



**PUBLISHING & DIGITAL CULTURE:
AGILITY, COMMUNITY, COLLABORATION**

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS





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CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS



UNIVERSITY of
GREENWICH

INTRODUCTION

This book brings to print the insights of three panel events that were convened over the past three years as part of Creative Conversations, a research and events initiative at the University of Greenwich, which investigates the relationship between creativity and commerce in the creative industries. This initiative aims to bring creative organisations and practitioners, researchers and students into productive conversations with each other, to share and benefit from the wide range of experience and expertise amongst them.

The three panels focus on developments in contemporary publishing and feature a range of speakers, occupying different roles within publishing, including writers, publishers and academics. Each panel summary is accompanied by an essay, which addresses questions discussed in the panel and explores them in further depth.

PANEL 1 | THE NEW SPACE OF PUBLISHING addresses how technological innovation and industry consolidation have brought about changes and new possibilities in both writing practices and publishing structures, including the rise of self-publishing.

The essay that follows, WHERE IS THE AUTHOR IN HYBRID MEDIA

STORYTELLING? THE AGILE AUTHOR & THE AGILE AUDIENCE, considers how the ways that people think about, buy and consume books have changed with the development of digital books and digital distribution, as has the way that authors interact with and create audiences. It posits the idea that both authors and audiences have become 'agile' in the way that they write and read. In part, this is a development of technology and the means of distribution and access. It is also a development of authors' preparedness to experiment with media, and audiences' willingness to try new forms of storytelling. These changes mean that a range of new business models have opened up and will continue to do so, allowing readers, authors and publishers to become ever more agile.

PANEL 2 | BUILDING READER COMMUNITIES asks how and why is it important for writers and publishers to think about engaging reader communities.

The essay that follows, PUBLISHING MARKETS, COMMUNITIES & THE CREATION OF VALUE reflects on the way that the contemporary publishing landscape is characterized by interconnected and shifting relationships between markets, communities and value. It explores some of these shifts, arguing that shared value creation is becoming increasingly central to business models within publishing, reshaping

the cultural and economic landscape in which it operates and impacting on the publisher's role as curator and framer of content.

PANEL 3 | THE WRITER AS CATALYST & COLLABORATOR discusses how writers collaborate with others, presenting a range of examples, and considers what results from these collaborations.

The essay that follows, WRITING & THE ETHICS OF COLLABORATION, argues that, although collaboration in writing has a long history, digital technologies have made such collaborative processes more visible and more scalable in contemporary culture, this raises questions, in the process, about the ethical framework within which such collaborations should take place, both online and offline. The essay goes on to analyse and discuss a range of examples of collaboration within the field of writing, attempting to identify the ethics that govern them and highlighting similarities and differences between them. In doing so, it explores how established ethics of collaboration in writing and publishing relate to writing and collaboration in digital culture, and also seeks to establish some normative principles that might have a general application for all forms of collaboration within the field of writing.

We hope that this edited collection contains information and insights that

are useful to you and that it stimulates further thought and discussion.

Rosamund Davies & Miriam Sorrentino,
October 2018

*The founder
members
of Creative
Conversations
enjoying the first
panel, Rosamund
Davies, Gauti
Sigthorsson and
Miriam Sorrentino.*





PANEL 1 | THE NEW SPACE OF PUBLISHING | 20/05/2015

PANELISTS:

**STEVE CARSEY, DIRECTOR OF ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING FOR AUDIBLE,
KATRINA HOPEWELL, MARKETING CONSULTANT IN BROADCAST AND DIGITAL PUBLISHING,
KATE PULLINGER, AWARD WINNING NOVELIST, DIGITAL STORYTELLER AND PROFESSOR OF
CREATIVE WRITING AND DIGITAL MEDIA
JEREMY THOMPSON, MD OF INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER, TROUBADOUR AND ITS SELF
PUBLISHING ARM, MATADOR,
PANEL CHAIR, JUSTINE SOLOMONS OF BYTE THE BOOK**

STEVE CARSEY

Steve described an industry career that has been a journey through TV and film storytelling media, before becoming Director of Original Programming for Audible. This experience enabled him to view the audio book as an opportunity for diverse kinds of entertainment, rather than simply audio versions of existing books. Audible is exploring a range of audio content, including multi-cast dramas and sitcoms. But this is only the beginning of what he hopes will be a much broader range of formats and genres. A key point for Steve, and further developed by other panel members, was that the definitions of media products are becoming increasingly blurred and ever more hybrid. While this may be a problem for businesses, which rely on categorizing in order to segment markets, there is plenty of opportunity for writers of new content.

Steve noted that, for a creative business like Audible, underlying all of this experimental practice is a strategy to reach new audiences and to expand their customer base. In his opinion, to be successful, 'content' businesses need to focus on maximising their audience through a marketing-driven and customer-centred strategy. Advocating a forensic marketing approach, he described how when casting for audio dramas, he considers the audience that the cast and narration will bring on the one hand and the audience that the writer will bring on the other. However, Steve doesn't believe that analysis of existing material and audiences will create

Rosamund Davies introduces the first Creative Conversations panel to a waiting audience in the Stephen Lawrence Gallery.



'It's one thing coming up with a creative concept or an idea or working with a story but, if we can't market it no-one's going to listen to it, so we have to look at everything we do through a commercial prism' Steve Carsey

the next breakthrough hit, that comes through the author's own creativity and willingness to experiment and explore the potential of their own content.

Steve suggested that, like many creative people, he has a novel inside him that has never been written. He celebrated the potential to be found in self-publishing, although he noted the inevitable tension between opportunities to discover new talent and the problem of an overabundance of content . He also highlighted the fact that self-publishing not only occurs in digital and in print but also in audio, citing ACX, the audio self-publishing arm run through Audible and Amazon.

'When you can have a broader canvas it allows you to do all other kinds of storytelling, all other kinds of different experiences.' Steve Carsey





KATRINA HOPEWELL

Like Steve, Katrina took an experimental approach to publishing when she developed the 'Unbinding The Book' project while at Blurb. It was a project that challenged the preconceptions of who could be an author and what could be an authored print book in the age of digital publishing. For example one book that was commissioned from Camille Leproust and Andres Ayerbe of duo Noot was printed on thermal paper giving the reader only four hours to read it before the paper turned black. There was clearly an audience for this experimental project as there were over 300 submissions and 10,000 people came to view the exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery.

Responding to the term 'authorpreneur', put forward by chair Justine Solomons, Katrina developed the discussion started by Steve in relation to marketing and self-publishing. Pointing to the successes of the young media entrepreneur Jamal Edwards, she suggested seeing each project as a business entity rather than simply a single creative work. She stressed that self-publishers, while they may have all the artistic freedoms they want, also have to become more

Panel chair, Justine Solomons, introduces the panel and the main points of the evening's discussion.

'Self-publishers these days if they want to be successful they need to create their own brand and develop a plan around them and to see their book as a business.' Katrina Hopewell

'We have a broad spectrum of people in the publishing industry here, which is I think what's happening in the publishing industry today.' Justine Solomons

business-minded and pro-active if they want to be successful. There is less risk for J.K. Rowling in self-publishing through Pottermore as she already has an audience, but this would not be the case with unknown writers without an audience. Katrina pointed out that there are a range of business models now available to a new author, if they don't want to go to, or have no luck with, the traditional publishing houses. There are several different platforms that enable crowdfunding and they can bring significant success. Katrina cited Paul Kingsnorth's *The Wake* published through Unbound (a crowdfunding-based publisher) which won the Gordon Burn Prize in 2014, as well as being long-listed for other prestigious awards.

