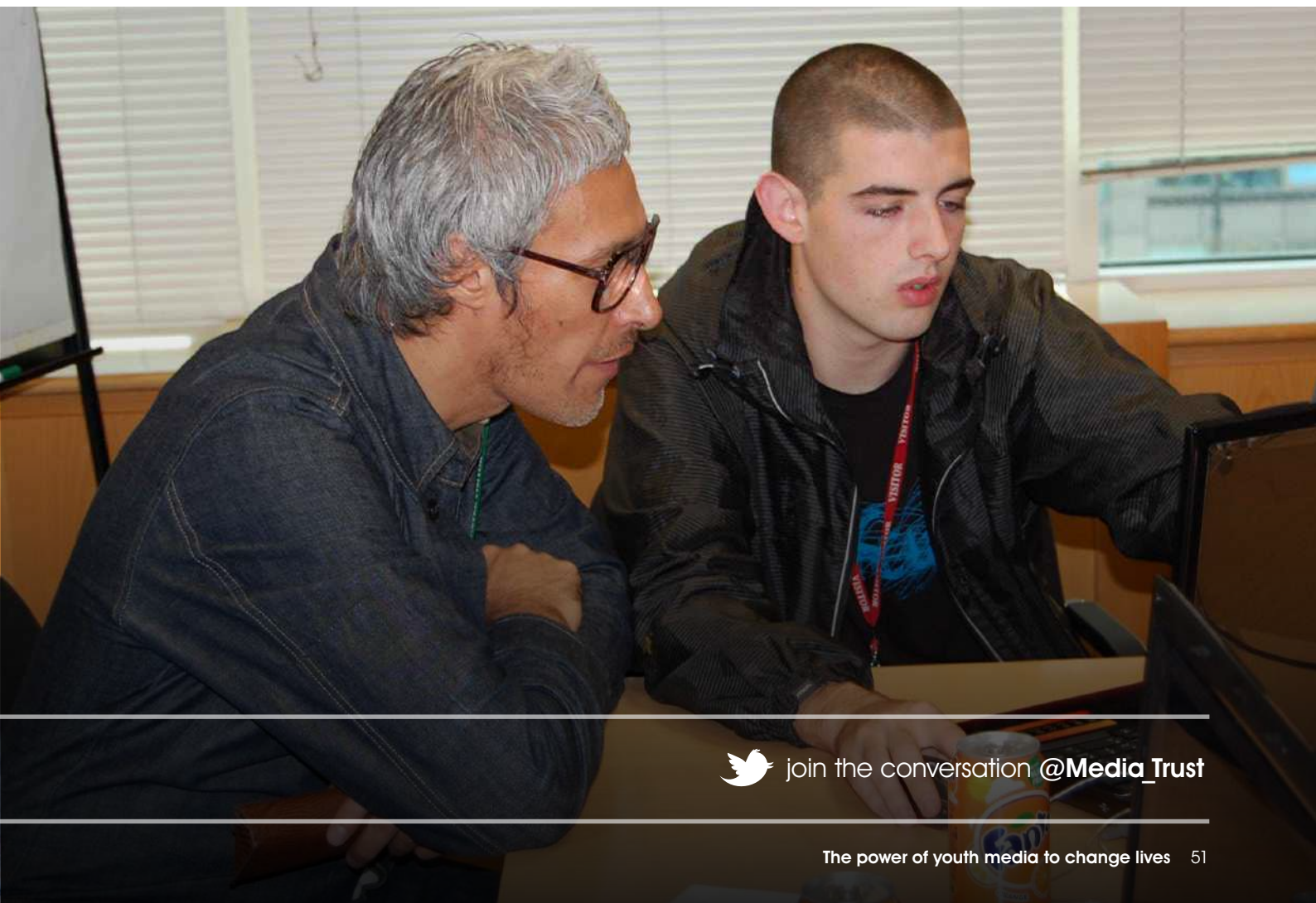
- The principle of successful youth media work is that projects should be driven by the needs and aspirations of young people and designed to give them autonomy and control of their own work.
- There is a great diversity of methods and approaches for delivering youth media projects: the sector has proved itself flexible and innovative in working with different groups and in a range of contexts.
- The moving image is the most common form of youth media activity, followed by print and photography.
- There are relatively few examples of games developed by young people but it is an incredibly powerful tool when it is used due to its high level of interaction.
- Digital media forms part of the creation and distribution activities of many projects and due to this expanding and low cost area there is huge potential for growth.

How are youth media projects delivered?

A central principle of successful youth media work is that projects should be driven by the needs and aspirations of young people and designed to give them autonomy and control of their own work. There is a great diversity of ways to deliver youth media projects. The sector has proved itself flexible and innovative in developing approaches to working with different groups and in different contexts. Generally delivery is informal and methods can be both long-term and short-term.

They include:

- Short courses/modules
- Time-limited project work
- School holiday courses/projects
- Sessions over a period of time.



Short-term v long-term

Interviews indicate the majority of youth media work takes the form of short-term project work. Only a few providers appear to offer long-term engagement opportunities. This pattern is dictated by the need to deliver short projects to keep the attention and interest of young people, availability of funding and access to suitable premises.

There is a diversity of high-quality, short project provision, which fulfils the needs of young people from all backgrounds. However, due to the absence of a wider context or ladder of development for young people, short-term projects could leave young people with the enthusiasm and interest to do more work and develop their skills, but nowhere to go to continue their involvement with youth media projects.

As there are benefits of both short-term and long-term projects the challenge for many organisations is to build the right blend. **They also need to work in partnership with relevant organisations to create a network offering sustained and varied engagement for young people.** This provides a ladder of progression for young people and **on-going support and opportunities for further activity.** However, these networks are often linked to a cluster of industry activity and there are only a few locations with the infrastructure in place to deliver this and these are almost all limited to larger cities. A 2007 report: [Audit of Moving Image Education & Media Access Centres in Scotland](#) looked at informal youth media production activity and noted that:

“In areas where there is a cluster of industry activity, for instance a Media Access Centre, an independent cinema, or an arts centre, there seem to be more varied, vibrant and diverse provision and more innovative moving image education projects, in terms of courses and target groups. The interviewees seem to support the assertion that this is a mutually beneficial feedback loop.”

This highlights the need for a more joined up and coordinated approach across the sector.



Themes

Themes are driven either by the young people themselves or set by funders, delivery organisations or partner media companies. When themes are set they add a welcome degree of structure and professionalism to individual programmes. One established youth media professional noted that the [Film Nation](#), supported through the Olympics, provided an excellent example as young people were asked to explore the Olympic ideals in relation to everyday life. These were generic and aspirational enough to be interpreted in many different ways. However, when related directly to explicit policy goals this can be restrictive.

When young people are given the creative freedom to explore and execute their own ideas it provides them with the opportunity to create content about issues that matter to them. A youth worker, with experience of European funding programmes, noted that European programmes tended to allow freedom – **“a blank piece of paper to explore ideas”**.



Media type

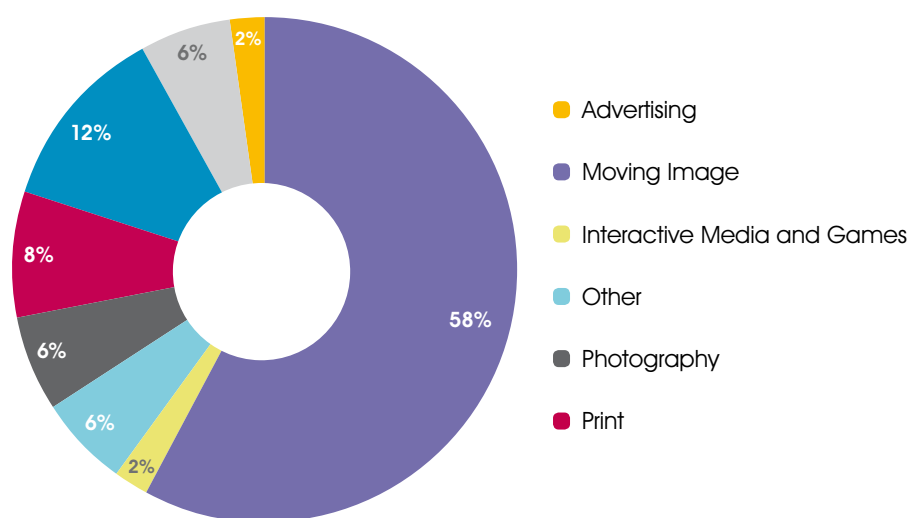
Many practitioners work across several forms of media to create work with young people in more than one discipline. This often involves different outputs from the same project appearing in more than one medium. Categories overlap and feed off each other to strengthen the overall project work.

Some firm conclusions can be drawn about the differing levels of opportunities available to engage with different media. **The literature review and interviews indicate that moving image is the most common form of youth media activity.** It has the greatest strategic support and a small number of dedicated funding and support agencies. Print and photography appear

to be the next most common youth media projects. **Despite the popularity of online and console games as part of young people's media diet, comparatively few organisations appear to deliver projects focusing primarily on game development, apps or interactive media.** However, digital media and social media in general form part of the activities of many projects, especially for the creation and distribution of work. Due to this expanding area there is huge potential for growth.

The evaluation of [Mediabox](#)¹⁴ confirms the prevalence of moving image projects as the chart below shows.

Mediabox projects funded by media type (2006-8)



14 GHK, 2008

Moving image

Moving image (film, television and animation) is the most high profile activity within the youth media portfolio. The category includes a wide range of forms and styles including animation, drama and documentaries. Moving image delivery organisations include companies with substantial professional production activities and others that focus entirely upon youth and community activity. Moving image projects can be easily distributed online and through social media sites and when working in partnership with media companies on both local and national media platforms.

Radio

Radio is a relatively straightforward way to distribute content and reach particular community groups. This is often delivered through an internet based service supported through an occasional 28 day Restricted Service Licence. Many successful radio projects are based in particular communities and provide young people with access to equipment and airtime, which is otherwise not easily available. This enables young people to talk directly to each other and to their community about issues of particular concern and get their opinions heard by wide audiences.

Case study

GMAC is at the heart of the film industry in Scotland. It supports and develops independent filmmakers and the community by providing affordable, high quality equipment, training and production opportunities.

The GMAC 2nd Unit provides training and outreach in moving image education. It is a unique community based initiative that provides practical opportunities for people under-represented in the screen industry and supports them to make their own films.

GMAC is a significant partner in the development and nurturing of new filmmaking talent from across Scotland and has a strong track record in supporting access to the film industry through its multi award winning short film production initiatives.

Case study

Radio Youthology (Radio Y) is a cutting edge youth development programme and online radio station set up by [Ulfiq Arts & Media](#). It supports and nurtures the development of young people's intellectual, professional and creative aptitudes through innovative media projects. Radio Y broadcasts radio programmes by its volunteers and other youth radio initiatives around the world.

The programme encourages young people to contribute to their society as leaders in media, arts and public life. The projects strengthen life-skills, motivate graduating from school, encourage volunteerism, support professional training goals and prepare young people for the technology driven 21st century job market.

Print media

Young people produce a wide range of magazines, news articles and opinion pieces with support from a range of different organisations including [Headliners](#) and [Livity](#). Typically, young people are supported to research and produce stories on issues of interest to them for contributing to their own magazine or for publication in local and national outlets.

Game design

Although there are relatively few examples of games developed by young people on structured media projects it is an incredibly powerful tool when it is used due to the high level of interaction. The reasons for the low delivery of game design projects appear to be complex and would benefit from wider research, but this could be linked to the lack of entry level delivery (education in game design tends to start at undergraduate level), the lack of recognised pathways in to the industry and the specialist skills required to create games.

Case study

[RollingSound](#) is an education and training organisation that provides outreach services for young people aged between 16-19 who are typically classed as NEET (not in education, employment or training). One RollingSound project, [Soul Control](#), was an innovative, multimedia computer game project funded through Mediabox.

The main idea came from two young people who have now gone into full-time employment within the computer games industry. The game explores the realities of gang life from the point of view of the main character (the player). Using the format of first-person exploration (used in popular games as Grand Theft Auto), it allows the player to explore the realities of gang life. It accurately depicts the realities and repercussions of the player's actions, both through the playing environment and a range of embedded documentary and film footage created by the young people. The game also allows the player to make positive choices and show pathways out of the gang lifestyle, for example through education.

The concept of the computer game is to reach out to other disaffected young people and to be used as a tool to discuss two key issues that are very important to them: gang culture and gun crime.

Case study

[Live Magazine](#) is a free, quarterly magazine, website and YouTube channel that is created by emerging talent from across the UK, with 50,000 copies distributed nationally.

The writing, illustration, design, filming, photography, fashion shoots, blogging, PR, marketing and social media are all

done by Live's young contributors under the guidance of industry professionals.

The magazine reflects inner-city life and culture. They dig deep into serious issues, and deal with them in a way that makes sense to their readers.

Live is a major launch-pad for new talent. Their journalists, designers and online team have gone on to secure employment within the media industry.

15 www.bbc.co.uk/wales/arts/yourvideo/queries/capturewales.shtml

16 www.oasisuk.org

Case study

Headliners inspires children and young people to investigate and challenge the world around them, enhance their personal development and promote their right to be heard as equals. Its focus is on young people who are isolated or at risk of exclusion, those who are disabled or have experienced being in care, and young people from minority groups.

Young people research issues such as gang wars, HIV/AIDS and size zero women and produce stories for publication and broadcast in the mainstream media. This has included broadcasts for Sky News and BBC Radio 4, and publication in The Guardian and local newspapers.

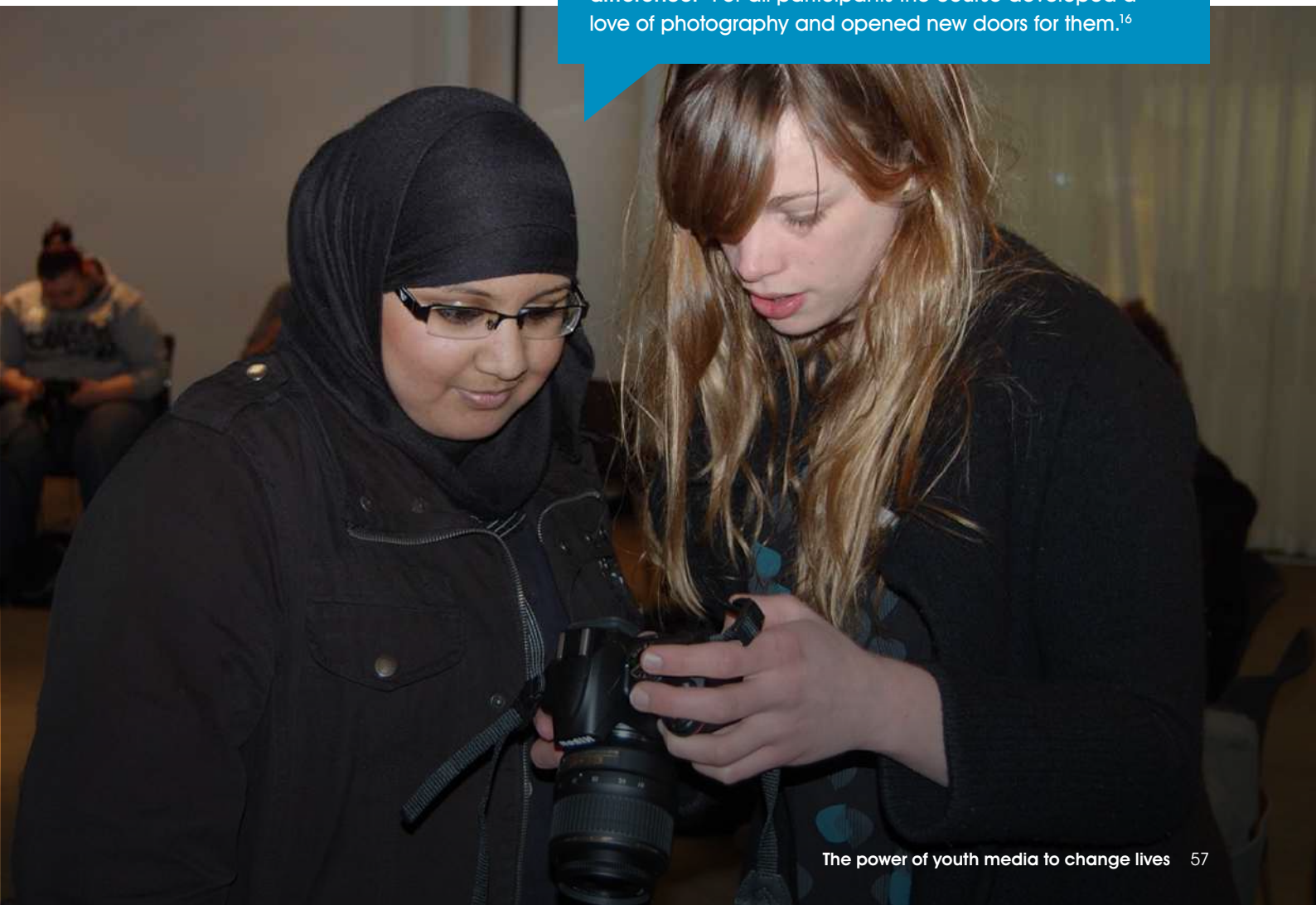
Photography

The use of still imagery through digital storytelling is becoming more widespread and a number of those consulted in this research had run projects with young people in different parts of the UK. As a result, young people contribute widely to different photography sites and there are many examples of excellent sites developed by young people working with professional photographers.¹⁵ Part of the reason for this is undoubtedly the low cost and accessibility of required equipment.

