# Mobilizing User-Generated Content for Canada's Digital Content Advantage

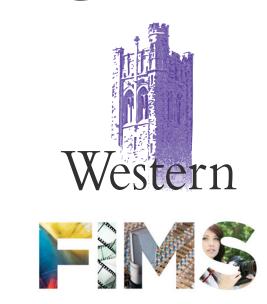
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# Canada

### The Project

- To examine user-generated content (UGC) in its current state, the state of knowledge related to UGC and identify gaps where additional research could create Canada's digital content advantage.
- Seek to reach goals by asking the same questions in three domains of UGC:
  - define UGC in its current state
  - identify successful models built for UGC
  - identify and anticipate barriers to further development and use UGC
  - anticipate the policy infrastructure needed to sustain a model to leverage further development of UGC to Canada's advantage

# **UGC: Three Major Domains**

#### **Creative Content**

- UGC generated by individuals or small nonregulated groups.
- May be created, developed, captured and put on display by a individual on an online platform.
- Found on portals such as YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, & Facebook.

#### **Small-Scale Tools**

- Tools, modifications, & applications that have been created by a user or group of users.
- Game modifications/add-ons created by users/ players to modify the game or assist in gameplay or virtual worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft, Second Life).
- Applications or tools created for mobile devices (such as the iPhone or Android).

#### Collaborative

- UGC authored collectively and shared by a selfregulating group of contributors.
- OSS includes both open-source software and free/ libre software.
- Wikis such as wikipedia.
- Government data sets can be provided by any level of government.

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#### **Creative Content**

#### **Current State of UGC**

- Successful sites integrate content creation, aggregation, distribution and consumption into a single tool.
- A recurring theme throughout the literature on creative content is the erosion of the traditional dichotomies between traditional creators and end-users – typical users are now more able than ever to produce creative content in a transformative way.
- User-generated content sites with unobtrusive marketing and no required fees are more attractive to users.

#### **Small-Scale Tools**

- Many elements of UGC present in games available today in user interface customizations or game conversion modifications.
- Modifications can act as sociotechnical objects, managing gameplay, providing incentive, enabling play, or can incite frustration.
- Modders/UGC creators may spend countless hours and effort on their mods; will support each other through websites and forums.
- Mods can aid in increasing the longevity and appeal of a game, as well as customer loyalty.

#### Collaborative

- Open source software (refers to a model of software production that is premised on making human readable code accessible includes both "open source software (OSS) and 'Free software" (Most successful examples of projects include Linux, Mozilla Firefox, Apache platform.
- Government data sets (by providing access to datasets, open data projects can utilize government data for a range of uses (i.e. the local NextStop app for transit data) -simply by providing access to data, governments can encourage the creation of useful apps at no cost to themselves.

## Policy & Infrastructures

- Limited information on policy for mobile applications.
- Companies have established privacy statements, Terms of Service agreements, and End-User License Agreements; some of these act as law in the virtual
- Community norms, player consent, and social sanctions act as infrastructure in games and virtual worlds.
- Different types of intellectual property may be awarded.
- Possible to apply "fair dealing" doctrine.
- Would be helpful to develop policies surrounding litigation, as this door has been opened and creates constraints.
- Copyright is not necessarily applicable in the development of UGC in the same manner as other types of content/media produced.

#### Barriers

- Closed proprietary platforms.
- Privacy and security issues.
- Copyright uncertainties.
- Access to bandwidth/infrastructures ("digital divide" concerns).
- Software/Hardware skills.
- Costs to accessing platforms.
- Lack of value or incentive (social, emotional, monetary).

- The digital divide.
- Broadband Internet access.
- Appropriate hardware/software for development.
- Computer/programming skills.
- Costs to accessing a game/virtual world.
- SDK costs.
- Policies preventing or limiting thecreation of small scale tools.

- Restrictive intellectual property rights (mostly copyright but now also potentially business method patents).
- Crown Copyright in the case of government data.
- Restrictive End User Licensing Agreements -EULAs (often pointing to US law).
- TPMs /DRM (and the proposed anticircumvention rules).
- Liability worries.

#### Where Do We Go From Here?

- Conduct further research on the policy and technological infrastructures needed to mobilize and leverage UGC in Canada.
- Conduct further research on the motivations behind UGC and the qualities of popular/viral UGC.
- Examine avenues for effective commercialization and monetization, to gain the value generated by UGC (and do so without hampering the energy and enthusiasm of end users) – searching for effective balancing mechanisms is crucial.

By enabling its populace, Canada will not only create a vibrant and innovative UGC sector, but also facilitate greater cultural expression and economic growth.



# **Mobilizing UGC**

- Understanding the target market, creating and maintaining a self-sustaining environment.
- Encourage models and platforms where users find value in generating content.
- Understand and anticipate the skills of future UGC creators and consumers.
- Encourage the creation of specific platforms that are open to creation.
- Encourage fans of games, virtual worlds, and mobile devices to create UGC: this leads to future employment opportunities, as well as technological literacy.
- Encourage further research on mobile applications in Canada, as well as the state of UGC small scale tools.
- Create supportive learning environments and communities to close the digital divide.
- Facilitate innovation, creation and protection of UGC as well as the production of UGC from other source material.
- Create a flourishing UGC environment through a careful, thoughtful and purposeful balancing of the various policy levers.

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