Going on to discuss the ready access of content through our mobile devices, Katrina pointed to the example of the social reading platform, Wattpad, that enables an audience of many millions to read on their phones and ipads. She stressed

Katrina Hopewell and Steve Carsey listening to Kate Pullinger's description of the 'Letter to an Unknown Soldier' project for WW1 Centenary Art Commissions.



that the platform allows authors to get direct and detailed audience feedback on what is liked. Traditional publishing houses can also use Wattpad to discover new authors who have already found a loyal and consistent audience. She highlighted how success on Wattpad has earned some authors deals with established publishing houses, a good example being Macmillan signing UK writer Nikki Kelly's *Styclar Saga trilogy*. When an audience is invested in an author's story, polished or not, they are more likely to follow it into the pay per copy model of traditional publishing even though these audiences are not guaranteed. The free content and sharing model of Wattpad becomes its own marketing tool, each new piece of work created builds the author's brand.

KATE PULLINGER

Like the other panelists, Kate, a literary fiction author, pushes at the boundaries of storytelling media. Many of her recent projects are web-based multimedia experiences combining text, audio and video. Kate pointed out that projects like



Kate Pullinger describes how involved the public can become in participatory writing projects that really capture the imagination.

these are always collaborative on some level. Unless an author would like to learn all the skills needed to create such hybrid fictions, it would seem essential to work with others. Kate also works on projects that ask for public participation. Working with 14-18 NOW and theatre director Neil Bartlett, the project invited members of the public to write a *Letter to an unknown soldier*. This soldier was the statue on platform 1 of Paddington Station. This collaborative and participatory form of storytelling clearly captured the imagination of the public as 22,000 letters were submitted. Kate noted that, far from print disappearing in the digital age of publishing, increasingly these projects have an associated print version. Many projects move back and forth between print and digital, each doing a different job. For example, *Landing Gear* is the print version and *Flight Paths* is the online version of a hybrid storytelling project led by Kate.

'What is the future of the book when you move beyond the printed page, or an electronic copy of the printed page? So a lot of the projects I've been involved with have been trying to find new ways to tell stories: web-based combining, text, video, audio, sound effects etc...to try and think about new hybrid forms of literature and indeed to carve out a literary space in the new digital multi-media realm.' Kate Pullinger

Taking a slightly different approach to the whole subject of self-publishing, Kate underlined that, although everyone is now able to publish, a large study by the organization Spread The Word on the publishing industry and Higher Education Creative Writing courses showed that there is less diversity than there was 10 years ago. This is even more marked in terms of whom is being picked up and published by traditional publishers. She questioned where the new voices are. Kate highlighted the experimental practice in hybrid poetry projects at the moment. Steve added that he would like to

find a way of amplifying something like spoken word poetry. Many in the audience were vocal about the value of poetry but the difficulty of trying to find the audience. This led the panel and the audience back to the central theme of marketing, how can poetry be introduced to new audiences?

JEREMY THOMPSON

Jeremy, an established publisher since setting up Troubadour in 1990, brought up the notion that some books are better left inside their author, to the amusement of the whole audience. While he made the point light-heartedly, he exposed the other side of this new-found freedom to publish – an over abundance of content. This point was re-iterated by the other panel members, noting that it can be hard to maintain attention on long form when other media are so demanding.

Self-publishing has developed considerably over the last 5 years with many different services now available to help authors self-publish including editing, formatting and promoting. Troubadour however was much earlier in the game, setting up Matador as their self-publishing arm in 1999 to provide traditional publishing editorial techniques and skills to self-publishing authors. According to Jeremy, this is not a

Jeremy Thompson and Kate Pullinger listen intently to Steve Carsey as he explains the commissioning and writing process for Audible.



common model, as self-publishing usually entails the author shouldering the burden of this work and the self-publishing platform is simply a digital facilitator. He comments that many authors need more than this hands-off approach and that they would benefit from finding self-publishers that still retain some of the traditional publisher's roles.

Jeremy highlights that while self-publishing may have started as 'vanity publishing' it has swiftly developed into something more, allowing authors to be far more experimental in what they publish. Picking up on Justine's point that publishers historically often marginalised authors, he noted that they are, however, starting to realize that the author is the brand. The hybrid author, who chooses one publishing model for one novel, may choose an entirely different medium and publisher for their next book.

Like Katrina, Jeremy stressed that an author who wants to be successful must market their work, visit conferences and fairs, network and create a community of followers. He commented, however, that, while the e-book has revolutionized self-publishing, print is still a problem for self-published authors. Shelf presence is a big part of an author's marketing, but bookshops won't stock print-on demand books

Jeremy noted that not all authors want to be 'authorpreneurs' and some that self-publish don't want or need recognition and they simply will not market their work, it is enough that it is made and that should be respected in itself.

'Traditional publishers bring a lot more to it than just the approval, they bring the expertise on the market. Normally publishers know their game very well here, through editing, through marketing, through positioning and through getting that product right and of course they're backing them financially' Jeremy Thompson

WHERE IS THE AUTHOR IN HYBRID MEDIA STORYTELLING? THE AGILE AUTHOR & THE AGILE AUDIENCE

BY MIRIAM SORRENTINO

In 2012 The Book Industry Study Group concluded a four-year research project ‘Consumer Attitudes Toward E-Book Reading’ assessing that e-books had become a ‘normal means of consuming content’ (Sweeney, 2016, p. 1). This study came at a point when the industry was not sure if readers would stand for a change from print to digital as a way to consume literature. The findings of the report showed that readers accepted a digital interface that in many ways aped a traditional print book. That was a few years ago and since then e-book sales have slowed by 17% and print sales have risen again (Cocoza, 2017). Other technologies and platforms have entered the market place and are offering a wide variety of reading experiences in a UK book market place worth £4.8bn.

‘We not only read, but also listen and interact socially with the content we consume and this will only increase as we multitask through our day-to-day lives.’ (Hopewell, 2015)

Anyone who likes to read can now access many types of published content; however, they may not have the confidence or digital skills required to do so. Many e-book readers are older women. A 2016 study for Kobo identified

that 77% of the most active e-book readers are aged 45 and older (Flood, 2016). They find the convenience of enlarging type at will and the portability of the technology attractive. Nevertheless the Digital Futures Index found that only 23% of baby Boomers are digitally adept. Perhaps more surprisingly only 42% of adults from the general population are able to demonstrate a set of digital skills with ease (Nominet, 2017). Not every adult is able to access this new content in the same way.

In order for the reader to make use of the digital technologies that enable multi-tasking and content consumption in the manner Katrina Hopewell (2015) suggests the reader needs to be agile. The term ‘agility’ refers not only to the reader’s flexibility in moving across media, but also their speed and ability to do so. The new active consumer (Jenkins, 2008) or reader may like the feel of a traditional paperback book but may just as easily spend time on YouTube. Over a relatively short period of time these readers have learnt agility, simply becoming much more comfortable with the variety of media choices available, more inclined

to switch from medium to medium, platform to platform. Exemplifying Hopewell's (2015) point, they are able to respond to emails and look at Facebook while reading a print copy of the latest must have book or listening to Audible. They may use e-readers or they may not. They can access newspaper articles on their mobiles by following links embedded in their friend's posts on Facebook while sat on the train to work.