Case study

The Foyer is a supported housing organisation. It provides temporary accommodation for young people aged 18-25 who have found themselves homeless. In response to requests from residents, Foyer set up a programme of photography workshops delivered by a photojournalist who works for the New York Times and other leading publications. The participants built up a dynamic portfolio of work and exhibited it at Croydon Clock Tower.

One said of the course: "I'm in a hostel and the photography course is helping me to find a new way to communicate. It's doing a lot for me, people can see the difference." For all participants the course developed a love of photography and opened new doors for them.¹⁶



Funding and strategy for youth media

- Public sector funding for the youth media sector is declining.
- Specialist or dedicated media funding is now a small minority of total funding for youth media.
- Youth media has the potential to deliver against government strategies for young people.

Funding and support

Due to the relatively new addition of youth media provision for young people the sector has struggled to assess its successes and achieve the visibility it deserves.

As a result, the past decade has proved especially hard for some youth media organisations. Several long established agencies specialising in youth media have suffered financially, in particular those that relied heavily on public sector grants. Currently, the sector is dominated by short term project funding, which brings both opportunities and threats for organisational continuity and strategic direction.

Youth media projects are financed through a wide range of sources. Grants from trusts and foundations appear to be the most common single source. Public sector funding used to be the keystone of several organisations interviewed, but this is widely seen as declining. However local authorities, the Youth Justice Board, police crime prevention budgets and others are still supporting some projects.

Many organisations deliver youth media as part of an overall portfolio of activity and draw funding from a wide range of sources. The reduction in public support for youth work is a threat to youth media activity. For example, [Inclusion Ventures](#) from Jaywick in Essex has delivered youth media work, as part of a wider programme in the poorest borough¹⁷ in England, by establishing links

with media professionals and local colleges. Funding was secured through [Big Lottery Fund](#) to deliver a series of filmmaking workshops in summer of 2011.

“Youth media is a powerful tool. I feel more should be done to ensure this sector can continue to flourish”
Survey respondent

The National Lottery is a significant funder, with [First Light](#), [Big Lottery Fund](#) and [Heritage Lottery Fund](#) all being mentioned. There is strong anecdotal evidence that [Heritage Lottery Fund](#) is seeing a media element in a growing number of youth engagement projects. In a similar vein, [Big Lottery Fund](#) has supported youth media as a means of engaging young people in some of their targeted programme strands.

[First Light](#), one of the very few specialist youth media funders, derives almost all of its income from the National Lottery via the [BFI Arts Council England](#) is a significant funder of a small number of interesting projects, which use media as part of a multi-arts approach such as [Protégé TV](#).

“We no longer have a primary funder, even though the media industry is looking to diversify its workforce and support work with disadvantaged groups” Survey respondent

European funding has also provided support for youth media work. Some projects have secured support from the [Lifelong Learning Programme](#), most commonly through the [Grundtvig](#) strand, which supports vocational training outside the formal education systems.

Mediabox, previously government funded, was unique as a specialist agency supporting projects across the whole youth media footprint. When it closed its doors in 2011 many interviewees noted that it left a big hole in the funding landscape.

Increasing support from business and corporates

A growing area of support is from commercial sources. This can take the form of help in kind (e.g. access to equipment or expertise), donations or payments for delivery of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity. Very few organisations have developed income streams from payments for services from the corporate sector to underpin youth media activity. Where there are examples of this it is either for training provision or for straightforward production, research or development projects. These include short promotional films, youth marketing and market positioning research for youth brands. There is potential for corporates to further support youth media activity.

The limitations of project funding

It is evident that the majority of youth media funding is for project work as opposed to core or on-going funding. Although this is not unique to the youth media sector, some interviewees commented upon the risk (especially for smaller providers) that they might become funding-driven - more concerned with chasing project funding to survive than maintaining any real sense of core mission (or quality of delivery).

It is also apparent that specialist or dedicated media funding is a small minority of total funding for youth media. Some suggested that youth media

elements offered as an add-on to projects focusing on other activities could too easily end up offering poor quality provision. This situation could be exacerbated by the lack of clear standards for delivery across the sector as a whole.

There were also suggestions that topics and target groups could be unduly affected by funder bias. At its most extreme some felt this could create a 'ghetto' of media projects for the most excluded. There was no consensus about any negative effects of the predominance of non-specialist funding on the media inputs and outcomes of project work, but the field may benefit from closer study.

Case study

Livity is a youth engagement agency. They work with young people to co-create positive and effective social campaigns, content and communities. Their clients, including Google, Coke, Playstation and O2, get invaluable youth insights and a precious pool of young talent energy and ideas. In parallel, their young people get training, equipment, support and opportunities to build a better future.

Government strategy

Government strategies for young people focus on successful outcomes. They are beginning to look beyond academic success in shaping positive life outcomes. The literature review provided a clear picture of youth media's ability to meet important government strategy aims. Media Trust's youth mentoring scheme¹⁸ delivered upon government strategies, including Every Child Matters and the Ten-year youth strategy. More recent government thinking has stressed the importance of promoting youth voice. As the HM Government report [Positive for Youth: a new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19 states:](#)

"Young people have energy, enthusiasm, and valuable ideas for shaping and improving the world around them. Yet young people generally get a bad press. Young people have a right to have their

¹⁸ Source: Substance, 2008


views taken into account in all decisions that affect their lives. We must give them a stronger voice and celebrate their positive contribution and achievements. We must also encourage and support them to speak up when they see media reporting that they believe is unbalanced or unfair.”

This strong statement of strategy potentially places youth media at the heart of government priorities, offering both opportunities and challenges for the sector.

Linking up with public priorities and investment and to build support for young people, whatever their background, is an

opportunity for the sector. The fact that youth media projects provide space and opportunities for young people to find and express their voice is self-evident. Many youth media organisations also set out to support young people in challenging and correcting the bias present in the mainstream media.

The challenges mostly concern visibility and proof of achievement. The successes of youth media need to be presented to decision-makers within government and other stakeholders in persuasive and dynamic ways.



By Reece, 15 - part of a digital stories project run in partnership between BBC Outreach and Media Trust

 join the conversation @Media_Trust

Recommendations for action



By Jayden, 18

1

A lead strategic agency for the whole of the youth media footprint should be established. This agency would work in partnership with key organisations in the youth media sector and media industry. This would allow the sector to:

- Identify and exchange best practice
- Develop and disseminate delivery standards
- Coordinate local and regional provision and encourage partnership working to optimise the use of resources.

There is also an urgent need to develop a UK-wide service to improve information for young people and youth groups. This would help them get involved in media at any level and provide 'ladders of progression' towards employment.

As part of this there is a requirement to better understand the landscape of the sector. This should be based on a methodical audit which should assess factors including:

- Number of organisations
- Location
- Type of organisation
- Scale of activity.

An initial study should establish a base level figure for participation. Following this there needs to be a practical and on-going method for sampling or estimating participant numbers. Further research in the form of a longitudinal input and impact study of youth media would also be needed to establish a true profile of the participants.

Greater strategic cooperation and coherence will strengthen the sector's ability to identify its benefits and communicate its value and impact to decision makers and funders.

2

Establish a national youth media aggregator to support the distribution and dissemination of youth media content to ensure young people's voices are heard by the widest audience.

Youth media output often struggles to get attention: government and national media tend to be very impermeable to individual youth media messages. This could provide:

- 'Agency' services which can aggregate and promote youth media messages within the national media
- A service which will lift the best and most interesting online youth media outputs above the 'noise' of the thousands of items of content posted online every day.

A strategic agency and aggregator for youth media content would allow the sector to better identify its benefits and provide the ability to communicate its value and impact to decision makers and funders.

A fragmented youth media sector needs a national voice.

join the conversation [@Media_Trust](https://twitter.com/Media_Trust)

Appendix 1: Organisations consulted in the research

Organisation	Interviewee
21st Century Literacy	Ruth Brooks
ACE	Clare Boulton
BFI	Nikki Christie Noel Goodwin
Channel 4	Glynn Ryland
Chocolate Films	Rachel Wang
Cornerhouse	Marisa Draper
Creative England	Jay Arnold
CUCR	Imogen Slater
Eclectic Productions	Shane Carey
Envision EMI	Emma Bird
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	Derek Bardowell
Film Agency Wales	Emma Flatley
FilmClub	Mark Higham
Film Education	Ian Wall, Lydia Pinke
First Light	Leigh Thomas
Headliners	Fiona Wyton
Hi8us Midlands	Kulwant Dhaliwal
ITN	Robin Elias
Knowle West Media Centre	Dr Roz Hall
Livity	Sam Conniff
Metropolitan Film School	Jerry Rothwell
The Prince's Trust	Jeremy Newton
The Prince's Trust Fairbridge programme	David Mellis
Rural Media Company	Nic Millington
Skillset	Kate O'Connor
Teesside University Media Academy	Warren Harrison
Watershed Media Centre	Madeleine Probst
Youth Music	Christina Coker Douglas Lonie

Research survey

A survey was sent to representative youth media organisations across the UK. Respondents quotations are included in the body of the report. Thank you to all those who took the time to complete this survey.

Focus groups

Five focus groups were held across the country with youth media practitioners. These took place in Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, London and Manchester. Thank you to all those who contributed their time and effort to these sessions.

Appendix 2:

Youth focus groups

Overview

Over the course of five days, a series of focus groups were conducted with 41 young people aged 12-24 in Bristol, Birmingham, Glasgow, London and Manchester. Each group consisted of those who are either currently working on a media project, have an interest in developing a media project or have worked on one in the past. They came from various backgrounds, with some on track to go to university and others who are not sure of their future plans. There were also some who could be considered “**at risk**” or youth who have faced adversity, along with others who came from more stable, traditional backgrounds. This mix proved to be beneficial in understanding how media projects fare with youth who are able to utilise it as a tool for various forms of personal and/or professional development.

The purpose of each discussion was to explore their media projects and find out what they have learned, the impact of their experience and what inspired them to remain involved.

Project summaries

Youth participants were involved in moving image, radio, photography and print projects and were recruited from a range of organisations:

- H-PAN
- The Prince’s Trust
- The Prince’s Trust Fairbridge programme
- Castlemilk Youth Complex
- Watershed
- Creative Youth Network
- City of Bristol College
- Skillset (advance creative and digital apprenticeship at the BBC)
- Catch22
- Headliners
- Fitzrovia (On the Road Magazine)
- Livity
- Trident Foyer
- Ulfah Arts and Media

Thank you to all those who contributed their time and effort to these sessions.

Reasons for engagement

Whether part of a specialist youth media organisation or a larger organisation that incorporated a media initiative into their wider offer, each of the participants worked on their given media project from start to finish.

Many of those who were part of larger organisations, that incorporated media into their wider offer, chose to participate in a media project either because they were recommended by a programme worker or took the initiative themselves based on a pre-existing interest in the field. As most of the organisations of this type that were included in our focus groups incorporated film projects, the majority of participants were interested in on-camera roles like acting or presenting, while a minority were previously interested in working more production roles like camera work or editing.

Participants who were part of specialist media organisations became involved for a number of reasons. Some had a pre-existing interest in the field, while others were looking for projects to get involved with where they could meet people or spend time when not in school.

There were also a few young people who became involved with media projects in an effort to combat shyness or improve their self-esteem. This sentiment was shared from a participant from Glasgow whose involvement with her local Prince's Trust project helped her to **"come out of her shell"** and combat a shyness that existed prior to her involvement. After she was involved in a film project that required working in front of the camera she felt more comfortable expressing herself around people. Another participant in Manchester noted that he got involved in his project because it was good for **"building self image,"** noting that he **"needed to change and this was the type of thing that would help (him) change."**

When it came to maintaining interest, many of the participants stayed with their given projects because it was **"fun"** and it introduced them to areas of interest that they had not previously recognised. For instance, a 16-year-old Livity participant in London began working with the organisation with plans to stay with them for three weeks,

which later turned into six months. **"It was the best thing to ever happen to me,"** she said. She now contributes regularly to Live magazine and has utilised her project as a way to make new contacts and now plans to run for Lambeth Youth Mayor. A 17-year-old Bristol participant who dropped out of college because he lacked interest, became involved in a radio and photography project because he **"needed something to do"**, but stuck with it because it was **"fun."** It is important to note that this particular participant also had a tough time focusing during our session, yet was clear of his maintained interest in being active in his photography project.

For those who had a pre-existing interest in media, they continued with their project because it gave them a greater understanding of the inner workings of the industry and could help with future aspirations. Some participants noted that it looked good on their CV either for college, university or for involvement in other media jobs or projects. A 15-year-old member of Bristol's Creative Youth Network said that he **"started it for fun"**, but stayed with it because he now looks at it as a foundation for what he wants to do. Another 15-year old Catch22 participant always wanted to take part in media in school but never had a chance, so the moment Catch22 provided an opportunity for him to produce a film, he jumped at the chance, noting that **"it will never get boring to me."**

Possibly another factor that contributed to high retention rates is the fact that many of the media projects allowed participants to take on numerous roles, which not only introduced new skills but also appeared to keep things exciting, thus maintaining their interest throughout the process. Many of those who worked on film projects took on more than one role, serving as on-screen talent while also working behind the camera. Three separate participants who worked on radio podcasting shows engaged in similar activity. A member of Glasgow's Castlemilk Youth Complex hosted a weekly radio show on Cyclonefm.com, and also booked interview subjects, programmed the music and maintained the show's presence online. He has been involved with the project for almost a year and a half.

Members of Bristol's Creative Youth Network take on the responsibility of producing a series of music events for their peers throughout the course of a year. All of those who participated in the Bristol focus group had been involved with the project for at least a year and a half, with one member involved for five years, now serving as a member of the group's board of trustees. Each person was involved in various levels of the production process from programming to lighting to advertising and promotion. This integrated involvement not only seemed to play a part in their retention, but it also contributed to their dedication to the final product and to the organisation overall. Throughout the focus group, many of its members quoted statistics of how their projects **"reduced crime by 23 per cent by helping to get young people off of the street"** and made note of national awards that they have won for their work in the Bristol community. As a result they were proud producers of their own work and ambassadors of their project. There is no question that the fact that they were able to **"own"** their projects and take part in its overall success played a part in their dedication.

Drivers for youth media

The increased responsibility that participants experienced through the media production process is just one of the benefits that came across in the discussions. Other benefits that were noted include **"helping with interview skills," "networking," "confidence," "motivation," "having a sense of achievement," "learning new skills",** and **"working with ambitious people."**

To explore the last point further, the idea of **"working with ambitious people"** or in other words, working in teams, came across as both a benefit and a challenge for some. **"Working with other people who don't really have any work ethic is difficult,"** noted one participant in Bristol, while another 12-year-old in London stated, **"people may not agree and you'll have to try to get on the same page."**

While this process of working and negotiating through teamwork may have been positioned as a challenge, none of the focus group participants felt that it was impossible to overcome, but just

understood it as part of the overall process. One participant noted that working on her media project helped her to become more creative not just in developing new ideas for her actual product, but listening to different points of view to understand how to make something work. While many had worked in groups for school or other extra-curricular activities, it was this combination of creativity, storytelling and tangible execution that made the team-working process different in media production.

A number of the participants found a great value in the production process and had a great appreciation for the skills that they learned while working towards the development of a product to ensure that it **"looks good,"** said one Bristol participant.