This essay seeks to question how this new media agility in both audiences, and the types of content offered, affects the author of such works. It proposes to explore the effect on business models going forward and the opportunities and pitfalls this agility opens up.

AGILE AUDIENCE

When ebooks first came on the market they showed such potential, as Elizabeth Stinson writes on Wired.com 'there was a moment when ebooks felt a little bit magical,' (2016). All the books that you could want, held within a slim portable device. However, the publishing industry, distributors and authors were not quick on the uptake of this new technology, treating it as a digital store of existing material, convenient and cheap. The original optimism and interest from an audience that had looked to e-books to provide something different from a print book, if they were to give up the latter's haptic qualities, were not catered for. In fact, as Paula Coccozza (2017, p. 1) points out 'the reading experience [an ereader]

delivers has scarcely progressed.'

Figures from The Publishing Association show that the audience's love affair with ebooks is fading, while overall book sales are increasing (Spring and Levett, 2017). Perhaps there have to be more compelling reasons for an audience to stay on a screen than simply a cheaper reproduction of what you can get in print.

Recently print books have enjoyed a 2.3% rise in sales (Spring and Levett, 2017). Print publishers have had to compete with the cheap ebook model and think more creatively if they wanted to re-attract this reading audience that have more media choices. This agile audience can choose if it wants a simple digital reproduction of a text on an ereader or if it wants something more. Readers of digital books are also likely to be readers of print books so the two audiences aren't mutually exclusive.

Paula Coccozza notes that publishers are moving away from late 20th century mass-market designs and production methods to more creative offerings. A quick look at the buoyant children's book market with a combination of extraordinary illustrations, paper art and interactive elements reveals the allure for an audience that wants to share the magic of reading print books with their children. Readers are re-engaging with beautiful print experiences not only in books for their children but in beautiful books for themselves.

An adult example is *S.* by J.J Abrams and Doug Dorst (2013), both a rich reading experience and a deconstruction of the act of reading. A print storybook, complete with de-bossed cover and marbled inner leaves, it provides a ground for biro comments made by two unknown readers that each scribble their thoughts in the margins. Included in the book is an assortment of newspaper clippings and postcards that further take the reader away from the usual linear format. It's a book that has taken inspiration from games, website hyperlinks and filmmaking. Though not the norm for mass publishing print books are evolving as a medium and, through limited edition runs, becoming art objects in their own right.

While there has been a drop in ereaders as a separate technology, there has been an increase in the use of mobile phones due to their multi-media functions, portability and constant development of new applications (Lapenta, 2012, p. 131). Digital publishers such as Kindle have released an app for the iPhone but this still hasn't fully exploited the possibilities of a smartphone's multi-media functions. The smartphone gives readers an easy and approachable technology with which they can listen to content while on the move, as well as looking at screens. This isn't a new phenomena, as portable audio technologies that now seem old fashioned, such as audio CDs, Walkman's and iPods, have been around for a long time and as an audience we

are quite comfortable with them. Audio publishers such as Audible have been a bit quicker to understand the benefits for their audience of accessing an audio book simply by using the 'flexible and integrated portable devices' (Fuchs, 2008) that we all carry with us on a daily basis.

The appetite for audio books has taken even audio publishers by surprise. Audio books are offering new experiences, such as *A Brief History of Seven Killings* by Marlon James (2015), which seven narrators voicing their characters' stories in a variety of dialects. Each character has their own audibly different chapter, something that would be almost impossible for the reader to achieve as easily in their own mind. This begins to show the possibilities of the medium. Speaking at the FutureBook Conference in 2016, Laurence Howell, senior director at Audible UK, suggested that there were not enough titles in audio format for the demand. He cited young professionals and students as the key demographic, noting that their overall consumption increased by 45%. Further adding to the idea that audiences have become more comfortable moving from medium to medium, Howell observed that both print and ebook sales had increased with this group by 39% as audio provided a gateway back to written literature (Eyre and Onwuemezi, 2016).

Audience interest in exploring different media stretches to more unexpected

platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. This provides a new opportunity for authors to self-publish. They can also find a broader audience than they would have had access to historically with self-publishing. one example is Elliott Holt, author of the Twitter fiction *Evidence* (2012). It is a murder mystery in which a young woman falls from a roof at a fancy SoHo party and dies. Different characters narrate the story from their various perspectives on their own Twitter streams during Twitter's 'Fiction Festival'. The story happened in real time, challenging Holt to write and publish live but also challenging the audience to follow all the streams to capture the story at a specific time and on this non-traditional digital

micro-blogging platform easily accessed on a smartphone. The speed and digital skill required to move from feed to feed and follow a story on Twitter exemplifies one aspect of the new reader's agility. Equally the variety of story-telling media; ebooks, audio books, special edition print runs and social media, that find an audience, proves the audience has become flexible in its approach to media.

Contemporary publishing needs to make the most of this more agile audience that is open to experimentation. The audience has become 'Entertainment consumers' (Russell, 2016). In 2008 Henry Jenkins described a cultural

environment in which the audience could access content wherever they wanted through the development of new technologies. He named it Convergence Culture, meaning: 'This circulation of media content – across different media systems, competing media economies, and national borders.' (Jenkins, 2008, p. 3). Our smart phones have provided the technological environment and audiences familiar with the technology that can easily switch from media format to media format.

'Some of the definitions will get increasingly blurred... people will be very creative with storytelling techniques when they realize that digital technology allows them to create different hybrid approaches to storytelling.'
(Carsey 2015)

AGILE CONTENT

The transmedia potential in storytelling has been explored by a number of global entertainment properties. These big corporations have the finances available to take a story from one medium into another. Transmedia is in essence world building; everything in the real world can be incorporated into the story world (Fast and Örnebring, 2017). This is because the content travels with the person consuming it. It appears in multiple facets of a person's life such as their Twitter stream and live experiences, as well as their books. We have been introduced to the world of *Star Wars* through the blockbuster

films and toys. Entertainment properties can extend their audience by publishing some storylines in graphic novels, others in games and other threads in new films. It's a situation that suits both business, which wants access to all markets, and audiences, who want the content they love in various forms.

'Hybrid approaches to storytelling' (Carsey, 2015) need not mean that a whole world has to be built in the manner of transmedia. A story can still hop from medium to medium should the author/creator choose that, but it doesn't need to be so all encompassing. It can be smaller in its media scope though retain its ambition for experimental practice. The media choices themselves may be free or relatively cheap to access. A story may well have a traditional print version or audio version but does not need the more heavily financed elements of transmedia that usually apply to film properties. It may involve social platforms such as Twitter. The *West Wing's* fictional former president Josiah Bartlet, has a Twitter account @Pres_Bartlet. The character exists on Twitter with opinions on politics and what is going on in the world as well as existing in the show, thus using a mix of media in a much more modest way.

Jennifer Egan's short story *Black Box* was a series of 140-character tweets that were published over the course of an hour on *The New Yorker's* Twitter account over ten days (2012). The

narrator, Lulu, is a 'beauty' and a spy whose mission it is to gather information from a terrorist. Her tweets are witty and were eventually published as a collection online, but the real achievement with this story was the potential to use Twitter as a media location for serialized fiction in real time.