Many also received assistance from industry professionals who volunteered their time to either speak with them or fully take part in their production process. This experience working with actual media professionals proved to heighten their interest in their project and also serve as a source of inspiration. An 18-year-old film producer from Bristol noted that her experience working with a professional cameraman on one of her projects helped her to become more mature and professional in the process. Another young person in Glasgow found great inspiration from working with a renowned British director, showing that he too could aspire to do the same.

Distribution and dissemination

The idea of voice also came across in a few groups who noted that their involvement was not only an opportunity for them to gain new skills and meet people, but to create a product that could educate their communities and express the voice of young people. They saw this as an opportunity to counter some of the ways in which young people are portrayed in mainstream media. This was especially prevalent with the London focus group where many participants chose to work on projects that focused on topics such as **“stop and search”** police activity; youth language and its effects on the London riots; and youth identity and personality. In addition, many residents of a youth hostel in Birmingham who had never worked on a media project expressed an interest in doing so in an effort to share their experiences with a larger audience.

When an 18-year-old Headliners participant was selected to be a part of a **“speak out challenge”** at school, his chosen topic was directly influenced by his Headliners experience on youth and media. His topic: why young people should have a voice. Also, when asked why his group chose to focus on ‘stop and search’ police activity, 15-year-old Catch22 member simply said, **“everyone in our area has a thought on the topic. Instead of complaining about it, we’ve done something about it.”**

In each focus group participants noted an appreciation for going through the process of developing their media product, but equally noted the importance of it being distributed as well. It’s about **“having something tangible to show people what’s in my head,”** noted a participant in Manchester. **“If it’s good, it’s the recognition that you get from those who see it that makes you want to do more,”** said another in Bristol. While another in London stated, **“If you want to make a difference, people need to see it. Getting your point across can change someone’s point of view.”**

Through working in partnership with the media industry some participants had had their films screened in major cinemas as well as shown online and on Community Channel. It was this reach to larger audiences that appealed to some participants, while others also took it upon themselves to expand their media products to wider audiences through Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other forms of social media. Producers of a relationship column in Fitzrovia’s On the Road Magazine were so proud of their work that they are now developing a bespoke Facebook page to promote the section and interact with potential readers.

It was clear from the focus groups that young people see media as a way to explore other areas of interest, while communicating their viewpoints to a larger community. Through discussion, research and storytelling, young media creators are deepening their own knowledge and learning the skill of communicating their insights to others.

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Appendix 4: Research team

Research Team

Chris Chandler has extensive experience of the public sector's engagement with film and the creative industries. He has worked with a range of organisations delivering media and arts community access programmes to young people and adults including First Light, Signals Media and London Bubble Theatre. He currently operates as an independent advisor and consultant to public, private and voluntary sector cultural organisations on the development of strategic business planning, operational delivery and evaluation. Recent consultancy and research projects have included the publication of a major report for Skillset into new entrants training provision; professional support to the management of the International Institute of Visual Arts (Iniva); and a ground-breaking study for the BFI – Opening our eyes – how film contributes to the culture of the UK.

As Head of UK Partnerships at the UK Film Council he managed partnerships with organisations including First Light and the regional and national screen agencies. He played the leading role in the establishment of the English Regional Screen Agencies and of First Light – the UK's innovative youth film initiative. He led on the creation of strategies for nations and regions, creative industries investment, film heritage, film education and audience development.

Chris Chandler is a visiting lecturer at the National Film and Television School and is external examiner for the Goldsmith's Media Landscapes course.

Mark Dunford has over 20 years' experience in the creative industries. Before he became an independent consultant he worked at the BBC, the BFI and the Arts Council of England. His consultancy work over the past 12 years draws on his research training and focuses on initiatives designed to increase the cultural and commercial effectiveness of public sector investment in digital media activity. Clients include UK Film Council, Skillset, British Film Institute, NESTA, Arts Council England, various charitable Trusts and a host of commercial companies.

From 2004-2008, he was Executive Director of Hi8us Projects Limited where he developed and led the Equal funded Inclusion Through Media Development Partnership, a youth media centred partnership of 37 professional organisations delivering 25 creative projects at a total value of over £7m; it was the largest sector specific Equal partnership in Europe.

Mark is currently employed on a 0.5 basis to manage the Skillset Media Academy at the University of Hertfordshire where he teaches undergraduate students studying Film and Television. He also leads an MA module on Digital Media at Goldsmiths College, University of London and is a Director of Digitales, a digital storytelling company based at the same University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts and a Trustee of London Bubble Theatre Company.

Appendix 4:

Research team cont.

Associate Researcher

Sherry J. Bitting

Sherry Bitting has spent over 11 years working in several facets of the media and communications industry. After crafting her skills at such companies as Fairchild Publications, Complex Media and Porter Novelli Public Relations, Sherry launched SJB Communications in 2008, where she worked with such companies as Complex Media (Complex magazine Complex.com), Men's Fitness magazine, Proctor & Gamble, Moët Hennessy, Caid Productions, Black Girls Rock! Inc., and more.

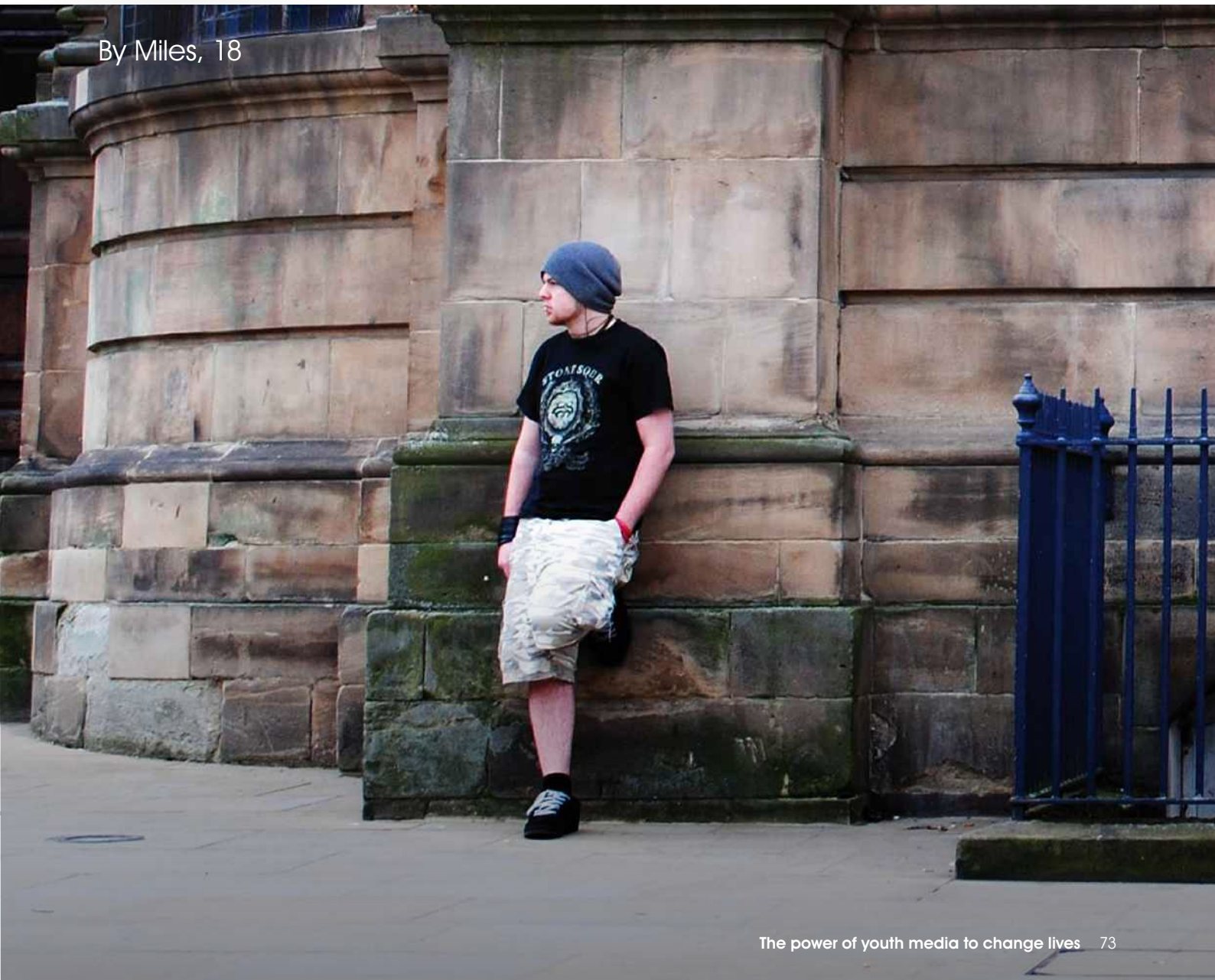
In 2010, she left New York City to pursue an MA in Transnational Communications and Global Media from Goldsmiths, University of London where she focused her dissertation on media education as a learning tool in secondary education. Sherry is based in London and she continues to work for clients both in the US and UK.

When not working, she enjoys speaking with young people on the importance of media literacy and critical thinking. Over the years, she has worked with such schools and programs as the Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers, High School of Media & Communications, Sweat Equity Enterprises, Teen Lift, and Inspirational You (UK).

Appendix 5: Acknowledgements

This report was commissioned in January 2012 and research was undertaken in the first quarter of 2012. We are grateful to the many people who took time and effort to respond to research in such a short period.

By Miles, 18



Our corporate members include:

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Successful Fundraising

By Mark Dunford

Chapter from The Alternative Media Handbook edited by Kate Coyer, Tony Downmunt and Alan Fountain (Routledge published Dec 2007)

Introduction

Competition for funds is fierce and only the strongest proposals secure the money needed to transform an idea into a real project. Fundraising can be a thankless task; especially for someone who is just starting out and maybe lacks the track record that many funding agencies like to see. This chapter maps out the range of funds available for community based media production work, and provides some helpful hints on the best way to approach funders.

The Media Industry

The most obvious port of call for media production is the media, yet conversely this is probably the hardest place for newcomers to secure support. Most of the major players are in the private sector and are naturally wary of high-risk community projects. They operate in a world where you are only as good as your last project. Supporting productions without a clear commercial pedigree represents an unnecessary risk and is generally seen as something to avoid. In many ways the BBC is similar and, apart from a few very specific strands designed to support newcomers, it is hard for people without a professional reputation to access the corporation's resources.

There are ways round this. Aspirant filmmakers can develop links with a well-established independent production company, and this can help you unlock the doors to broadcast commissions. The price you pay for this is a certain loss of control over the development and financing of a project.

Public Sector Funds to support UK Media

The leading public sector funding agency for the media work in the UK is the UK Film Council. Established in 1999 through the merger of a number of funding agencies, the UK Film Council is a single strategic body designed to support the development of film across the UK. It operates a number of different funding programmes for production, ranging from major feature films through to digital films made by young people. It also supports the distribution of independent and non-English language films.

The various funding programmes overseen by the UK Film Council are all, theoretically, open to newcomers. Indeed, the New Cinema Fund is explicitly charged with supporting new and challenging work. Like all funding programmes it is heavily oversubscribed, but over the past seven years has established an impressive reputation for lively and inventive work.

The UK Film Council also supports the national and regional screen agencies in Scotland, Wales and across the nine English regions. These development agencies are charged with supporting local talent and

building the local media economy so that more businesses flourish outside the M25. They are always caught between the ambitions of the UK Film Council, and the reality of the limited resources available to develop regional media work. The more successful are those that have combined media funding with finance secured from a range of different public and private sector funders, to establish resources of a scale which is large enough to make a significant difference.

The unavoidable conclusion is that the funding available for any media work in the UK vastly exceeds the number of projects seeking finance. Successful fundraising for community based work requires tenacity and an ability to combine different sources of funding to realise a project, particularly if the project in question could be considered difficult or challenging.

Successful community media companies have secured public sector funds from a range of different funding regimes, by thinking beyond the obvious to draw in support from different sources, including:

DCMS Lottery programmes

- *Big Lottery Fund* which provides funding for projects working with specific target groups. It is best to check the website for details of specific programmes (<http://www.biglotteryfund.org>).
- *National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts* which supports creativity and innovation. Information is available via the website (<http://www.nesta.org/>)

Business Support Agencies

- Business Link can support the creation of local business with small grants, while sector specific agencies such as CIDA in East London provide funding for creative businesses in a given geographical area

Regeneration Funding

- Most regeneration funding is based around specific localities, but savvy media businesses have been able to secure funds as part of a contribution to a wider regeneration strategy. One way of approaching this is to conceive of a programme of work embracing a number of productions rather than a single piece of work. The simplest starting point for national funds is the Government Funding website which provides an overview of national funding available through key departments (<http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk>).

Trusts and Foundations

- UK Trusts and Foundations donate some £2bn a year to charities each year, roughly the same amount as awarded by the Government in grants. Charities like the Media Trust and Hi8us have secured valuable funds from this sector, but it is a notoriously conservative world which tends to favour more established, less commercial artforms. Information on funding from Trusts is available from a range of different sources including the Trustfunding website overseen by the Directory of Social Change (see <http://www.trustfunding.org.uk>).

Corporate Sponsorship

- The corporate sector is usually approached with fresh-faced optimism but, despite the widespread growth of Corporate Social responsibility Programmes in the last five years, it is the hardest nut to crack. Most support is offered as 'in-kind' expertise, or as a discount on advertised rates. Funding is hard to secure and usually goes to high profile, well known projects.

Approaching Funders

It is not unusual to apply for dozens of grants without success. There are literally hundreds of grant giving bodies scattered across the UK, and although competition is always fierce there are ways to increase your chances of success. Fundraisers need a thick skin.

Define your Project

The most obvious starting point for every funding proposal is the project in question. Funders are always more likely to support something which is clear and easy to describe, over something which appears complicated or unwieldy. Applicants need to work on simple project descriptions which aren't cluttered with jargon. The rule is keep it simple.

Projects need simple, memorable titles which are used throughout the proposal. There is nothing more mind numbing for an assessor than reading a document where every second sentence starts "The project will..."

Be Realistic

Fundraising is a pragmatic task. Applicants need to be realistic about what they are likely to get, how they set about getting it and when the work needs to be done. Careful planning is the essence of successful fundraising.

At the most basic level you need to be sure that your project is eligible to apply. If a particular funding scheme is unable to fund individuals, then there is simply no point approaching them unless it is done through a properly established organisation. This may sound obvious but roughly 10% of all applicants fail basic eligibility checks. No matter how strong the proposal is, it remains an aspiration unless it is eligible to be funded.

Fundraising takes time, and you should never underestimate the amount of work needed to compile even the simplest proposals. Always aim to submit a proposal in advance of any advertised deadline. Likewise funders always take time to assess proposals, and usually this is longer than the stated turnaround times. You need to find out how long it will take to review applications and then plan accordingly. It is sensible to add on a few weeks to account for bureaucratic delays outside your control. Projects, which are scheduled to start within the advertised assessment period, will inevitably raise questions from the assessment team.

Find the right blend of funding

Few, if any funders, will fully finance a project, so most proposals require a financial partnership constructed by the applicant. Applicants need to think very carefully about how this is put together, and work on the assumption that the different funding regimes will talk to each other about each proposal. Each fund operates under different rules, so you need to check to ensure that the funds you approach work together and can do so on your project.

Identifying the right blend takes time and effort. The internet is an invaluable research tool for funding, and there are various newsletters which provide information on different types of funding; some are free but most charge. Specialist Trade Press also provides information on funding and it is wise to go beyond the media press.

Research funds you are approaching

You need to learn as much as possible about the sources you intend to approach. Find out what has been supported before and see if there is anyone you know who has secured funds from the same source; if so, ask their advice.

It is important to make contact with the staff team working in a funding agency so they know you are about to approach them. Always go to any advice sessions or seminars available for prospective applicants. This is the time to discover whether your project has a realistic chance. If, for example, a particular Trust works with young people but rarely funds media work then you can discover why. It may be that no one has applied, but then again it could be because the trustees believe filmmaking is a crass, commercial activity. Better to learn these things before you apply.

Don't get distracted

Don't be tempted by the sudden availability of funds. Funding given for a specific purpose can only be used for that purpose. If the aims of the funding programme don't fit with your own then move on; you can easily end up doing something that isn't part of your intended programme.