Creative approaches to media can create a diverse range of hybrid storytelling experiences. The non-fiction story *Snow Fall* by John Branch was launched in *The New York Times* (2012) as an extraordinary mix of website platform, film-making, beautiful writing, photography, meteorological data, animations and interactive graphics, digitally designed by Andrew Kueneman. It told the story of a number of avalanche deaths among expert skiers and won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing.

Visual Editions, co-founded by Anna Gerber and Britt Iversen, are a media neutral London-based book publisher. They select the medium that best suits each new storytelling experience for each project they take on. In a recent project, London and Los Angeles based authors recorded *Bedtime Stories* (Pilger et al., 2015). This collection of short stories was published for Ace Hotels using Soundcloud as the platform. In another project *Tree of Codes* (2010), author Jonathan Safran Foer, design studio Sara De Bondt Studio and Visual Editions explored die-cut technique and paper books by cutting a new story out

of *The Street of Crocodiles* by Bruno Schulz. This book went on to win D&AD's 'In Book Award' for Book Design in 2011.

The opening up of the means of production through web 2.0 and the power and ubiquity of social sharing platforms has allowed authors to share content in the way that best suits them, their finances and their audience. Not only can an author create content on the 'free' platforms of social media but they can also choose to self-publish through Amazon as an e-book and have print on-demand for those that want it. The bookshop, that only dealt with the big publishers, would not stock independent works and would not order books on demand, is now in competition with digital distribution. Henry Mance notes that Barnes & Noble, America's biggest bookshop, was refusing to stock Amazon's on demand books (2015). By 2016 it had conceded to sell some self-published books available in the Nook, the competitor product for Amazon's Kindle. Authors no longer have to wait for agents and publishers, acting as gatekeepers, to allow them to reach an audience. Amanda Hocking's paranormal romance novels earned her millions of dollars through Kindle self-publishing before she signed a deal with a traditional publisher.

AGILITY AS A MARKETING BUSINESS MODEL

The idea of delivering content on different media as a way of marketing

all other content by that same writer was very well understood by marketing departments for entertainment properties (Jenkins, 2008). Using content in this agile way has started to blur the distinction between marketing and the legitimate work of the author. In transmedia cases, such as the *Star Wars* universe, comics and prequels don't need to be authored by the original writer of the series for readers to enjoy them, they exist as authored properties in their own right. Yet, they also function as a marketing exercise for the rest of the *Star Wars* universe however: increasing audience awareness of a brand, increasing sales and attracting new audiences.

For marketing departments in publishers this new agility required new ways of thinking. Initially, when traditional book sales started to go down in 2009, readers started to favour the ease and low cost of ebooks and publishers responded by publishing the same written content as the print book in ebook format. Seeing digital as a relatively cheap way to market a book, Amazon offered deals such as a free ebook version of print books. Traditional publishers started to offer introductory free chapters, discounted or even free ebooks from a series, in the hope that readers would pick up the rest of the author's works at the recommended retail price (Collins, 2013). Even academic publishers started looking into selling chapters from academic textbooks as separate

ebook sales. Writer's platforms such as Wattpad offered opportunities for writers like Anna Todd to create serialized fiction, with stories in easily consumable chapters (Streitfeld, 2014).

It is easy to see why the ability to share the same content across different media is so tempting to publishers.

However for marketing to work on an audience there needs to be some

charm, there needs to be a good fit, it needs to feel authentic and it works best when it isn't so obviously a marketing strategy. 2015 saw a 13% drop in traditionally published ebook sales (Nielson, 2016, p. 20). If simply publishing the same content on different media isn't sufficient to attract an audience that is willing to engage with a diverse range of media then what do an author and publisher need to do?

In older publishing business models it would have been very difficult to ask the author to write other content for marketing purposes. The author had one role, and the publisher and their staff other roles. The author would need to have been paid in some way, through their advance or through a separate contract. But as we develop new publishing models, both publishers and authors are thinking about storytelling and authorship differently. If the story itself is looked at through a marketing lens, then all the elements of the story

become content to be chopped up and delivered in multiple ways. The question then becomes, who is in charge of the 'chopping up', a marketing department or an author?

'There's no doubt that writers' interest in Twitter fiction is partly driven by publishers. Authors are encouraged to use social media to engage with their readers, and a large Twitter following can translate into strong book sales' (Goldhill 2015).

Asking the PR department of a publisher to tweet on behalf of an author or beloved character doesn't feel authentic and can't be guaranteed to match the craft skills of the author. For the author, publisher and the audience this new 'content' needs to be created by the author.

Creating work with a hybrid media approach seen through the lens of marketing may not mean that the author needs to create new elements for a story that can come out in Twitter, for example, but it may mean that authors themselves need to become more accessible. The audience becomes interested in them as though they are content to be consumed. This in itself can be a challenge for an author as they may be introverted or reclusive rather than sharing and extrovert. However the author chooses to connect with their audience, these new demands are being made of them. In order to make sales, authors are being asked to do work

that may have been seen traditionally as marketing but is now becoming something else - content.

THE AGILE AUTHOR

Audiences can and do participate in communication and feedback with authors, whether it is wanted or not. While this opens up tremendous creative opportunities it also means that audiences demand more and more from the content creators. In Henry Jenkins' description of Convergence Culture, mass media and interpersonal media merge. Not only does an author have to think of their work as a hybrid media piece but they are also expected to be personally accessible over multiple media channels.

This is common on content sites like YouTube. YouTubers often create similar content and share it across multiple platforms, each bit of content supporting other bits. As an entertainment consumer we can follow and consume their everyday activities. YouTubers create content from their lives, the games they play and their relationships, as well as what might be thought of as more original authored content such as sketches. Many authors have Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, speak at book fairs and 'sell' themselves as much as their work. Authors use social media to keep in touch with and extend their audience. Paulo Coelho is an author with over 9.22 million followers on Twitter. He mixes tweets with philosophical quotes and

pictures of his life. Although authors may not enjoy it, the audience's personal connection with them, rather than simply the written material, can sell books.

Naturally publishers have started to look on YouTube and Instagram for content creators with a large following and offer them publishing deals. Joe Wicks started by publishing workout routines on Instagram and now has his own TV show and has authored a number of *Lean in 15* cookbooks with publisher Bluebird. There is considerably less risk involved for publishers in publishing an author who not only has a large fan base but is also comfortable creating content for a number of different media. This fan base guarantees some sales and means the author knows how to market themselves (Speed, 2016).

For some authors, reaching out to their community for further involvement in a hybrid media fashion is becoming more common. As a tech journalist and broadcaster, Kate Russell already had a large Twitter following before she became a Sci-fi author. She wrote a novel set in the world of the videogame *Elite*, an open-ended trading game set in space that has a long history and a dedicated fan-base. Kate Russell is very aware of the need to work on engaging the audience for her book. Quite apart from her Twitter activity, she plays *Elite* with her fans, game streaming live on TwitchTV, a live streaming video platform owned by Amazon.

'...we can use the interactive tools that the internet now gives us to create that bond which makes a lasting relationship with our readers' (Russell 2016).

The story and the relationship with the audience can have a life beyond a single product. If authors choose not to share their own lives as part of this marketing and hybrid media experience but they want access to not just the traditional audience but also this agile audience then they need to think about how they might develop other content. Author Philip Pullman chose not to tweet about himself but to tweet about a surprisingly literary housefly. Jeffrey is an ordinary housefly that lands on Pullman one day and starts to read the material on the author's desk. Jeffrey doesn't come from *The Book of Dust*, Pullman's latest novel, but is a character invented purely for Twitter.

Despite the benefits for authors, there are a number of downsides to taking on the marketing roles traditionally undertaken by the publisher and bookshop (Atkinson, 2015). Amanda Hocking has commented on the stress and workload involved in creating social media marketing in which a blog, a Twitter feed and Facebook page are the minimal requirements to be a hybrid media author (Pilkington, 2012). The increase in workload does not necessarily correlate to an increase in profit for the author.

CONCLUSION

We have reached a moment in time where technology can allow access to many media. Audiences have the ability, curiosity and crucially

the access to content on the most common of devices, the mobile phone. Authors and publishers need to find new ways to attract this agile audience. One way of doing this is to use hybrid media to allow audiences easy access on their terms.

The most commonly and easily deployed hybrid media model is the marketing model: the same content is simply parceled up and distributed on different platforms and media. The audience chooses if they want to read works in a traditional printed format, serialized in ebooks or in some other format.

The second most common hybrid model is also a marketing model but it requires new content, often live and on-going. This is a model where the author creates work in their preferred medium and then connects with their audience over a social media platform - exemplified by authors such as Paulo Coelho and Kate Russell. The second business model seems to rely on free labour by authors and we might question whether a free labour model is sustainable in the long term.

The third hybrid model is more commonly used by big entertainment properties

such as Star Wars and Marvel, where stories are conceived with a multiple media in mind and a view to creating some parts of them as films, other parts as graphic novels, or board games or merchandise.

In the fourth business model, publishers look to social media platforms to find new authors; people with a big following already, a good core idea and a hybrid media approach. Publishing a book for someone with an existing audience and media awareness is a less risky strategy than an unknown who only works in one media. Paige McKenzie's *The Haunting of Sunshine Girl* was marketed by Weinstein Books to her 313,000 followers on social media, with a media strategy involving Snapchat, Vine, and Tumblr (Burling, 2015).

Perhaps the most exciting model is one of collaboration, a fifth model. Brian O'Leary argues in favour of publishers working with digital platforms and other media as a way to engage communities with content rather than thinking in more traditional terms about written books. He calls this an 'architecture of collaboration.' (2014). John Branch's 2012 non-fiction story *Snow Fall* is an example of this approach as are various projects by publishers Visual Editions. More recently Hybrid media piece *It Must Have Been Dark By Then* created by Duncan Speakman and a team of collaborators, used audio, printed book and locative media to create a work

which explored environmental change over three continents (2017). Hosted at the British Library the audience was free to wander around the streets of London reading and listening to the stories of peoples lived experiences of Louisiana, Latvian villages and the Sahara while creating their own unique map. This hybrid piece is interactive at the point of use and collaborative in its creation.

This is the type of work that requires collaboration and specialist skills. It is difficult to write about the 'author' in this hybrid media context. Authors are expected to be storyteller, marketer, multi-media experimenter, intellectual property lawyer, sometimes designer and often publisher; Sarah Atkinson's research indicates that cinema, in all of its new forms, poses similar challenges for creators (2015). For all the doors media agility and audience agility has opened, it has created new challenges. However, this collaborative model does give an insight into what may be possible. The app that was created for *It Must Have Been Dark By Then* makes the content easily accessible, yet the story content means more when experienced alongside the physical book, which could be purchased online by a different distributor. This is a publishing model that requires more work from the audience but has potential to give greater rewards.

The gateway to these new hybrid media experiences is the mobile

phone. Audiences have an 'emotional attachment' to these multi-media devices that are permanently connected to family and friends (Vincent, 2006) and will elect to consume content through them. By using devices that have inbuilt GPS capabilities, image and audio capabilities, live streaming and connectivity with friends, authors can imagine and create all sorts of worlds. The author is familiar with the technology and is not dissociated from it, because they also carry it about on a daily basis. The hybrid media moment is now because technology is coming close to achieving the things we might want from it, as both author and audience.

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PANEL 2 | BUILDING READER COMMUNITIES | 02/03/2016
HOW AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR WRITERS AND PUBLISHERS
TO THINK ABOUT ENGAGING READER COMMUNITIES?

PANELISTS:

AURIOL BISHOP, CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF HODDER & STOUGHTON AND CO-DIRECTOR OF GREENWICH BOOK FESTIVAL

ALEXIS KENNEDY, CEO OF FAILBETTER GAMES (AT THE TIME OF WRITING)

ALEX PHEBY, WRITER, LECTURER AND CO-DIRECTOR OF GREENWICH BOOK FESTIVAL

KATE RUSSELL, WRITER, JOURNALIST AND TELEVISION PRESENTER

MEIKE ZIERVOGEL, WRITER AND FOUNDER OF PEIRENE PRESS

AURIOL BISHOP

Auriol underlined the fact that, while publishers' main relationship used to be with the retailers who sold their products, they are now able to engage much more directly with their audience. They can, for example, get a much better idea of what readers think about a book from online reviews and discussion. While this is a great opportunity, it is also a challenge. Marketing departments have been required very quickly to become experts in social media and in building communities and this is not an easy thing to do.

A key point for Auriol is that building communities is often about drawing on existing communities that you belong to or have a relationship with. She cites the Greenwich Book Festival as an example. It was inspired by the three co-directors' shared involvement in two different communities. They all belong both to the local community and to the world of publishing. Auriol is Creative Director of Hodder & Stoughton, Alex is a writer and Patricia, the third co-director, is an arts journalist. While Auriol met Patricia through the school playground network, she knew Alex through her publishing contacts. With Alex also leading the Creative Writing degree programme at the University of Greenwich, the trio were able to draw on the communities of which they were already part and bring into play a powerful nexus of local and industry support in order to set up and run the festival.

'When I first started, mainly my job [in marketing] consisted of creating bits of paper to help the sales people go out and sell books to people and putting up posters that people ran past and didn't really look at and no one could track whether that was effective or anyone had seen it at all. Then the internet got invented and Amazon was launched and suddenly publishers went from being stuck in their ivory towers to actually being able to talk and listen (we don't do enough listening) to what readers were saying'. Auriol Bishop

Another key factor that needs to be taken into account is that communities usually take time to build. As co-director of Greenwich Book Festival, Auriol said she anticipated it would take three years to establish a community around the festival. She also made the point that the Greenwich Book Festival is not primarily motivated by commercial aims, although the festival still needs to bring in audiences and revenue to survive. It therefore allows her more freedom than she has within a corporate trade publisher to curate a list of writers and books that she values highly and wants to share with others. This appeals to her personally and is also a real advantage when trying to build a community, since successful communities depend on shared trust and mutual respect. When a community is also an essential plank in your marketing strategy, however, while you obviously value

Auriol Bishop explains why she, Alex Pheby and Patricia Nicol started the Greenwich Book Festival.



it highly, there is a tension between this financial value and the social value that participation in the community has for its members. Auriol suggested that the question of how you maintain the balance between the values of the community and the values of the market may be less of a conundrum for small businesses (like fellow panelists Failbetter Games and Peirene Press and writers like Kate Russell) who are likely to share the values of their community and engage with them in a very direct way. Although many people who work within mainstream publishing are also passionate about what they do, it may be harder for a large publishing business to get the balance right.