Prepare the Application

Careful preparation is the basis of a solid application. All the answers need to be drafted carefully within stated word limits. Proposals should be written in clear language, without unnecessary jargon or sector specific terms which can confuse the reader. The aim is to demonstrate you have the skills, experience and knowledge needed to realise an excellent project.

Additional information can be provided in supporting documents. Many funders will request comparable information. It is sensible to build a fundraising toolkit which includes all the basic supporting documentation together with answers to questions which recur across different schemes, for example, material on the composition of a Board. A resource like this will make subsequent bids simpler.

Before you submit a proposal it is good practice to commission a dummy assessment. Get a critical friend with expertise in funding to review your proposal, so revisions can be made before it is submitted. Authors often get too close to their work and extra advice can sharpen a proposal. An experienced freelance consultant will usually do this for a small fee, but if you haven't the resources ask a colleague or friend

Remember to address the right person in a simple covering letter. Applications starting "Dear Sirs" show a lack of basic knowledge about the funder that does not bode well for a long-term relationship.

Include the right backing documents

It sounds obvious but you need to make sure everything requested is submitted with the application. Failing to provide the correct information will at best delay a proposal and may even render it ineligible. If something isn't available explain why in the covering letter.

Plan your budget and Cashflow

Every project requires a budget and a cashflow. This needs to show what is going to be spent, and when funds are likely to be needed. The key is to be realistic by showing why you need the funds you are requesting to make the project happen. Do not look for all funding in advance as it almost certainly won't happen that way. It is also good practice to include a basic risk analysis demonstrating you have identified possible risks within the project, and have plans to address them.

Record how you spend the money

It is essential you keep all the paperwork to demonstrate how you spent the money. Funders often visit projects as part of their regular monitoring work and some may want to work closely with you on the delivery of the project, especially if you are a new client running something which is outside their normal world. In all cases, they'll expect you to have strong financial management in place so they can be assured funding is spent wisely.

Conclusion

Funding for community based media work is limited, and what little there is available is highly competitive. Community media practitioners have been forced to think outside conventional media circles to develop sustainable projects. Many successful organisations have looked to new sources of grant income, without jeopardising their original mission. The consequence has been a blurring of the boundaries between different types of work and the growth of a stronger, more vibrant community media sector. Dogged research and thoughtful forward planning have underpinned this success; these are the fundamental components of successful fundraising.

Mark Dunford
June 2006

Extending Creative Practice

Mark Dunford, University of Brighton and DigiTales
Alison Rooke, Centre for Urban and Community Research, Goldsmiths University

Abstract

Older people's access to digital technologies is a policy concern and effective e-inclusion is now recognised as central to the active participation of older people in society contributing to active ageing at work, independent living, and active community membership. This chapter discusses a pan-European project; Extending Creative Practice (ECP); which brings together media, education, public services, social care, and educational partners in Slovenia, Romania, Finland and the UK. It explores how the project addresses the social, economic and geographical isolation of older people whilst simultaneously gathering a vibrant social history which tells us about the personal, social and Historical changes older people have lived through. It draws on an extensive formative evaluation to explore how digital storytelling can extend the quality, range and amount of opportunities for autobiographical storytelling by digitally excluded people.

Keywords: Digital storytelling, ageing, citizenship, inclusion

1. Introduction: Older People's Digital Exclusion

In the last decade, an array of digital technologies has transformed the way many of us communicate and participate in society. The Internet brought into being e mail, then Web 2.0 saw the emergence of social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr, which have revolutionised personal communication. The public services we receive have also been transformed and are increasingly best accessed digitally. For many people the pace of change has been breathtaking and policy makers now fret about the emergence of a digital divide between those on and off line.

Older people's access to these digital technologies has become a particular policy concern across Europe and beyond. Elderly people often lack skills, knowledge and the expertise needed to use ICT. A range of factors including the anxieties of older people themselves, inadequate marketing and the dynamics of technological change combine to mean the elderly have often been excluded from this revolution and the

benefits it brings. Effective e-inclusion is now recognised by the EC as one key aspect of ensuring the active participation of older people in society contributing to active ageing at work, independent living and community involvement¹.

Extending Creative Practice² was an EC funded “Action Research” partnership which sought to investigate whether Digital Storytelling could be one way to provide older people with the confidence to overcome this “digital divide”. It was also a means to explore the use of a workshop derived narrative form with older people, and, in this respect, the policy context was a springboard for critical research. Our partnership of five like-minded organisations from four countries came together to look into the use of Digital Storytelling as one means to increase meaningful usage of the internet by elderly citizens in Europe.

1.1. Ageing and digital Inclusion – the European policy context.

A considerable body of policy initiatives across Europe recognise and seek to address the digital divide. The 2006 Riga Ministerial Declaration encourages “both inclusive ICT and the use of ICT to achieve wider inclusion”. This ambition was translated into the tangible 2007 e-inclusion initiative prioritising work to encourage the use of ICT by elderly people. An acceptance of a need to go beyond a simplistic notion of a digital divide of ‘digital haves’ and digital ‘have nots’, towards a fuller understanding of the dynamics driving technological change underpinned this. Policy was constructed to encourage research and innovation in new ICT products and services for ageing well; increase awareness of their benefits among users and public authorities;

¹See Living Online- Digital Agenda for Europe ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/living-online

² The partners are: **Digitales**, London, UK, **Centre for Urban and Community Research**, Goldsmiths College, London, UK, **Laurea**, University of the Applied Social Sciences, Espoo, Finland, **Mitra**, Maribor, Slovenia, The **Progress Foundation** and IREX, Bucharest, Romania. The project was funded through the EC’s Lifelong Learning Programme under the Grundtvig programme.

remove legal and ethical barriers and reduce the perceived fragmentation of approaches in deploying these technologies across Europe.

Access to, and use of, technology is a starting point, though providing people with the confidence and ability to adapt to the rapidity of technological change is a more profound long term policy goal. In January 2010 the Commission published an analysis of e-inclusion across Europe³. This highlighted the importance of understanding *how* individuals relate to the internet and the ‘moving target’ of inequality, stating that successful e-inclusion initiatives have ‘an impact at the individual level as much as at the social level, and at the micro level as much as at the macro and meso levels.’ In their analysis of policy efficacy Bentivegna and Guerrieri (2010, 2) draw on the distinction between access and usage to stress the importance of support for activity which has a continuous impact on everyday experience. Such impact can manifest itself in many different ways so successful policy has economic, educational, political and cultural ramifications. Initiatives which potentially impact on internet usage amongst elderly people have been consistently highlighted as priority actions. Research by the Nominet Trust drew attention to the need for initiatives which provide older people with “greater knowledge training and information about the potential of differing uses of the internet in order to gain more fully from uses of existing applications.”⁴

Although the picture is uneven across Europe, Romania is the country with the lowest number of internet users in the higher age brackets⁵. Internet usage amongst

³ See *Analysis of e-inclusion impact resulting from advanced R&D based on economic modelling in relation to innovation capacity, capital formation, productivity and empowerment* Sara Bentivegna and Paolo Guerrieri, College of Europe (January 2010)

⁴ See *Ageing and the use of the Internet Current Engagement and Future Needs* Christine Mulligan and PDone Passey The Nominet Trust (2011)

⁵ See European Commission (2012) Life Online Digital Agenda Scoreboard https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/scoreboard_life_online.pdf

retired groups is consistently lower than for other groups in all EC countries⁶ and even in 2012 65% of 65-74 year olds in Europe had never used the internet⁷ while the contrasting figure for 15-24 year olds was just 4%. Moreover, this divide is widening as the pace of technological innovation increases, indicating “major and long lasting difficulties” (Bentivegna and Guerrieri 23). Bentivegna and Guerrieri’s research into E inclusion concludes that “older persons [are] positioned on an alternative trajectory” rooted in a basic uncertainty about technology and lament that “traditional initiatives undertaken over the years’ have failed” (2010: 25). Not only are those left behind by digitalisation disappearing rapidly from view, they are also losing the ability to participate in everyday life. Young people are characterised as ‘digital natives’ while their marginalised counterparts need to acquire the tools to become ‘digital immigrants’; terms which illustrate a sharp description of socially constructed patterns of exclusion. The revealing metaphor shows how difficult it might be to encourage participation. Again, here both accessibility and usability are policy priorities that need to be transformed into tangible activity.

1.2. Extending Creative Practice: Digital Storytelling with Older People?

Digitales and CUCR⁸ built a partnership across four countries to deliver an initiative called ‘Extending Creative Practice’ (ECP) which trained elderly people in Digital Storytelling⁹ as a way to creatively address these policy goals. Meadows (2003) chronicles the roots of Digital Storytelling as a workshop derived form of creative

⁶ See European Commission (2012) *Life Online Digital Agenda Scoreboard* for a longitudinal breakdown of internet usage across Europe from 2006- 2012

⁷ See European Commission (2012) *Life Online Digital Agenda Scoreboard* Table Two has detailed information

⁸ DigiTales is an independent research company hosted by the Media and Communications Department at Goldsmiths. The Centre for Urban and Community Research is part of the Sociology Department at the same University.

⁹ There are many guides to Digital Storytelling. The best known is *Digital Storytelling Capturing Lives, Creating Community* by Joe Lambert of the Center for Digital Storytelling (Digital Diner Press)

practice drawing on community arts and oral history. DigiTales trained colleagues from across the participating countries in a condensed version of the workshop process set out by Lambert in his *Digital Storytelling Cookbook* (2010). ECP's intensive 'train the trainers' workshops assumed a basic working knowledge of the technical, social and pedagogical skills needed to run a workshop but guided participants through the process so they could use the skills and knowledge needed to make a story in a collaborative workshop environment. Our partnership was conceived to have an impact at different levels, with each partner standing to gain new knowledge, experience and skills for subsequent projects. The research was a pilot intended to have multiple outputs. The foundations for the pilot were laid at the train the trainer workshops.

ECP was primarily funded to facilitate inclusion, but the partners went beyond a training and exclusion orientated agenda to explore the use of the Digital Storytelling methodology as a means to capture and tell stories about the lived experience of older people in contemporary Europe. In this respect, it shared much with contemporary oral history activity. Our work engaged directly with the policy questions around usage and impact prioritised by the Riga Conference. Bentivegna and Guerrieri's (2010) impact index divides countries into different groups based on the "use and diffusion" (Bentivegna and Guerrieri, 5) of the internet into everyday life. In the period 2004-2009 this impact index rose across all the European countries. However there remains a considerable difference between the strong countries (essentially Northern Europe plus the UK and Germany), countries which possess a strong internet culture (mostly smaller countries like Estonia and Ireland), and those where the internet is less embedded in everyday life. The study shows both a consistent increase in internet usage and a maintained disparity between the different country groups. ECP included partners

making stories with elderly people from each group; Finland falls into the first category, Slovenia the second and Romania the third.

ECP used digital storytelling to represent the diversity of older people's experiences across Europe, thereby fostering greater inclusion, understanding and knowledge. It also sought to impact on older peoples' everyday lives by providing them with the ICT skills needed to participate in society. Our work had synergies with the local policy context in each partner country. In the UK, Age UK research showed only 20% of over 65s had ever used the Internet (Age UK 2010). Specific initiatives such as *Itea* and *Biscuits* an annual week long series of nationwide events enabling people in later life to explore digital technology¹⁰ have been developed to support the elderly at a basic level. In Finland, 96% of the population has access to broadband, with access to 100mb broadband set to become a legal entitlement by 2015, yet elderly people remain lower users than other groups across society. In Romania, 65% of the population has never used the internet, and the digital divide between rural elderly residents and their younger urban counterparts is extremely stark¹¹. In Slovenia, the importance of ICT for the elderly was recognised by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs called for action to facilitate the inclusion of elderly people through the National Social Protection Programme 2006-2010¹².

ECP was delivered through a series of training workshops. At the outset DigiTales hosted two 'train the trainers' workshops at Goldsmiths, University of London. Fourteen trainers then returned home to work with local communities of elderly people. These fourteen trainers cascaded the project by delivering pilot workshops with older people, and disseminating the methods to colleagues. At the close

¹⁰See www.ageuk.org.uk/itea-and-biscuits This site provides more information about the support provided through Age UK

¹¹See European Commission (2012) *Life Online Digital Agenda Scoreboard*

¹² Data provide by ECP partners

of the project 101 older people had participated in ITC and digital storytelling workshops in 12 out of 41 regional libraries in Romania. The Finnish partner, Laurea worked through elderly people's centres and with individual housebound or isolated elderly people, and the digital stories produced by older people through ECP provided content for the interactive Caring TV network¹³. In Finland 43 students were trained in Digital Storytelling and 13 elderly people took part. Trainers from Romania were county librarians working in the context of the digitalisation of Romanian public libraries. These librarians adapted the workshop based training to make it more appropriate to their elderly cohort taking into account the needs and abilities of older people and their previous experience in providing IT training for the elderly. This involved shorter sessions and more preparatory time with computer programmes. The five trainers from Slovenian partners, Mitra developed a detailed strategy and programme and then delivered training with local partners, Academia, a Slovenian private adult education institution who were able to provide ICT facilities and support, and Push (which translates as 'Snail') an organisation providing residential care for older people with special needs. A total of 33 older people participated and each made a digital story. Curriculum adaptability is a key feature of Digital Storytelling and the partners were able to contrast their different approaches to delivering workshops with elderly people. The cumulative impact of the project was far greater than any individual workshop and the iterative evaluation conducted by CUCR played a key part in generating a shared knowledge across the partnership. The partners all learned from each other before, during and after the project.

¹³ See Caring TV Network www.caringtv.fi

1.3. Accidental learning

Creative activity and learning with elderly people is often dismissed as a time filling activity rather than something with clear outcomes that can be adapted and used more widely. In the process of mastering digital technology trainees learn to express themselves and acquire skills or confidence needed to participate more actively in many everyday activities in contemporary society. Simultaneously, digital storytelling offers a means of sharing something which is produced through this learning and creativity. Participants particularly valued the opportunity to be involved in creative activity, which was both ‘fun’ *and* productive. The final result: a film that participants could proudly share with others was particularly valued. Different types of valuable creative, social and technical learning are carefully embedded in the digital storytelling process. All of these have their own value.

Digital storytelling combines the pleasures of learning, self-expression, reflection and creativity with the practical skills needed to use digital technology and the internet. Participants make, and publish, a personal story about something ‘close to their hearts’. Learning comes out of this affective and enjoyable experience of people working together to do something creative. In digital storytelling workshops the motivation to learn flows from a natural desire to tell one’s story and, because of this, the barriers encountered at times (largely due to mundane failures of technology) did not result in participants giving up. Mutual support is part of the workshop process. One Slovenian trainer Sanam stated, “It was really an amazing experience, and the most fascinating of my life. I can easily overlook the difficulties because of the fun we had”.

2. Digitally narrating a life lived.

The sociological listener is, to my mind at least, a kind of equivalent to Clio, one of the nine muses who personify the highest aspiration of art and intellect in

*Greek mythology. She attends not only to the implication of the past in the present, but she is also concerned with the relationship between the close-at-hand and the remote. Dedicated to a history of the anonymous, as Walter Benjamin put it, her song celebrates the uncelebrated and aims to “brush history against the grain – even if [she] needs a barge pole to do it.”¹⁴ Les Back, *The Art of Listening* (2007: 166)*

One of the most rewarding aspects of digital storytelling with older people is the richness of the stories they tell about the long lives they have lived. This adds a welcome reflective dimension to the storytelling, which contrasts sharply with workshops held with young, more digitally adept trainees. Digital storytelling workshops offer older people a rare opportunity to re-examine collections of family photographs, select images, order their story, decide on which story to share, develop their own analysis, explanation and reflection in a unique space and time. Just as important is the audience for the story, whether the immediate audience in a workshop, or the wider audience which may be virtual or actual. ECP opened up an attentive space where older people were heard. The workshops, celebration events and final ECP conference were as much a space for speaking as listening. In coming together for the final conference, the older people in the three participating countries seized this opportunity to tell each other and a younger generation, about their life stories, memories, hopes and wishes.

One of the qualities of the photograph is that it offers a way of expressing visually what is sometimes difficult to articulate verbally. In creating digital stories old photographs were pulled out of boxes, re-examined, placed in a narrative order,

¹⁴ Walter Benjamin, “Paralipomena to ‘On the Concept of History,’” in *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings Volume 4.: 1938-1940*, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Belknap Press, 2003). p. 407.

scanned. Monochrome images were pixelated, enlarged and filled with electronic light. They were also given new life through their narrative ordering, opening up new readings. A past which seemed disconnected from the present is inserted into the present through the personal narratives that were created to accompany them, as digital storytelling powerfully combines the promiscuous meaning of photography with the power of the spoken narrative.

Many of the digital stories made through ECP attended to the ordinary, seemingly unremarkable moments that make up a life lived. Stories recalled happy moments and treasured memories of everyday life, tales of meeting a future partner, making a home, days when families were young, family holidays and growing older together. In attending to these, bigger stories are told, stories about the historical events and life changes that have taken place in post-war Europe and their personal legacy for those who grew up.

Two of the participating countries were post-1989 nations which had undergone profound changes since the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Day-to-day life a quarter of a century ago, is in many ways unimaginable to today's younger generation, but was distilled in the single images assembled together to produce a digital story. A group of Romanian elders chose to make films about the impact of the earthquake which hit the Balkan region in March 1977. A film by 65 year old Anisora Stamate '*Marriage in the middle of ruins*' spoke of the incongruity of celebrating her wedding day in the aftermath of a tragic earthquake and the ruined lives and buildings it left. Her personal history is retold through the medium of the digital story as she recalled her wedding day in Vrancea, located at the epicentre of an earthquake which shook the Balkans with the loss of 1,578 lives and over 11,000 people injured. Speaking calmly over images of ruined buildings being demolished to make way for the rebuilding of the city centre,

Anisora describes her feelings of fear which accumulated during this disaster, and their psychological traces. She describes this event as ‘the greatest misadventure of her life’. We are shown a photograph taken on the steps of the city hall, a couple surrounded by a small group of family and friends. We see an image of our story teller when younger, holding a bunch of flowers, while she tells us of passing hopeless people with endless sadness in their faces while on the way to the town hall for her wedding ceremony. As military personnel went about their search for people trapped in the ruins of the town hall and surrounding streets, her wedding was completed as scheduled. With the passing of time ‘the memory of these events remained printed in a corner of her memory’. Her story points towards the psychic and social impact of the past on the present. It reminds us of the physical cityscape which has been lost, forgotten by a younger generation ‘who saw the light of the new city’. Anisora’s story encapsulates what the sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) describes as the relationship between private troubles and public issues.

Like Anisora’s story, many of the stories told contained a personal dimension which also spoke of the historical past and the wider forces impacting on peoples’ lives. It tells her narrative, but also speaks of the trauma experienced by an older generation. This is a past that continues to haunt the present. The narrative style of many of the films, and the testimonies and discussions at the final ECP conference, spoke of a desire to share these stories in order to inform the present and today’s younger generation. Digital storytelling is an autobiographical means to make a larger sense of the past through the use of a collaborative, interpretative process yielding personal accounts of specific moments. It can clearly have a cathartic dimension, yet it does not have to.

Mark Freeman¹⁵ distinguishes between a “life as lived, moment to moment, and a life as told, in retrospect, from the vantage of the present” (2010:4). His work explores the way the past informs the present, and vice versa. It seems especially pertinent to consider the distinction in relation to some of the digital stories gathered through ECP. Stories like “*Marriage in the Middle of Ruins*” are contemporary reflections providing accounts of lost everyday histories and, in this way, they are informed by the past and the present; they look backwards and forwards simultaneously.

The narrative style on many of the films, and the testimonies and discussions at the final ECP conference, spoke of a desire to share these stories in order to inform the present and today’s younger generation. Digital storytelling is an autobiographical means to make a larger sense of the past through the use of a collaborative, interpretative process yielding personal accounts of specific moments. In another film entitled the *Nanogenerian*, by Ploscaru Cornelia the narrator begins her story in the third person. A story of tremendous loss, perseverance and human spirit emerges. We hear of a girl growing up in the countryside, with hard working parents, who made a living gathering and selling reeds. We hear how she was orphaned at an early age, of an early marriage to a young man who lived upstream, her young husband not returning from battle and shortly after the death of their child. As a listener, one can only imagine the social world and troubles this young woman grew up in, and the impact of such hardship and loss in such a short time. However, the narrator tells us that ‘she picked up her heart and fostered her twin nephews, whose parents had perished in sickness and misery’. Then we hear of the return of the husband she thought was lost forever, the birth of four children. We learn that ‘the state signed peace treaties and agreements with other nations’ while they are building a home from the ground, darning, spinning, and

¹⁵ See *Hindsight The Promise and Peril of Looking Backward* – Mark Freeman (Oxford University Press, 2010)

raising a family of six. As the photographs shift from monochrome into colour we see pictures of happy family life. Children smile on horseback in the evening sunshine, several generations are sitting with arms around each other with the *Nanogenerian* seated at the centre. We are stoically advised of the lessons of this life and all of its joys and losses by the narrator, who, we find out, in the last few frames, is the daughter of the woman in the story. We are told of the importance of optimism, observing customs, keeping faith, making allies, supporting ones' children. The film closes with words of thanks to her mother. The straight forwardness of the story, of overcoming hardship, hard work enduring loss and the rewards of family life and good faith point to what the sociologist Avery F. Gordon describes as 'complex personhood'.

'Complex personhood means that the stories people tell about themselves, about their troubles, about their social worlds, and their societies problems are entangled and weave between what is immediately available as a story and what their imaginations are reaching towards. (Gordon 2008: 5)

These stories, like many shared through digital storytelling, point to a deeper significance. In a society which is future oriented, digital storytelling's narrative process, provides an opportunity for framing an understanding of the past and the present. ECP was much more than a simple opportunity to talk about the past. Participants were able to chronicle changes in their lives, and show how their personal past had shaped their lives. Telling the story in a simple two minute digital story created a bridge between different aspects of their lives. Burgess writes about how "for the storyteller, the digital story is a means of 'becoming real' to others on the basis of shared experiences and affective resonances" (2006:6)¹⁶. Poignancy and relevance flows from the past to inform the present.

2.1. Beyond reminiscence

“[F]or those of us who are older, particularly for those of us who are aware that death is closing in, finding ways to shape and to express ourselves through artistic and other creative processes, and finding ways to pass on what we know to the generations of our children and our grandchildren, are increasingly important.”¹⁷ Michael Friedman

I am now 60 and there is a year until retirement and something is opening in my life. There are lots of things I would like to do but when I was younger I had to work (although I nurtured hobbies always), now my golden age of opportunity is opening a new youth.

ECP participant

Reminiscence activities are one of the primary ways in which older people’s memory is framed. While it is important to acknowledge older people’s pasts and personal histories, the risk of a focus on reminiscence is that it can symbolically locate older people in the past, as ‘living history’. ECP provided an opportunity to interrogate some of these attitudes to older people, to recognize their intelligence, experience and ability. Telling stories about the past with digital technology can be a way in which older people insert themselves into the present and the future. By uniquely combining storytelling, which uses resources from the past (such as memories, stories, images and photographs), and a supportive shared creative workshop, together with digital technology, which is very much of the present, ECP offered older people an opportunity to think about the ways they may wish to project their (digital) stories into the future *and* the means of doing so. One theme which ran throughout the project was the reassessment of what lived experiences of the past say about future social relations and

¹⁷ See <http://blog.imagineage.com/the-importance-of-creativity-in-old-age/>

more generally the place of older people in society. At the ECP final conference in Maribor many of the participants who attended discussed the ways that taking part in the project had given them a new orientation to the present and the future leading to what was described as *a total change in life*. One participant from Romania discussed how, his life had changed since learning to use computers through the workshops. He told the evaluation team that *I had to reschedule everything in my life since learning how to use a computer, I used to go to bed at 11 but now I am up till 1*.

Throughout ECP it was clear that older participants appreciated being ‘invited into the present time’, the opportunity to enter into intergenerational exchange with a younger generation of trainers, to have their intellectual capacity stretched and the creative capacity realised. As one participant stated *The technology improves and we with it!*. Others spoke of a sense of optimism and a ‘golden age of creativity opening up’; and it is through these technologically inspired relationships between old and young using technology that this process is afforded

2.2. Flexibility: multiple contexts and multiple benefits

ECP demonstrated clearly the flexibility of the workshop based approach to Digital Storytelling that can be simply adapted to meet different needs and circumstances. In the process of authoring short digital stories learners receive IT skills training: learning to create folders, record and use sound files, upload photographs, search the internet, write a text in word and print it out and use basic editing software. Workshops build each story in a simple, effective way comparable to any storytelling process. Our evaluation (Rooke & Slater 2012) showed the importance of different facets of the process to demonstrate how social, economic or cultural goals overlapped so they could be addressed simultaneously. One of the resounding themes which emerged from the final conference in Maribor was the reduced social isolation and

loneliness that some older people experience. In this respect, our work contributed demonstrably to a narrowing of the digital divide, and, more importantly, pointed to ways to take the work forward. Strong friendships were built within each group of participants and between individual participants and trainers. The trust and sharing which are integral to the intergenerational workshop process, is an affective process. A warm and welcoming atmosphere was created through the sharing of stories in the story circle laid fertile ground in which friendships between older people flourished. As one Romanian participant eloquently stated “They put us together, and we danced and laughed and created stories and it changed our lives”. Social serendipity was as important to the participants as the creative learning process itself.

Each member of the team learned something every day during this Project. Working with old people was a true challenge for each of them, but in final moment the team and participants became a family. Maria Ciobanu Valcea County library,

Sharing stories in the group has been a source of pleasure, and the basis through which friendships have been built. Some were clear that they would continue these friendships beyond the life of the project. A number of people remarked that their groups ‘felt like family’ and they set up and exchanged e-mail addresses in order to keep in touch.

Training was obviously delivered in different settings and locations. A number of lessons flow from this, the most pertinent being that the chameleon-like adaptability of the digital storytelling approach offers a rich tool for policy makers wishing to bridge the digital divide. Contrasting experiences in Finland and Romania illustrate the adaptability of the method, as well as different conceptions of elderly across the EC. In Finland trainers often dispensed with the story circle to work with frail, elderly people on a one to one basis in their homes. Completed stories were then shared on Caring TV.

This approach provided a means for both caring professionals and their dependent, elderly clients to engage with each other and interact with others through Caring TV. In contrast, the Romanian partner worked through the public space provided by the libraries undergoing digitalisation. Here the risk of new technologies alienating older library users was minimised as mobile and active elderly people were brought into libraries to work closely with library staff. Patience from learners and trainers was integral to success. As one trainer, Rotaru Florina: from Târgoviştea, Dâmboviţa County Library, wrote in her evaluation session log, *“I learned that patience and repetition is the mother of wisdom.”* Learning steps in the training sessions were purposely slow and therefore manageable. Trainers often helped out with some of the more time consuming tasks, such as scanning and downloading music to give the participants more time to actually create their film. This was appreciated by participants, as one retired librarian storyteller stated:

*I had fear, because of my age, that I would not understand new technology
but my former colleagues were very patient*

6. Conclusion

Nick Couldry (2010) describes how digital technologies and software innovations have increased the number and range of voices in contemporary media practice; initiatives like ECP contribute directly to this. Extending Creative Practice was successful in providing a space where older people could be seen and heard and their stories could be told. The richness of the stories told across ECP suggests although older people have much to learn in regard to ICT, Digital Natives may have much to learn from the Digital Immigrants. What this group lack in technical prowess they more than make up for in creativity and the desire to share their stories. Digital storytelling increases voices in media practice but, like much community media, these voices are

often isolated and therefore remain largely unheard, in their position on the margins of media practice. Bespoke internet channels and localised media platforms, such as Caring TV, provide spaces for voices to be heard and for the more general creation of a dialogue between storytellers. Establishing a means to develop this dialogue is one of the activities the partners are looking to take forward. While Extending Creative Practice used digital storytelling with elderly people as an inventive, specific response to series of different policy drivers, the intention underpinning the programme was far deeper. The partners wanted to develop the use of digital storytelling with elderly people as a springboard for subsequent storytelling activity; to explore how digital storytelling could be used to gather stories from older citizens and create audiences to listen and respond to older peoples stories. These ambitions were largely realised. This partnership is a start on a far larger exercise and the partners are currently looking to develop a bigger European partnership to take the research forward, establish links with like-minded organisation and, in doing these things, work in a range of different local environments to gather a collection of stories from unheard voices across and beyond all the participating countries. Many of the issues raised in this article merit further, deeper consideration. Accidental learning is integral to digital storytelling, yet it is a means to an end as it is the expressive stories which resonate beyond the training workshops which are the true legacy of programmes like Extending Creative Practice.

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Understanding Inclusion through Digital Storytelling: A case study of assessing the impact and effectiveness of workshops across Romania

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“We tell ourselves stories in order to live”

Joan Didion, The White Album, 1979.

In the introduction to “The Politics of Storytelling”, Jackson (2006) describes how he draws inspiration from the Hannah Arendt’s view that storytelling is never simply a matter of creating either personal or social meanings, but an aspect of ‘*the subjective in between*’ in which a multiplicity of private and public interests are always problematically in play (Arendt, 1958 quoted by Jackson 2006). Storytelling is, in his eyes, one of the primary ways in which we make sense of the world and our position within it.

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Storytelling is universal; it cuts across cultures and is one of the activities which distinguishes and defines humanity. It is also complex and can be culturally specific. For example, *Rakugo* is one of the finest form of comical monologue, a storytelling technique from Japan. To master such a technique, one needs a lengthy preparation time because the art of *rakugo* is passed from master to student through oral practice. The storyteller sits on the stage, is surrounded by specific props and tells a three part story: *makura* or prelude, *hondai* – main story and *ochi* – the closing, punch line. *Rakugo* started as a street performance, with performers entertaining the people passing by with anecdotes (Harrigan, n.d). *Rakugo* is no longer as popular as it used to be, however, Beicho Katsura III, an 86-year-old *rakugo* comic has been recognized by the Japanese government as a Living National Treasure. For this reason, Hiroshi Ishiguro, a professor at Osaka University and one of the world's most famous robotics specialists, created a Beicho Andriod, a human droid which is a copy of Beicho Katsura III (Hornyak, 2012). This simple example shows how storytelling can be treasured as an important part of our cultural and sometimes national identity, it helps to define people and their interaction.

Stories are not only about tradition, they express the soul of a community, its experiences and failures, the wisdom telling how people have subjectively lived events - they are a reference point for social education and enculturation. “The collective past, present and imagined future times and places represent a subjective point of view that frames how a person feels and storytelling transports people to different points of view so they can reinterpret or reframe what particular “facts” mean to them” (Simmons, 2007, p. 14). Freeman (2010) describes how the narrative imagination “discloses meanings that might have been unavailable in the immediacy of the moment...and truths that might otherwise have gone unarticulated”. We tell stories every day, and our stories tell many things about us. Telling good stories, stories that matter, stories that will stay with people and influence their lives is not a natural skill for many people but something developed through practice. It has often been an informal role taken by grandparents or other elderly members of the community. Romanian literature abounds with examples where old people tell stories in long winter nights to their nephews and nieces. Telling stories in this way used to be a popular and valued skill in high demand from grandparents; a means for the one generation to pass on experience and wisdom to the next

The new media explosion and the increased access to mobile technology, where cheap smart phones allow one to record video materials and post them instantly on the internet leads to opportunities within what Burgess (2006) calls large consumer participation in the media culture. Changes are not only related to democratization of content creation or user generated content, due to the web 2.0, but also to what Florida (2002, quoted by Burgess, 2006) referred as *ubiquitous creativity*, a feature of the current cultural citizenship. We are all potential authors, creators, and citizens. In fact, in terms of the storyteller, we have moved from a physical person to an online web 2.0 person with the potential to become an online storyteller. The physical storyteller has been transformed into a digital version of herself and this, in case of many people, demands an increase newer digital skills and abilities. This shift has profound implications for storytelling traditions; it requires an ability to adapt to new, digitised ways of storytelling.

What is Digital Storytelling?

The term “Digital storytelling” (DS) and the methodology with the same name were crafted in the research labs of Berkley University from California and are now increasingly used across the world. DS describes a simple, creative process whereby people with little or no experience of computers, gain skills needed to tell a personal story as a two minute film using predominantly still images. Burgess (2006) defines it as “a workshop-based process by which ‘ordinary people’ create their own short autobiographical films that can be streamed on the web or broadcast on television.” Different authors see DS as means to express vernacular creativity (Burgess, 2006), research method for local health issues (Gubrium, 2009), a form of personal creativity (Lambert, 2013), a means of preserving a community’s identity and a form of oral history (Klaebe et al, 2007).