ALEX PHEBY

Alex made the point that he earns a living from working as a university lecturer and not from his writing (although his writing is critically well received, he was recently nominated for the Wellcome Book Prize). This allows him to take a particular stance with regard to his writing and his audience. He emphasized that, as a writer and educator and also as co-director of the Greenwich Book Festival, his aim was not just to give the audience what they wanted, but to educate them and introduce them to things that they are not familiar with but might learn to like, thus creating new communities of interest.

Learning from their experience at last year's book festival, when some sessions involving less well known writers attracted low numbers, while others quickly sold out, Alex



Alexis Kennedy and Meike Ziervogel listen to an audience member question.

'When you talk about what does the author get out of it... the author gets their process, the author gets their writing, they write and, to a certain extent, that's a way of being in the world.' Alex Pheby

and Auriol took a different approach this year. They offered visitors free tickets to the less mainstream events when they bought tickets to the most popular ones. They aimed in this way to reach and develop new audiences as part of the festival. Alex made the point that this used to be an important role played by publishers. Readers would develop trust in a particular publisher through reading and enjoying books that they published. This trust would encourage them to read other books published by the same company, but written by authors that they had never heard of and would not otherwise have read. Alex does not believe that this cultural role is part of the remit or capacity of large publishing corporations today.

ALEXIS KENNEDY

Alexis Kennedy, Creative Director of Failbetter Games, echoed Auriol and Alex's experience of drawing on existing communities to build new ones. Failbetter Games has a loyal community around their interactive fiction *Fallen London*. However, the latter is free to play and, although the company brought in revenue through producing work for clients, Alexis recounted vividly how, a few years ago, his business almost went under. In a final effort to make the business work, he and his partners launched a crowd funding campaign to produce a videogame, *Sunless Sea*, which is set in the world of *Fallen London*. They found the *Fallen London* community keen not only to fund but to promote the game. This experience made Alexis realize that communities are a valuable business asset and helped him articulate Failbetter Games' business model, which relies on this community. They operate a freemium model, in which people who participate for free in *Fallen London* pay for additional content and spin off experiences,

'We hire from our community. It's very common for games studios to do that.. we've made three, four permanent hires from our community, not to mention interns that we've hired. These are people who care about your stuff, love your stuff and often you'll have a persistent digital record of their interaction with other community members, which gives a much better idea of what kind of person they are than an interview.'

Alexis Kennedy

such as *Sunless Sea*. *Sunless Sea* has also reached a whole new audience and expanded the community. The ability to beta test prototypes through the community is also highly valuable to the company and they also recruit from it.

KATE RUSSELL

Participating in and building communities was and is an essential part of Kate's experience as a writer. As a tech journalist and broadcaster, Kate had a large Twitter following. Her first fiction project was a novel set in the world of the videogame *Elite*, a community of which she was herself a member. She won the right to set the novel in this world as a reward for helping to crowd fund *Elite: Dangerous*, the recent rebooted version of the original *Elite* game. She then crowd funded her own novel. Kate stressed that authenticity is vital to building a successful community. When communities build

'You need to be regular, you need to be there consistently. It's no good coming on just when you've got something to promote and expecting everyone to be interested in what you have to say. You've got to be a constant part of the background for them, in order for them to continue to be interested in what you have to say.' Kate Russell

around a story world, a brand or an individual, it is because people feel it is something they can connect to, which is genuine and which has its own unique identity and integrity.

She also pointed out that communities need consistent and regular input. But it is important to offer people ways to participate and contribute themselves. A community is active not passive. Members of a community will not only buy books and attend events, they will crowd fund projects, spread the word and bring in new members. They will provide feedback and give you new ideas. Dedicated communities, which build around a writer and/or a project want this kind of involvement. They interact intensively with each other, discussing experiences, sharing strategies, organizing their own related events and thus deepening and expanding the experience of the game, book, film etc. for each other.

However, such communities also have a life far beyond this original engagement. Community members become friends, they interact with each other rather than only with the original content creator. When a community is important to its members, it becomes part of their lives and they own it as much as the original creator does. Communities are therefore also unpredictable. They will not always give you the feedback you want or expect and they may not always do things you want them to do. As Kate Russell points out, communities need to be managed. However, if communities are powerful and proactive, they will never be fully controllable.

Kate Russell presents digitally to the audience and the panel before live game streaming with her fan-base on Twitch.



MEIKE ZIERVOGEL

Meike, like Alexis and Kate, is clear about the fact that her business depends on its community. She was also keen to stress that communities require not only time, but energy, to build and maintain. Taking a slightly different tack to Auriol and Kate's experiences, she testified to the fact that it is possible to build a community from scratch, with minimum reliance on existing networks. As a publisher of foreign language books in translation, which are traditionally difficult to sell, she knew she had to establish a strong brand, rather than rely on selling individual titles. Therefore, although Peirene titles are available for sale individually, the subscription model is very important to Peirene, as it facilitates much stronger reader loyalty. In order to attract subscribers, Meike focused on getting out into public spaces - setting up pop up stores at places like supermarkets and farmers' markets. She also produced a newsletter, which she handed out at the entrance to the tube. The strategy paid off and Peirene still runs about 80 popup stores a year to attract new subscribers. Meike sees face to face contact as very important, not only to build but to maintain a community. She runs a literary salon from her own house. Since the house can only fit 50 people, the salons tend to sell out very quickly. But for Meike the fact that the salon is in her house epitomizes the nature of a reading community - which is 'the private and the public sphere colliding'. A community is something more

Alex Pheby discusses the freedoms he has as a tenured academic to pursue his writing without relying on it to make his living, a fact that he is aware most authors do not have the luxury to do.



intimate than a public. A community is something that you choose to participate in and belong to.

'Our books are sold through Amazon, Waterstones etc. but, what actually counts is our subscriptions. We now have subscribers up to the end of 2018. I've just finished curating the list for 2017. I haven't announced it yet and I've no idea what I'm going to publish in 2018... those people what they are doing is they're trusting the brand, Peirene, and they are very important to us. And how do we find them? We run pop up stores outside supermarkets, at farmers markets. We run about 80 pop up stores in a year. Our Peirene books are very strongly branded and beautiful and that's why our pop up stores work. People who never enter book stores come up to us... we do an annual literary newspaper... we distribute them twice a month at London tube stations... actually handing over the paper, looking people in the eye... and then you've got them, you hand them the paper and that's how we build communities, we're very hands on.' Meike Ziervogel



PUBLISHING MARKETS, COMMUNITIES & THE CREATION OF VALUE

BY ROSAMUND DAVIES

The contemporary publishing landscape is characterized by interconnected and shifting relationships between markets, communities and value. This essay explores some of these shifts, arguing that shared value creation is becoming increasingly central to business models within publishing, reshaping the cultural and economic landscape in which it operates and impacting on the publishers' role as curator and framer of content.

VALUE AND VALUES IN PUBLISHING

Within the traditional business model of the mainstream publishing industry, the main product or value proposition is the book. A book's value may be measured in different ways. As a cultural artefact, it may be evaluated by both publishers and book buyers in economic terms, according to price, or volume of sales, but also according to other factors, such as its aesthetic qualities, its cultural relevance, or the status of its author. These latter qualities, in addition to being valued for themselves, have the potential to enhance the cultural status of both publisher and reader and thus have significant symbolic value.