As a method, DS combines techniques to develop literacy and storytelling skills with an introduction to basic Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This is underpinned by storytelling work comprising group exercises and individual processes that develop confidence and build self-esteem. These different elements combine to form the narrative basis of digital stories. On the surface these digital stories are all singular, personal audio visual accounts of an individual’s story, yet – the making of them is shaped by the collaborative

experience in the storytelling workshop. Each completed story shows how someone envisages their place in a personal and a public world. They all bridge the past, present and the future. Particular sets or groups of stories acquire a wider representative meaning and, in doing this, say something deeper about the place they come from. This paper goes on to look at a group of stories and the process of making them through the eyes of the storytellers.

The original approach to Digital Storytelling workshops set out by Lambert in his *Digital Storytelling Cookbook* (2007) demanded a basic ICT competence as well as the ability to participate in an intensive creative workshop requiring emotional openness and a willingness to collaborate with strangers. Such interaction is the means through which one's story is identified, refined and told; it turns from a memory to a digital story ready to be shared with others. However, participants in the early days of digital storytelling workshops who were digitally excluded found the experience to be primarily "about technology, and technology becomes the focus of the process as we enter the second day, with the voiceover completed and images selected." (Lambert, 2013, Kindle Locations 2081-2082).

First, participants work on developing the story – the process is insightful and reflexive - and they need to decide exactly on which aspects to focus (stages 1 to 3). In the next phases, participants select the images (from personal photo archives or online uploaded copyright free images) in order to illustrate the stories (stage 4). Then, participants write a personal story as a script, not longer than three minutes, and combine key emotions or happenings alongside illustrative photos. The author records the script and the edits the voiceover alongside the images, while the relevant pictures are being displayed (steps 5 and 6). Once the final story is told, the digital story is shared with the rest of the group in a screening of stories (step 7) (Lambert, 2013). Sometimes, participants may wish to show their story to a wider audience, so many stories are uploaded on Youtube or other Internet spaces where personal stories are easily shared.

The workshop environment is key to story development. , Most the stories are initially quite personal, but the final version which emerges through the prism of the workshop experience is the agglutination of a personal and social input. "The sort of reflecting upon experience involved in the production of personal narrative can range from seemingly direct rendering of memory

into words, to a self-aware evaluation and interpretation of experience, often constructed in interaction with another.” (Davis and Weinshenker, 2012). Participants pass through a process of creation and co-creation, of meaningful social interaction, of adapting the format to the digital environment, while at the same time keeping all short and significant. It is a personal statement, but it is a socially reviewed and accepted personal statement; a point where the private and public interests identified by Jackson (2006) co-exist. To take the direction of travel signposted by Jackson (2006), DS is one of the ways in which technology can be used to enable people to tell their personal stories in a new way. It is a junction where technology and storytelling meet to point in a new direction enabling authors to craft personal stories using imagery, text and the spoken word; a point where new and old practices are intertwined.

How can we understand Digital Storytelling?

As a relatively new cultural form of cultural practice drawing on a range of different roots, practices and interests, DS has attracted attention from a range of scholars and researchers. One consequence of this is that literature, research and practice is limited and exploratory, as writers, practitioners and academics work their way towards a fuller, more rounded understanding. Drivers for individual projects are often drawn from different sources with a desire to use DS with particular groups or communities. Sennett (2012) notes how many community projects “offer good experiences” but “have to lead somewhere to become sustainable”. This sense of immediacy is found to many digital storytelling projects where the short term benefits of the storytelling process are defined in terms of stories told or people trained. It is rare to find research which considers the content of digital stories or takes a longitudinal approach to the evaluation of the impact of attending a DS workshop on participants. Key note sessions from Joe Lambert and John Hartley at *Create, Act, Change - the 5th International Conference of Digital Storytelling (2013)* sought to bring a greater understanding of the practice of digital storytelling by arguing for a need to “theorise” the work. John Hartley and Joe Lambert both argued for this but came to the same point from starting positions on opposite ends of the spectrum - as the consummate media theorist and the dedicated practitioner.

This paper proposes that four interrelated different forces underpin digital storytelling work with older people and taken together these are components of a digital or “media literacy” that needs

to be fostered to generate the greater inclusion of older people in contemporary society. Firstly, there is a desire to explore the use of the methodology as a means to facilitate the greater digital inclusion of older people through the provision of IT skills; secondly there is the use of the process as a means to engage older citizens in their communities; thirdly digital storytelling is a means for older people to have their voices heard and fourthly, there is an act of creative expression at the heart of the process. The paper explores these four aspects through a cross-sectional survey with a group of older storytellers from across Romania who made digital stories through a project called Extending Creative Practice.

Extending Creative Practice

DigiTales² led a research partnership with action research projects using digital storytelling in different settings with older people in Finland, Romania and Slovenia to deliver an initiative called ‘Extending Creative Practice’ (ECP). The company trained local people from Universities, NGOs and libraries who then went on to use digital storytelling with local elderly as a way to creatively address the questions around inclusion. DigiTales used a condensed version of the training workshop process set out by Lambert in his Digital Storytelling Cookbook (2010). ECP’s intensive ‘train the trainers’ workshops assumed a basic working knowledge of the technical, social and pedagogical skills needed to run a workshop but guided participants through the story gathering process so they could use the skills and knowledge needed to make a story in a collaborative workshop environment (Dunford and Rooke, 2013). This partnership was constructed to have an impact at different levels, with each partner standing to gain new knowledge, experience and skills for subsequent projects.

At the outset DigiTales hosted two “train the trainers” workshops at Goldsmiths, University of London where prospective trainers from across the partnership came to learn the basic digital storytelling methodology.. Trainers from Romania were county librarians working in the context of the digitalisation of Romanian public libraries. Fourteen Romanian trainers then returned

² DigiTales is an independent research company hosted by the Media and Communications Department at Goldsmiths. The company now has a base at the University of Brighton and from September 2013 it will extend activities to Middlesex University.

home to work with local communities of elderly people. This initial group of trainers cascaded the project by delivering pilot workshops with older people, and disseminating the methods to colleagues across the Library network. These librarians adapted the workshop based training to make it more appropriate to their elderly cohort taking into account the needs and abilities of older people and their previous experience in providing IT training for the elderly. This involved shorter sessions and more preparatory time with computer programmes. At the close of the project 101 older people had participated in ICT and digital storytelling workshops in 12 out of 41 regional libraries in Romania. The Finnish partner, Laurea worked through elderly people's centres and with individual housebound or isolated elderly people, and the digital stories produced by older people through ECP provided content for the interactive Caring TV network (http://www.caringtv.fi/front_page.html) In Finland 43 students were trained in Digital Storytelling and 13 elderly people took part. The five trainers from Slovenian partners, Mitra developed a detailed strategy and programme and then delivered training with local partners, Academia, a Slovenian private adult education institution who were able to provide ICT facilities and support, and Push (which translates as 'Snail') an organisation providing residential care for older people with special needs. A total of 33 older people participated and each made a digital story.

Why work with older people?

A range of factors including the anxieties of older people themselves, inadequate marketing and the dynamics of technological change combine to mean the elderly have often been excluded from the digital revolution and the benefits it brings. The Internet has revolutionised both personal communication and the dynamics between the citizen and everyday services from banking or shopping through to the relationship with public authorities. Many of the public services we receive have also been transformed and are increasingly best accessed digitally. The pace of change has been breath-taking and policy makers now fret about the emergence of a digital divide between those on and off line; a divide which disproportionately affects older citizens.

Processes which potentially increase internet and ICT usage amongst elderly people have been consistently highlighted as priority actions for policy makers and are therefore areas of interest researchers. Bentivegna and Guerrieri (2010) draw on the distinction between access and usage of the internet to stress the importance of ICT activity which has a continuous impact on everyday experience. Such impact can manifest itself in many different ways so successful policy and practice has ramifications in different areas. Research by the Nominet Trust (2011) drew attention to the need for initiatives which provide older people with “greater knowledge training and information about the potential of differing uses of the internet in order to gain more fully from uses of existing applications.” (Milligan and Passey, 2011) Although the picture is uneven across Europe, Romania is the country with the lowest number of internet users in the higher age brackets (EU, 2012).

Recent academic research into ICT usage by older people identifies similar issues. Sayago, Forbes and Blat (2013, p.527) undertook a four-year study with 420 older people which concluded successful learning for older people was dependent on three related elements within any training initiative namely “(a) linking learning to real life needs, (b) learning collaboratively and informally, and (c) adopting appropriate memory aids”. The longitudinal aspect of the research allowed the authors to explore the importance of acquiring confidence over time. Damodarn, Olphert and Phipps (2013) reached similar conclusions in their study of over 1,000 older people in the UK. This concluded that ensuring access to ICT is the key issue for sustaining usage and findings demonstrated that older people with ICT skills value the benefits and independence that access to a computer provides, and are often “exceptionally tenacious in trying to remain digitally connected”. Balazun, Saranto and Rissanen (2012, p. 1202) explore how training in ICT to increase computer usage by older people in Slovenia and Finland provided one means to reduce the loneliness experienced by many older citizens and they recommended that “it is important that older people are computer proficient, because computer engagement can reduce the level of loneliness of older people and in this way have a positive effect on their quality of life”. Wandke, Sengpel and Soksen (2012) argue that older user centred design training and instruction is one way to encourage older people to use technology and to overcome the perception that older people are somehow unwilling or unable to use ICT. In a similar vein, Gonzalez, Ramirez and Vladel (2012, p. 586) used a survey of 240 older people in Spain as a means to investigate the impact of ICT training on older people and concluded that

“the elderly said that they enrolled in different activities to learn and to keep their minds active, and they thought of training as a means of social participation and lifelong learning”.

As well as addressing research questions of academic interest, our own research work engaged directly with relevant policy questions around usage and impact prioritised by the 2006 Riga Ministerial Declaration encourages “both inclusive ICT and the use of ICT to achieve wider inclusion”. Bentivegna and Guerrieri’s (2010) impact index divides countries into different groups based on the “use and diffusion” of the internet into everyday life. In the period 2004-2009 this impact index rose across all the European countries. However there remains a considerable difference between the strong countries (essentially Northern Europe plus the UK and Germany), countries which possess a strong internet culture (mostly smaller countries like Estonia and Ireland), and those where the internet is less embedded in everyday life. The study shows both a consistent increase in internet usage and a maintained disparity between the different country groups. ECP included partners making stories with elderly people from each group; Finland falls into the first category, Slovenia the second and Romania the third. A 2012 research study commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and performed by TNS (Quick et al, 2013) shows that 44% of Romanians between 40-54 have never used a computer connected to internet, 71% of Romanians with the age between 55-64 years old and 91% of Romanians over 65 years old have never used a computer connected to the internet, while the percentage for Romanians aged 15-29 who have never used a computer connected to internet is just 11%. The gap is big and libraries, when conceived as places for community engagement and lifelong centers see reducing digital exclusion as part of their civic duty (International Federation of Library Associations - IFLA, 2004).

The media theorist Henry Jenkins (2008) argues that “we should not assume that someone possesses media literacy if they can consume but not express themselves” and, in doing this extends, the notion of media literacy to embrace production. He sees a media world where production and consumption “collide” in different, unanticipated ways to create a new media landscape. The rich potential in this landscape depends on the inclusion of different groups across society as consumers and producers. Nick Couldry (2010) describes how the “vastly increased opportunities enabled by digitization for exchanging images, narratives, information and ways of managing data” have created new opportunities for voices to be expressed and

heard. He talks of a need to “prepare spaces of political exchange” where stories can be told and ideas discussed. Digital storytelling with older people is one means to develop media literacy and provide older people with the means to have their voices heard in the spaces described by Couldry. New digital forms of knowledge and connectivity have led to new forms of inequality, including cultural and generational inequalities. For elderly people, digital storytelling is one approach to addressing this, and Romanian libraries equipped with ICT provided a physical home for this work. In Romania, the elderly are bearers of great personal stories and digital storytelling is one means for them to tell stories in a new form.. Work with older people and ICT often starts from a position of little or no ICT knowledge so the ECP workshops included a large portion of training in word processing, audio recording, editing tools and the use of the internet. Completed stories were then shared with different community groups across the library network.

Creative activity and learning with elderly people is often dismissed as a futile, time filling activity rather than something with clear outcomes that can be adapted and used more widely. Digital storytelling offers multiple benefits for older people. In the process of mastering digital technology trainees learn to express themselves and acquire skills or confidence needed to participate more actively in many everyday activities in contemporary society. Simultaneously, digital storytelling offers a means of sharing something which is produced through learning and creativity. Qualitative research (Rooke and Slater, 2012) demonstrates that these all have their own value and that participants in digital storytelling workshops valued the opportunity to be involved in creative activity, which was both ‘fun’ *and* productive. The final result: a film that could proudly share with others was especially valued.

ECP was primarily funded to facilitate the digital inclusion of older people, but the partners went beyond a training and exclusion orientated agenda to explore the use of the Digital Storytelling methodology as a means to capture and tell stories about the lived experience of older people in contemporary Europe. Different types of valuable creative, social and technical learning were carefully embedded in the digital storytelling process. In this respect, it shared much with contemporary oral history activity.

Research design

Different authors in different ways. Some see Digital Stories as means to express vernacular creativity (Burgess, 2006), others regard it as a consultative research method for local health issues (Gubrium, 2009), or a form of personal creativity (Lambert, 2013), or finally as a means of preserving a community's identity and a form of oral history (Klaebe et al, 2007). *Our research objective was to understand which of these areas of expression was the most significant for the senior citizens who attended the workshops across Romania.* Understanding this would allow a better, more specific insight into shaping digital storytelling with the digitally excluded, senior population. .. At the same time, it would inform the future development of digital storytelling workshops, with other digitally excluded groups. It also provided an opportunity to directly address the questions around understanding sustainability of community projects identified by Sennett (2013).

In doing this research, we have taken into account the fact that the elderly citizens are “pre-digital natives”³, that the IT literacy gap in Romania between young and old citizens is wide, and that the senior population of Romania has, to a large extent, never browsed or surfed.

As a result, our presumption was that the elderly attendees at DS workshops would see the courses, as a tool to become ICT literate. Therefore, DS could be used fruitfully as an educational method to teach IT to elderly citizens.

In 2010, 101 seniors attended the digital storytelling workshops as part of Extending Creative Practice Project and they formed the target group of our research. Our research method was the opinion questionnaire, conducted through Survey Monkey. Eighty six senior citizens filled in the questionnaire. In order to fill in the questionnaire, the librarian trainers (who have led these workshops in 2010) contacted these seniors in the summer of 2013 by email and phone and have forwarded to them the link with the questionnaire. Some respondents agreed to fill in the questionnaire from their home computers and others have filled in the questionnaire in the library. The eighty six participants who have filled in the questionnaire have been a sample of

³ Digital natives – millennial (born between 1978-1993) who since birth have been exposed to the Internet and to a constant stream of digital technologies

convenience drawn, as mentioned above, from our ability, through the librarian trainers, to reach a large number of digital storytellers via the library network.

The survey consisted of eight questions. The first two filter questions, asked respondents to confirm that they attended the digital story workshop and made at least one digital story. Five respondents who answered no to either of these questions were eliminated from the survey sample. Answers provided by the remaining 81 respondents were analysed.

Question three drew on the literature review and asked participants to evaluate their involvement in the workshop by ranking the experiences they had as mainly an opportunity to:

- Do something creative,
- Learn how to use a computer,
- Express themselves/say what they have to say, and
- Be part of a community/group.

Respondents were asked to put 1,2,3 or 4 in accordance to the importance and emphasis they put on their experience during the workshops. Participants ranked the different possibilities and then explained their choices in the subsequent question. This fourth question was an open question where participants had an opportunity to explain the rationale behind their choice. Such statements provide interesting arguments and some of these are highlighted below descriptive statistics. The final four questions built a socio-demographic picture of the respondents; question 5 addressed age, question 6 related to education, question 7 looked at whether the respondents came from rural or urban areas and question 8 asked about gender. The survey period ran from June 1st – June 30th, 2013.

Descriptive statistics

Seventy participants lived in the urban area, while the gender split showed that 58 out of 81 respondents were female. In terms of education, due to a large split of participants and in order to be able to apply some statistical data processing methods, we decided to group the participants in

two categories, those with undergraduate level (37%) (Secondary school, high schools and vocational schools) and participants who were higher education graduates (63%) (college, MA and PhD). In doing this, we recognised that the library system may have created a distorting effect in our sample with a higher proportion of respondents coming from a highly educated background than might reasonably be expected.

In terms of age, 36% of our respondents were between 61-70 years old, 30% were between 51-60 years old, 27% between 40-50 years old and the rest were between 71-80 years old. The relatively large proportion in the younger age range were economically inactive and the course provided them with an opportunity to acquire skills.

Survey respondents selected the following options to best describe the most significant aspect of attending the DS workshops: DS was an opportunity to do something creative - 45 rank 1 responses, DS was an opportunity to express myself – 8 rank 1 responses, DS was an opportunity to feel a member of a community/group – 5 rank 1 responses, DS was an opportunity to learn how to use a computer – 23 rank 1 responses.

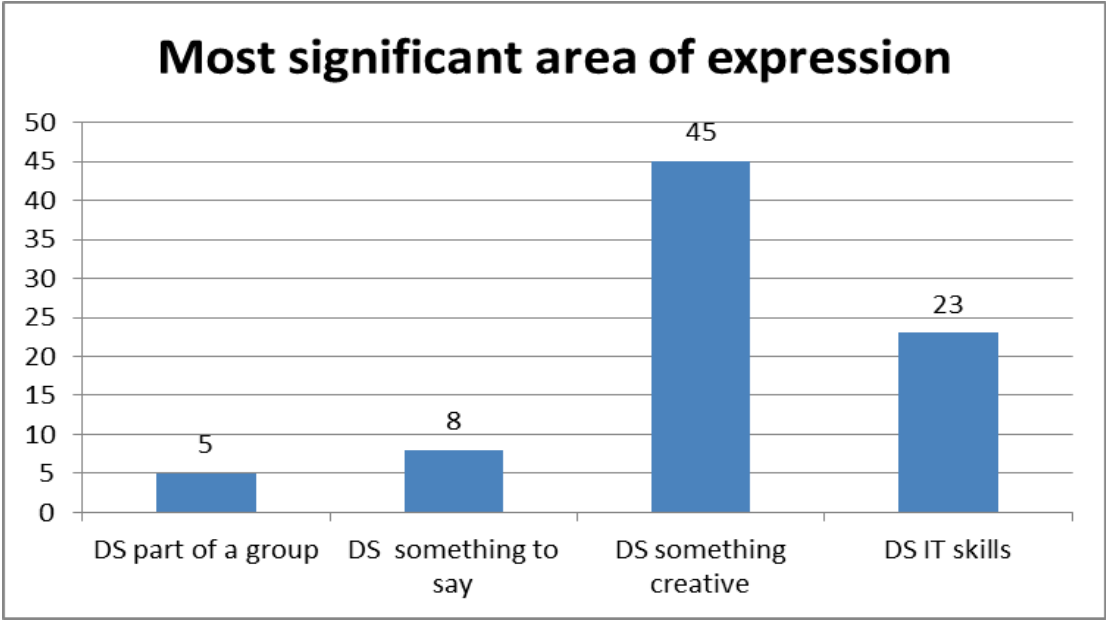


Figure 1: First choice experience in a DS workshop

Below are a few typical comments and opinions from those who ranked the creativity elements of the workshop highest:

„An interesting way to creatively express myself and an opportunity to meet people with shared passions”,

„Because it demanded my imagination and creative spirit”,

„I think it was a creative course and I learned how to tell the story of my life combining photos, emotions and I met new people, made new friends and remembered a small part of my own life”,

I like telling stories about my family”,

„This course gave me the chance to create something I always wanted to do: a small story about the places I’ve been in, where I met special people and they opened my appetite for new people and places”,

„It is a possibility to create, in retrospective, different activities and events lived in certain stages of my personal life until retirement. Creative, the significance of every photo I selected. My participation was a spiritual blessing”,

„In a monotonous world, I had the chance to express my creativity”,

„I realized I can create a beautiful story about my life and I wanted to share my life experiences with people around me”.

Studying the arguments provided by the participants who have put the IT dimension on the first place, we noticed that they were, in most part, those with the most limited ICT skills. In this respect, DS seems to benefit the most digitally excluded as the answers provided by them show:

“I did not know how to work on computer”,

“To be honest, this is the first time I use a computer. I had the experience of using a typewriter, but this is the first time I use a computer”,

“I am a pensioner and I had the chance late to use the computer, and this program has allowed me to learn more, in a practical manner using this modern communication technique”,

“I have never worked on the computer before”,

“I had no idea how to work on computer, this was my first time”,

“First of all I needed to be able to use the computer, and then perform something”.

Typical answers provided by those who selected the the third preference where DS allowed participants to express themselves, were:

“I was able to present to others, the greatest joy I had lately. It gave great pleasure”,

“It allowed me to express myself once more, compared to what I knew”,

“The workshop has created the right atmosphere to express differently my routine occupation”,

“I liked talking about my family”,

“It allowed expressing my thoughts, to put in a movie what I wanted to say with words, but I could not because I am shy”.

Finally, the people who felt most important that DS is a way socializing, feeling part of a community argued as follows:

“I don't work at this point and I spend most of my day indoors and this course has helped me meet new people, especially from my locality and I made some new friends”,

“I felt lonely”,

“First of all, I have discovered myself and I increased my self-confidence. I have really felt I am part from my city community. I have met people and I have shared impressions. I have learned from other people's experiences. Thank you and I want to attend other courses like this”.

Our next step in the enquiry was to investigate if there were significant differences between men and women when experiencing the activities performed in a DS workshop. In other words, are there significant differences around the perceived creative or technical benefits of a DS workshop? Our null hypothesis was that there should be no obvious difference between men and women around the benefits of a DS workshop. Analysis (Table 1 below) showed that such a review is possible.

Table 1: Relationship between gender and first two ranked DS experiences

		gender		Total
		female	male	
option	DS something creative	37	8	45
	DS learn how to use a computer	12	11	23
Total		49	19	68

We concluded that there is a significant association between gender and choice of the two most preferred experience chosen by the participants in the DS workshops, with $X^2(1) = 6.83$, sig = 0.009 and $p < .01$. As illustrated in the Table 1, no frequency number was lower than 5. Therefore, our null hypothesis is rejected. Women tend to perceive their experience in the DS workshops as a creative one whereas men are less likely to highlight this.

No other significant association has been found, related to age groups, education level or domicile of respondents.

Conclusions and discussions

To some extent, the data from the survey both challenges and reinforces our initial hypothesis about the primary importance of DS as a means to teach ICT to literacy to older people. It seems that for our participants, the most memorable part of the course was creating the story. As the librarian trainers reported, even if a few participants have seen and used a computer before, none of them have had contact with the software needed to produce a digital story, namely, in our case Windows Movie Maker, which means that for all our participants, this ICT experience has been new. Also, some of the participants have attended other library events in the past and there is a

possibility that some of them knew each other before, however, they did not know each other's lives with the level of detail or in the emotional depth which emerges through a DS workshop. From the responses provided by our participants who selected the ability to express themselves as their first option, we noticed that their emphasis on self-expression had more of a psychological dimension rather than a civic or political one, although there were also civic expressions noted. Our literature research demonstrated that DS has achieved great results working with vulnerable or disadvantaged categories of citizens – minorities, women, and youths, poor people and these groups often make stories which simultaneously engage forcefully with personal and political points. Last but not least, women seem to gain more than men from the creative part of the DS workshops. Many of our respondents told reflective stories and this may be one means to populate the space identified by Couldry (2010) with new or unanticipated voices. Ultimately, our research confirms the results of other qualitative studies (see Rooke and Slater, 2012), which conclude that the DS workshops are mainly ways of streaming creative energies and expressing vernacular creativity in the age of web 2.0. It is an opportunity for our contemporary elderly storytellers to continue the same time honoured activity as their ancestors, tell their stories, pass their wisdom, educate the new generations, but with a digital twist. In this way, the whole of the digital storytelling workshop is greater than the sum of the parts. Each aspect is important and the acquired digital literacy opens the door to a new form of creative expression that is simultaneously old and new. It harks back to our opening quote from Joan Didion in her classic account of the 1960s, the era when many of our storytellers came of age.

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Understanding the Media Literacy of Digital Storytelling

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Keywords: digital Storytelling, media literacy, voice, impact

Abstract

Digital Storytelling is a workshop-based process in which participants gain the skills and knowledge needed to tell a personal story using their own words and imagery. This article draws on a MERJ conversation held during the Media Education Summit 2014 in Prague to deconstruct Digital Storytelling as means to understand the methodology and the stories told using it. It explores three specific themes:

Theme A: Process of production – finding the articulate and personal voice;

Theme B: Crafting the stories – creating meaning in a short form;

Theme C: Impact – understanding stories as texts and collections.

Prior to the session, delegates had the opportunity to consider literature covering an overview of digital storytelling practice, and extracts from key academic and practitioner-based texts which address the three themes. Selected stories were shown at the start of the session. The article uses the resultant discussions as a means to explore the specific media literacy of digital storytelling. It looks at the multiple creative processes underpinning Digital Storytelling and considers how they merge together within the individual text to create an individual story that can be viewed in isolation or seen as part of a larger collection of stories.

Introduction

‘Digital stories – when properly done – can be tight as sonnets: multimedia sonnets from the people.’ (Meadows, 2014)

This paper considers a series of questions around the literacy engendered by Digital Storytelling arising from our longstanding work as academics and practitioners. It doesn't seek to provide simple answers but it does engage with issues of concern to those

interested in understanding how new forms of expression require, expose and bring into being new forms of literacy; this article is an attempt to define and then explore the media literacy of Digital Storytelling. It is written to start a literacy-based discussion around what is largely uncharted territory and to move the consideration of the media literacy of Digital Storytelling practice beyond the project-based discourse that characterises many presentations and articles.

The authors of this article are both practitioners *and* academics. We wanted to bring the specifics of the digital storytelling method (as defined in the next section) to a broader environment to address questions of media literacy with colleagues who may not be familiar with the form.

What do we mean by Digital Storytelling?

As defined by the Center for Digital Storytelling, Berkeley, California:

A short, first person video-narrative created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images and music or other sounds. (Lambert, 2006)

As Lundby (2008) points out, the term digital storytelling is used to encompass a wide range of forms, ranging from gaming and interactive storytelling (Handler Miller, 2014), to the use of digital visual effects in film, to the proliferation of self-representations in a range of social media forms, from Facebook posts, to Tweets, to self-made movies shared on YouTube. The Digital Storytelling (DS) to which our research refers, however, is the specific media practice, defined by the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) in Berkeley, California, as 'a short, first person video-narrative created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images, and music or other sounds'. This method emerged over twenty years ago, its roots in community activism, its techniques evolving from media arts and radical theatre and its primary driver a 'response to the exclusion of 'ordinary' people's stories in broadcast media'(Hartley and McWilliam, 2009). The primary emphasis is on 'story', rather than 'digital' and the technique is firmly based in the facilitation of the 'Story Circle', the workshop practice that enables participants to tell (usually) personal stories that will become 'little nuggets of media called Digital Stories' (Lambert 2013:1).

Story Circle uses a range of activities and writing stimuli to develop trust within the group, to build storytelling techniques and visual literacy and, ultimately, to 'find' that story (more about the method and genre later). The 'Seven Steps' set out by Lambert in his Digital Storytelling Cookbook provide an underpinning set of principles and story-making components which, Lambert recognises, 'were never meant as a prescribed 'catechism' of

storytelling, more simply a framework for the discussion of the aesthetic quality of this particular form' (2013:53).

Seven Steps of Digital Storytelling

1. Owning Your Insights	What is the story you want to tell? What do you think your story means?
2. Owning Your Emotions	How does the story feel?
3. Finding The Moment	Was there a moment when things changed? Were you aware of it at the time? If not, what was the moment you became aware that things had changed?
4. Seeing Your Story	What images come to mind when recalling the moment of change in the story? What images come to mind for other parts of the story?
5. Hearing Your Story	How will you tell the story – how will you 'perform' your voice over? Would the story be enhanced by additional layers of sound – ambient sound or music?
6. Assembling Your Story	How will you structure your story? How will the layers of visual and audio narratives work together?
7. Sharing Your Story	Who is your audience? What was your purpose in creating the story? Has the purpose shifted during the process of creating the piece? In what presentation will your digital story be viewed? What life will the story have after its completion?

Source: Lambert (2013: 53-70)

Participants are taught how to record their voice-overs, capture their images, still or moving and edit their piece to run somewhere between two and three minutes. Digital

storytelling is now used around the world in a variety of contexts, from community engagement programmes to health and wellbeing projects, to different education settings to name but a few. Despite the plethora of personal narratives available through social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook, the distinctive methodological approach captured in the story circle brings a unique form to Digital Storytelling with its own capacity to shape narrative, although each and every story is unique.

In her account of vernacular creativity and Digital Storytelling, Burgess (2006: 209-210) notes that the range of literacies required for digital storytelling 'cross the divide between formal and informal learning'. She describes how these include 'not only 'learned' skills like the ability to conceive and execute an effective narrative and use a computer' Burgess (2006:210), but also more intuitive modes of collecting and arranging textual elements such as words, photos or drawings, the oral narration and the combination of all this material to create the 'televisual flow' of the final story. In this piece, we argue that Digital Storytelling strays beyond the televisual and has since established itself as a form with its own distinctive codes and conventions. Burgess goes on to describe how she has observed in her work as a practitioner that different demographic groups adopt different styles of expression and contrasts the more journalistic tone adopted by older storytellers with the more personal and emotive work from younger people. Burgess was writing in 2006 yet our own work as academics and practitioners suggests that this generational distinction remains largely intact.

Sparking a Conversation

Digital Storytelling as a form has been gathering momentum as a 'movement' across the globe as more and more practitioners are trained and take the method into a wide variety of educational, community, activist, and even commercial research environments. Joe Lambert, founder of CDS, describes digital storytelling as having 'evolved to become an international movement of deeply committed folks working with story in virtually every field of human endeavour'. Lambert (2013:1). It is also gaining recognition within the academy, as researchers seek to both use the form as a pedagogic tool and to find ways in which to question, to analyse, to criticise and to define the form and the phenomenon, taking the evidence for its increasing visibility beyond the realms of practitioner anecdote.

As Hartley (2013) states, as well as the growing body of scholarship (Thumim, 2012; Chouliaraki 2012; Couldry et al (2010) and most recently Cregori- Signes and Brigado-Carachan (2014), there has been an international conference series since 2003, taking place in Wales, Australia, Portugal, Norway and Turkey, with the next one scheduled September 2015 in the USA. In parallel, there have been European conferences focusing on

digital storytelling in Obidos (2009), Valencia (2013) and Athens (2014) and, most recently, a symposium 'Digital Storytelling and Social Inclusion' at Nagoya University in Japan (November 2014). There is ample opportunity now for digital storytelling practitioners and longstanding and emerging academics to share and discuss their work together.

Finding the articulate and personal voice

Couldry (2010) identifies five new possibilities of voice enabled by digital technology, namely opportunities for new voices to speak and be heard; an increased mutual awareness flowing from a greater influence over distribution; new scales of organization for circulating material; the changing nature of the spaces required for political organisation and the potential for new intensities of listening as the space of media discourse is opened to new voices. He cites Digital Storytelling as an example of a vernacular form created through digitalization where makers or storytellers are able to exert a previously impossible degree of personal control over the development, production and distribution of their material. The first and last of Couldry's five possibilities of voice can be used to frame our understanding of media literacy within Digital Storytelling. This form of media production has its own distinctive patterns of meaning which draw on and extend the range of influences that shape Digital Storytelling, such as forum theatre, Photovoice and community organising. Each new storyteller is an additional media voice.

Stories from outside media discourse may be told through Digital Storytelling; these 'lost stories' can contribute to a richer or poorer understanding of the past. For example, 'Marriage in the Middle of Ruins', is a Digital Story made by Anisora Stamante who recalls her March 1977 wedding in her home town of Vrancea, the epicentre of an earthquake which took 1,578 lives and injured over 11,000 people. She describes the wedding as 'the greatest misadventure of my life' and tells of passing hopeless people with endless sadness in their eyes on the way to her ceremony. This story provides a moving personal account but speaks of the historical past to provide a quotidian account of the wider forces shaping everyday life. In many ways, it is an archetypal digital story; a moving personal story yet somewhat rough around the edges without the sheen of professionally made media.