As consolidation has increased within the publishing industry and publishing companies and imprints have

become part of the portfolio of large corporations, another kind of value has increased in importance, shareholder value, i.e. the value that a business can deliver to its shareholders. An adherence to the prevailing equation of shareholder value with growth, i.e. higher profits and stock price year on year, has meant that large publishing houses have moved increasingly towards a 'blockbuster approach', in which editors are tasked with identifying, producing and promoting 'big books' - potential bestsellers which, if they deliver on their potential, will make a lot of money quickly - in preference to a more diverse catalogue and range of sales volumes across different titles, which produce slower growth (Thompson 2010, Bhaskar 2013). This prioritization of a book's capacity to generate high sales volume over other kinds of value has been particularly bad news for 'mid-range authors', whose books may sell, but not fast enough or in sufficient volume to generate the kind of value publishers are seeking. Such authors may find that their sales history makes them even less attractive to publishers than a new writer with no track record at all (Thompson 2010).

However, the risk adverse strategies of large publishers have opened up

ground into which small, independent publishers have expanded. These publishers rarely have shareholder profits as their main focus. They are typically microbusinesses, run by owner managers, whose central aim is not to make extensive profits. Of course they want their books to sell, but since their business model does not depend on the kind of high volume of sales sought by large publishers, their measures of success focus less exclusively on this aspect and often give more weight to the nebulous value of literary quality (Duffy 2015). This quality is assessed in the first instance by the publisher his or herself, but confirmed externally by literary awards.

The willingness of small presses to take risks on writers who are seen by the large publishing houses as too risky or niche means that books published by small presses have been frequently on the shortlist and indeed winners of the most prestigious literary awards in recent years. Such success usually produces a large spike in sales for the book concerned. The most striking recent example is perhaps the awarding of the Booker Prize two years in succession to novels published by small press Oneworld (*A Brief History of Seven Killings*, by Marlon James in 2015 and *The Sellout* by Paul Beatty in 2016). James's novel, which doubled sales from

the 3,000s to the 6,000s when it was placed on the prize long list (O'Brien & Shaffi 2015), has now sold over 36,000 copies, while Beatty's book reached the fiction top ten list in the weeks after the win (Flood 2016). These are not huge figures, compared to the bestsellers at the very top of the Nielsen charts. However, they do demonstrate that the cultural prestige value of the awards circuit converts fairly reliably into the monetary value of the marketplace. The book, however, is not the only carrier or creator of value in publishing. One might also consider the publishing brands themselves, as well as both writers and readers.

BRAND VALUE

Although large publishing houses are internationally recognized names, the size and wide range of their catalogues means that brand loyalty to the publishing house is unlikely to play much of a part in the decision of readers to read their books (Pheby 2016). Brand loyalty does however function at the level of the writer. This results in an increasing focus by corporate publishers on writers with 'platform', i.e. writers who have an existing audience or public profile and so are themselves an established brand (Thompson 2010, Duffy 2015).

The brand identity of small presses, on the other hand, often has a greater

1 | This is also the idea behind the various different imprints that may be housed within one larger publishing company

influence on reader choice than the author's name, since their authors are often new or unknown to readers. It is therefore vital to small presses to build and maintain this brand identity and most of them focus on a very specific sector of the marketplace, such as books in translation (see Peirene Press, *And Other Stories*, Pushkin Press), or they may simply build up a track record in curation that means readers trust their judgement¹. Most small presses also operate subscription schemes, which both facilitate and build on the brand loyalty of the readers, as discussed below. This affords them a level of consistent income along with the more unpredictable income provided by individual book sales. (Hamilton-Emerly 2016)

READERS AND VALUE

Small presses therefore tend to develop close connections with their readers that move beyond the transactional relationship between seller and buyer. Independent publisher, *And Other Stories*, credits the names of subscribers in its books, giving them the status of patron, rather than customer (Tobler 2016).

Peirene Press runs a regular salon, where readers can meet and talk to writers and to each other in an informal, social setting (Ziervogel 2016). Galley Beggar

Press invites readers to book launches (Jordison 2018). All these publishers also produce newsletters to maintain their connection with readers. Such publishers are creating a value proposition for these readers that goes beyond the book. Their readers have the opportunity for greater involvement and emotional investment and to become part of the publishing project itself. Likewise, the value of this relationship for publishers goes beyond the subscription fee: establishing and maintaining this strong connection with readers helps publishers themselves to feel part of a community of interest and that their books have social and cultural value (Jordison 2018).

The community that builds around small publishers in this way embodies a co-creation of value between publishers and readers, in which the value is both social and economic. As Benkler puts it,

'Human beings are, and always have been, diversely motivated beings. We act for material gain, but also for psychological well-being and gratification, and for social connectedness. There is nothing earth-shattering about this, except perhaps to some economists.' (Benkler 2006: 6)

Ten years after Benkler wrote his influential book *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedoms*, intangible assets

such as a brand's reputation and social capital (Bourdieu 1990) are in fact more routinely taken into account as part of its market value (Arvidsson 2013) and it is not only the small presses who rely on this kind of value creation. Mainstream publishers have also realized that they need to develop and capture co-created value. As reading and buying activity moves online and is influenced more and more significantly by informal networks of knowledge sharing, recommendation and community,

trade publishers can no longer rely on promoting books to traditional booksellers as their main marketing strategy.

The subscription model has been discussed within trade publishing, but it has not yet found wide support (Jones 2015).

However, in a marketplace in which only 20% of book discovery now happens in bookshops (Penn 2017) publishers have fully recognized that they need to diversify their sales and marketing activities to reach readers via a range of platforms and that they also need to find ways to leverage the large scale informal networks of influence that digital technologies have enabled (Bishop 2016). One obvious way in which

publishers do this is through publishing deals with media stars from digital and social platforms such as Wattpad (a social networking platform for writers and readers, on which the majority of reading material is produced by Wattpad users), Youtube, Facebook, or Twitter (Palmer 2016). These social media stars bring with them the valuable 'platform' of millions of loyal fans (Reid 2014), who see themselves as not so much an audience as a community.

'I think community is the key here, it's not actually an audience. I don't think we build audiences anymore, because audiences in the traditional sense is a passive experience. You sit in the auditorium, or you sit behind the television, or you sit in front of a book and you consume that in a linear way that the author or creator has expected you to consume it. With a community, they want to feel like they are participating. They want to feel involved in what you are doing and that they've had some contribution to it even if it's a very small part.'
(Russell 2016)

Social networks, however, constitute a very particular kind of community, in which the social status that comes with being highly networked has been made visible and measurable through the mechanics of 'follows', 'likes', 'votes', 'reads' etc. Thus reified, these marks of social standing function as a 'reputational currency' (Arvidsson 2013), turning the

social network into a marketplace that operates through the circulation of attention and approval. Such markets function slightly differently, however, from a market in which goods are exchanged for money. On the online social reading site Wattpad, for example, demand does not drive up market price. A story that is in high demand does not become more 'expensive' for readers to read. On the contrary, it makes each reader's vote for that story potentially more valuable to him or her, if they use it to 'pay' for reading the story, because it may be rewarded by the reciprocal attention of the writer of the story. This will, in its turn, attract the attention of that writer's wider network, bringing the voter more followers and readers of their own stories. The story thus functions as an effective hub for shared value creation by both reader and writer (Davies 2017).