Literacy provides people with the means to speak and, in this way, it can restore memory; Digital Storytelling workshops provide a means for people to tell personal stories which would otherwise remain untold. 'Marriage in the Middle of the Ruins' is just one example of a distinctly personal story that can be taken as evidence or raw material for subsequent study. The selection and arrangement of the material within the Digital Story is key. Facts do not, as E.H. Carr (1961) famously pointed out, speak for themselves but, in the case of Digital Storytelling, it is the storyteller rather than the historian who decides

what to include and what to 'give to the floor'. Unlike Historians, Digital Storytellers are, however, telling a personal story, which may be about the past, and this may contribute to historical discourse by simply increasing the quality, range and amount of material for the historian to consider. These stories are simply a fragment of evidence for the historian. The veracity of Digital Storytelling is purely a matter of personal perspective.

Freeman (2010: 52) explores how life narratives can provide a means for introducing a measure of humanity into our understanding of the past. He warns that 'memory far from reproducing past experience as it was, is constructive and imaginative, maybe even fictive, in its workings'. Trying to make sense of past is often a personal task and this is especially the case with a reflective practice such as Digital Storytelling. Perspective may change depending on point of view and every individual's unique relationship with both past and present. In 'Marriage in Middle of Ruins', the story is told from the perspective of a successful marriage born out of an earthquake and it is simultaneously harrowing and life affirming; it would almost certainly have been lost to the floor if the marriage had not succeeded. In this way, Digital Storytelling draws in new voices so they can be seen and heard, yet it also affirms the rationale for telling the story, which may be both democratic and therapeutic.

Thumim (2012) notes the assumption that digital storytelling is most often encountered as a process that functions to democratise media spaces. In contrast, therapeutic outcomes are often ignored or understood as serving a project of self-improvement in opposition to a more widely conceived social good. This is exactly our own experience as practitioners where, for example, digital storytelling programmes have been commissioned or funded to provide skills for employment (www.digem.eu) foster the digital inclusion of older citizens (www.silverstories.eu) or facilitate intercultural dialogues (www.digi-tales.org.uk). Thumim challenges us to open out the frame of the therapy/democracy dichotomy to see what else is going on in contemporary digital storytelling. She argues that by focusing on the tension between discourses of therapy and democracy we may find more satisfying explanations of meaning within digital stories.

As practitioners, we have both seen the opening up of difficult memories or painful experiences during a workshop. Evidence gathered in Romania, Crisan/Dunford (2014) through focus groups suggest that there can be difficult subjects raised within the trusting environment of the storycircle which are either dropped entirely due to their sensitivity or reframed for telling in the final Digital Story.

All digital storytelling trainers ordinarily go through the workshop process to provide them with a sense of the demands placed on participants. Workshop facilitators are not therapists but they need to possess creative, pedagogic and social skills beyond those

required in most educational or training environments. Many Digital Storytelling projects engage directly with difficult issues or hard to reach communities so these require different aptitudes and skillsets. For example, working with young unemployed people is radically different from working with older people with early onset dementia and it is possible, indeed likely, that no one individual is equally skilled at working with both groups.

Creating Meaning in a Short Form :

If citizens are to make their own TV on the kitchen table – as it were – then it is important that Big Media provides them with forms which can be readily learned, elegant forms which allow for an articulate contribution. We should make good Digital Stories, not bad television ... Digital Stories are indeed multimedia sonnets from the people, but let's not kid ourselves that they grow on trees. (Meadows et al, 2006:3)

Although the ambitions underpinning digital storytelling have consistently focused on alternative narratives to mainstream media – the voices of ordinary people – they still utilize institutional languages of media and of storytelling itself. Hartley (2013: 77) points out that 'digital storytelling is not *opposed* to mainstream media narrative; it is on a continuum with it ... digital storytellers need to know enough about the 'costly signalling' game to be able to use their messages'. Digital storytellers progress through a facilitated workshop practice that enables them to find their individual voices; it also draws on the expertise of the workshop facilitator and both the participants' and the facilitators' innate understanding of the processes of signification within multimedia presentations. The exercises and processes that contribute to the Story Circle teach the underlying principles of story telling in a multimedia format. Digital Storytelling participants are introduced to the classic narrative structure, they have to consider the 'performance' of their authorial voice, they go through processes of image deconstruction prior to reconstructing them to make their stories 'work'. The storytelling process is reverse engineered so in this respect it is the opposite of much mainstream media.

Storytellers need to identify their narrative voices in relation to their perceived audiences and they need to consider issues of ownership both in terms of an awareness of copyright when using externally sourced assets to enhance their own photographs or self-created sound tracks, *and* in terms of what permissions they themselves wish to grant for wider distribution of their work. They also noted that, as with most current output on

social media channels such as YouTube, the short 2-3 minute piece is what has now come to be the acceptable length of published self-made movies. Certainly, nothing longer would get a click on busy Facebook timelines.

However, these conventions have followed long after the form was established in the early days of digital media, before Web 2.0 modes of self-publication went viral. The point of the form is that it enables the teller to construct intense meaning that packs an emotional punch most effectively *because* of its brevity; in this way the form, at least partly, determines the content.

Digital storytelling centres on a co-creation approach. The Story Circle activities, which enable individual storytellers to 'find' their stories, are led by trained facilitators, each of whom themselves has gone through the Story Circle process and created their own story. Facilitators should know what it *feels* like to make that journey of deep reflection, listening to self and – most importantly – to others, and finding and sharing what could be a deeply personal and perhaps emotionally fraught experience. The classic CDS model for a digital storytelling workshop lasts three days and usually facilitator training adopts this model. However, although the short form of the finished product is fixed to two-three minutes, practitioners may adapt the model to suit their own participants' needs. For example, the Silver Stories partnership <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/silver-stories>) is piloting the use of the digital storytelling models with older people at the time of writing, ranging from active older people in community settings to those who may be living with dementia or memory impairments. Workshop schedules have been adjusted to meet the needs of the different groups. If the digital storytelling workshop is their first encounter with computers, then additional time is required simply to introduce basic skills with the machine before attempting to make a digital story.

Brushwood, Rose and Low (2013: 36) examine the crafting of meaning from the perspective of analysing the narratives produced in two community-based multimedia storytelling projects in Toronto and Montreal. They noted that in this context, participants not only faced technical challenges but also had little or no experience of (knowingly) interpreting or constructing a visual narrative.

'...facilitators worked quite hard to develop these skills amongst participants, offering workshop sessions exclusively on photography and discussing the nuances of visual narrative, including the difference between visual illustration and metaphor'.

In paying greater attention to developing these media literacy skills, Brushwood Rose

and Low note 'the potential to open up new modes of self-representation'. This resonates particularly with projects that are working with displaced people and one of the case studies describes the way participants without photographs of their own with which to make their stories and without using stock images (in this case as a workshop 'rule') are assisted to find alternative ways of creating visual representations to enhance their audio stories. Questions of representation were opened up by discussion about, in this case, the nature of images available of Afghanistan on the internet and the process of constructing alternative ways to depict the memories of childhood in a conflict zone enabled the participants to construct more symbolic, less stereotypical imagery that could be more powerful within the context of the story of an individual, rather than using the imagery of a journalist's report from a war zone.

Darcy Alexandra's (2008: 102) work with undocumented migrants in Ireland also adapts the classic CDS model 'to invite more in-depth and sustained enquiry into the storytelling process and the formation of *communities of practice* (Wenger 1999)'. The workshop was designed as an on-going weekly two-hour workshop over five months. Alexandra also worked with participants who lacked images from within their personal archives, or were understandably reluctant to use their own family images for fear of recognition. In one case study, a storyteller, who was from Bangladesh, decided to create his own images because he was unable to source any appropriate images of people from the Internet to enable him to tell his story who were not white.

Clearly, for vulnerable groups it is of utmost importance to ensure that they are fully equipped to make their digital stories both practically and in terms of developing their media literacy skills. As the media theorist Henry Jenkins (2006: 176) argues, 'we should not assume that someone possesses media literacy if they can consume but not express themselves', and, in doing this extends the notion of media literacy to embrace production.

Facilitators are often experts not only in digital storytelling, but also in their specific field in which they are using the method. They can also be motivated by artistic or political considerations. Many Digital Storytelling workshops are funded projects – commissioned, or grants – and these will have their own drivers around the expected 'outputs' required by the funder. From some social science perspectives, this raises issues around authenticity of voice. The stories may indeed be personal to the individual storyteller in origin and their recorded voice over literally their own recorded voice, however the question that these raise is how authentic is a story that has been shaped with the assistance of a facilitator to fit with, for instance, a themed commission? In 2008-9, our company DigiTales was commissioned by the British Council to lead a digital storytelling project with migrant and ethnic minority young people from nine countries in south-east Europe, 'Imagine

Your Future'. The British Council wanted to use digital storytelling to identify and promote young leaders and, in doing so, help deliver its 'intercultural dialogue institutional guiding pillar'. This is clearly a more direct intervention in the storytelling process than the use of story prompts that are characteristically part of the Story Circle's activities. The key issue is around the extent to which it curtails what can or cannot be said.

That perennial question, 'Does the end justify the means?' is meaningless as it stands; the real and only question regarding the ethics of means and ends is, and always has been, 'Does this particular end justify this particular means?'. (Alinsky 1971: 25)

Hartley (2008: 203) points out that the artistic or political leanings of the facilitator, or those of the facilitator's paymaster could influence or shape content because self-made media should not need the input of 'someone external to the self whose story is being narrated'. This could be seen as somewhat idealistic in that it assumes that the story can be told without the intervention of the facilitator. The balance is the key factor and, again it goes back to the skills of the facilitator. However, the strength of the form lies in its focus on the group engaged in the Story Circle process, the reflective process and the finding the storyteller's voice through a collaborative process as opposed to perhaps the more simultaneous individual productions that dominate the social mediasphere.

Understanding stories as individual texts and collections

If Digital Storytelling is to gather its own momentum and to play a significant role in public culture, the next step is to move beyond the focus on production at the local level, however much participants benefit from being part of the workshops, and however much the cultural institutions benefit from engaging members of the community as co-creators. (Hartley 2008: 202)

One criticism that Hartley has made consistently is the Digital Storytelling movement's focus on small-scale productions that are rarely shared beyond the specific communities that participated in the digital storytelling intervention – i.e. family, friends, interest groups and funders. His view is that despite the term 'digital' in the practice, digital storytelling is only digital in production and not distribution or exhibition; it is not 'native' to the internet. The consequence is that there is in effect no significant audience beyond the immediate for many Digital Stories. Texts 'belong' to the storytellers and remain within

their possession; they rarely, if ever, go viral. This is not necessarily an entirely new problem, for example, in the UK during the 1980s community media productions made through the Channel Four funded workshop movement rarely attracted an audience.

Digital Storytelling is distinguished from this earlier work in two ways; firstly, the stories are made and told by the storyteller rather than a third party filmmaker and secondly, the potential offered by the internet is radically removed from the world of 1980s TV. Shirky (2010) makes a related point when he argues that because we are increasingly producing and sharing media, we need to reconceptualise media and find ways in which new and different forms of media, such as Digital Storytelling, can reach an audience. Hartley returned to this theme in his article 'A Trojan Horse in the Citadel of Stories' (2013), in which he develops his earlier writings (2008, 2009) about the potential of Digital Storytelling to achieve accessibility and value to a larger group beyond those who have participated in a digital storytelling workshop and their immediate viewers/listeners. The opposite model to the former mainstream media approach of scaling up audiences, Hartley talks about scaling up stories, grouping them so that they make sense to wider groups of people. He talks about shifting digital storytelling from self-expression, the individual, to something that can appeal to wider communities – 'the 'we' communities (or 'demes')'.

He calls the Digital Storytellers to action:

Given that digital media and social networks have already made what constitutes 'our' deme more risky, complex, open, uncertain and multivalent than ever before, it is urgent for progressive innovations like the digital storytelling movement to catch up. (Hartley 2013: 103)

The task now is to find new and different ways and means for digital stories to find and retain an audience. As Matthews and Sutherland (2013: 98) observe:

Although personal digital life stories now abound, relatively little attention has been given to the parallel acts of listening – across various and many contexts – that need to occur if we are to hear, value and respond to people's self-documented lives and experiences.

They point out that there is little or no written evidence or academic research into the use of digital stories themselves. The emphasis has been on reflection and the reflective practitioner, rather than the storyteller(s) and the stories. In the same article, Matthews and Sunderland also highlight the lack of attention that has been given to the 'parallel

acts of *listening* – across various and many contexts – that need to occur if we are to hear, value, and respond to people’s self-documented lives and experiences’. Matthews and Sutherland (2013:98). This act of listening requires space to hear and understand stories individually and collectively. The arguments posed in this article, in a sense, represent the polar opposite of Lambert’s focus on ‘the movement’ of digital storytelling – the act itself. Matthews and Sunderland are interested in the efficacy of digital life story narratives as data for academics, policy makers and practitioners. Lambert – like many other practitioner accounts of digital storytelling – focuses on the unique, the individual, personal experience. Matthews and Sunderland (2013: 97) view the stories as, potentially, ‘large-scale multimedia qualitative datasets’, whilst acknowledging the shortcomings of, for example, using large-scale databases to make stories ‘listenable’ to policy makers.

Listening can often be taken for granted and is often relegated below telling, even though ‘Listen Deeply, Tell Stories’ is the mantra of the Center for Digital Storytelling. Yet, as O’Donnell, Lloyd and Dreher (2009) point out, in the analysis of story-based practices within the field of cultural studies, listening is under-discussed in comparison to questions of voice. There is no shortage of observations, such as Rossiter and Garcia’s (2010: 49) ‘participant produced digital stories constitute a rich and relatively unexplored source of qualitative data’. There are pockets of evidence in the form of project evaluations and reports and localised examples of impact, such as the remarkable effect of the work of Patient Voices (www.patientvoices.org.uk), who in a recent project used digital stories they had produced with mental health service users to influence the trustees of Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust, who were addressing poor patient and staff satisfaction survey scores in relation to dignity, respect and communication. Two years into the project, stories are now shown at the beginning of every Board meeting and in staff recruitment and selection interviews ‘to remind staff and Board *why* they are there’ Hardy (2013).

In the specific use of digital storytelling within health promotion research, Gubrium focuses on the participation of storytellers and the positive impact on them as the value in digital storytelling and notes the importance of ethical practice when working with vulnerable people in terms of sharing their stories. In a forthcoming article, Jenkins and Hardy note that, in the words of Margaret Mead, ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has’. The role of stories created in facilitated workshops and shown to audiences, for example, via the Patient Voices website (www.patientvoices.org.uk) is that of an important social movement with the potential to effect change at individual, community and societal levels.

Conclusions

Different forms of literacy are brought into being by different cultural forms, so in this way the literacy of digital storytelling is obviously different from that of say a feature film, a novel or even an oral history testimony. Not only does the brevity of the form place specific constraints on what can and cannot be said, but both the democratic and therapeutic components of the story circle shape the content in unpredictable ways. The processes involved in story circle provide rich opportunities to develop media literacies. Activities involving reading images, to encourage participants to squeeze the most meaning from the limited amount of images the form demands, for example are rooted in classic media education approaches to 'denotation/connotation' exercises. A word game involving the construction of a short narrative from a shared lexicon that has been constructed by the group is an effective way to encounter questions of point-of-view. The act of construction within a set of formal constraints can lead to broader questions of form/content and genre. Questions of the authorial voice, the ownership of the story and the audiences for it provide an accessible springboard for opening wider discussions about ownership and control and ethical questions about distribution via the Internet, for example. As a practitioner, it is never possible to know what story is going to be told yet it is possible to envisage how it may be told. This tension between the restricted form and the unpredictable content make Digital Storytelling an exciting, productive area for both practitioners and academics. The real difficulty is finding the appropriate route to an audience; this is both a question about reaching a larger number of people and about reaching the right audience for particular stories. This is the real imaginative challenge facing everyone concerned with shifting this emancipatory form of new media beyond the workshop.

Digital Stories Presented for Discussion at the World Café

1. Casatorie Printre Ruine (Marriage Amongst the Ruins), Romania, 2010.
2. Sauna Sisters (Finland, 2011)
Funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme Grundtvig. Stories can be viewed from the Extending Creative Practice website. www.extendingcreativepractice.eu.
3. Hello Fish Mate, UK, 2014
4. Agora vou para o lar. (Now I'm going to the Nursing Home), Portugal, 2014.
Funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme Transfer of Innovation. Stories can be viewed from the Silver Stories website <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/silver-stories>.
5. Deep Diversity (USA, 2008). This story is no longer online.

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