This reputational capital, once accumulated, can be converted into financial gain in the form of advertising, sponsorship, publishing deals etc. with companies seeking guaranteed attention and reach for their content. However, since social media communities do not see the granting of attention as a one way process, but expect some kind of reciprocity, social media stars depend on their ability to successfully generate and integrate financial with social value through their ongoing relationship with their fans. In order to successfully engage with

these communities, publishers need to understand that the value of both book and author lies in maintaining this relationship and this necessitates particular development, publication and marketing strategies. For example, in order to appeal to his particular community, YouTube star Jamal Edwards modeled his book *Self Belief: The Vision on the structure of a videogame* (Mahey-Morgan 2013), while Wattpad star, Anna Todd, developed an app. to involve her fans in the development of her content (Dredge 2016).

Publishers also attempt to reach out to and foster reader communities by sponsoring and sending writers to literary festivals to engage with readers, as well as by developing relationships with book groups, schools and other established communities, offering them free books and other offers and opportunities. This has led to the emergence of the 'book group book' as a fiction genre, routinely cited by both agents and publishers. If the 'book group book' sits at one end of the scale and the direct involvement of readers - aka fans - in the development of the content of the book at the other, both are indications of the raised awareness amongst publishers of the value of establishing a relationship with readers and the power of communities to create value for readers, writers and publishers.

WRITERS AND VALUE

Although publishers increasingly expect

writers to come ready furnished with their own 'platform', it is also the case that writers look to publishers to provide them with this platform. A deal with a major publisher can provide a writer with major exposure, as can a deal with a small publisher if their book is shortlisted for an award. But, as publishers expect writers to do more for themselves, writers are also realizing that the publisher may be offering less added value than they used to, particularly as the profit share for traditionally published authors is much lower than for self-published authors. If they self-publish, authors can make more money from a lower volume of sales and this is one reason for the increase in popularity of self-publishing for writers. This was initially made feasible as a business model by Amazon's offer of a digital publishing and distribution platform in one. However, self-published authors now have a range of digital and print publishing and distribution options to choose from, including Kobo, which, like Amazon, offers an online book store, and publisher/distributors such as Draft2Digital and Ingram Spark.

The traditional role of the agent is also of less value to the self-published author, since they do not need their relationship with self-publishing distribution platforms to be brokered in the way that they might need an agent to broker a deal with a publisher. The rise of self-publishing as a viable route to market for writers has demonstrated that the writers who are most able to

build their own profile and community may correspondingly be those least inclined to see publishers or agents as a necessary part of the mix. Indeed such writers are often able to exploit the possibilities of new technologies more effectively than traditional publishers. Mark Dawson is a UK best-selling and self-published author and vocal advocate for self-publishing, whose breakthrough came with his successful exploitation of Facebook (Dawson, n.d.). He now runs courses to impart his Facebook marketing expertise to other writers. Meanwhile JK Rowling established Pottermore as a route to distributing her Harry Potter series in digital form and the platform continues to evolve (Jones 2016).

In addition to the rise of the 'authorpreneur', i.e. the author as business, as exemplified by Mark Dawson (McGregor 2015), digital technologies and platforms have seen the rise of another trend: collaborative approaches that bring together writers and readers in joint publishing projects through crowd-funding. As a variation on crowd-funding sites like Kickstarter and Patreon, which offer a platform to a wide variety of ventures, specialized publishing company Unbound finances development and publication through crowd-funding and shares profits 50/50 with authors. This will be covered in the final chapter

Although these new publishers operate

according to different models from those of the international corporations that dominate publishing, the success of their business, particularly in the early stages, tends to depend on another type of international corporation: digital platform businesses, like Amazon, Kobo and Wattpad and of course Facebook and other social media, which make the works of self-published authors visible and accessible to a wide audience. These digital platforms have built the shared creation of value (in which writers use their platforms to publish content and find readers, and the platforms depend on this content to attract more users) into a high growth business strategy. Their business model is to acquire a large volume of users first, creating value through the resulting network effect, and then to develop more and more efficient ways to extract value from the network (Balaram 2016).

Typically platforms monetize their users' activity by taking a percentage of sales and/or advertising and by data mining. In the case of Amazon, the original enabler of the explosion in self publishing, this has resulted in some controversial moves. As rival self publishing platforms entered the marketplace, Amazon introduced the KDP

Select programme, which offered higher royalties to self published authors, in return for exclusivity, and offered readers the Kindle Unlimited (KU) subscription programme, which makes KDP Select authors available to its subscribers on an unlimited basis. This put out some non KDP Select authors, since they are not included in the offer to KU subscribers. Meanwhile Amazon's subsequent decision to modify KU authors' payment terms to pay them per page read also met a mixed reaction (Anderson 2015). Amazon's interest is also increasingly focused on selling books from its own imprints (Kirkbride 2018), making it harder for both self published authors and books from other publishers to get noticed on its platform. This suggests that the ability of both of the latter to maintain their market access by building strong connections with readers will remain vital.

'We've got ourselves a bit stuck on this idea that a writer needs to be sitting in his ivory tower and is the sole creator and a demigod... I write, and I hope my authors do the same... they're writing, not because they know something to tell the world, but because they're on a journey and they're trying to figure something out... and then you want to hand it over to someone else and hear what they make of what you've written and that helps me to go on to my next journey. We seem to have lost that in the publishing industry.' (Ziervogel 2016).

In a marketplace of limited content, there may also be new ways for publishers' curatorial skills to create value for readers. Endeavour Press, for example, is a small independent publisher which hunts out and republishes for a new audience digital editions of backlist and midlist titles (no longer of interest to large publishers).

REFRAMING PUBLISHING?

It might be, however, that the future development of publishing depends on a reformulation of its value proposition away from the book per se, towards a more varied approach to the framing of content (Bhaskar 2013). Drawing on Goffman's use of the term, Bhaskar defines the 'frame' within publishing as comprising a wide range of elements, including printing and distribution technologies, design, marketing strategies, economic and symbolic value, brought together in a particular configuration. Publishers' choices and actions in how they combine such elements to frame content determine the value that can be extracted from and added to it for a particular audience. The book in its current form is the dominant example of such a frame. However, as part of the commissioning process of any book, publishers already consider the potential value of related rights, such as film or television adaptation, which, in addition to rights income, also promote book sales: demonstrating that thinking beyond the book is already a well established practice. Nevertheless,

as discussed in the previous chapter, the potential for transmedia approaches to storytelling, which encourage immersive and long term engagement with story worlds across different media, and other more 'mobile' forms of content and reading could be much further exploited by publishers.

Whatever the ways in which content might, in the future, be framed and reframed differently, it seems likely that shared value creation will become increasingly important to this process. In a publishing landscape of infinite content, reader attention is the vital currency that publishers need to access and convert into monetary value. A powerful way to achieve this conversion is to reward such attention with an experience of belonging and validation. This means approaching the relationship with readers differently. A range of relationships is possible and necessary, depending on the writers, the work and the audience. Perhaps one key to understanding this relationship is to think of it as a conversation.

As networked digital technologies make visible the fact that audiences not only want to own content but also want to share it with others in order both to build relationships and to participate in collective identities, short form and/or serialized content, which can be easily shared, discussed, and indeed contributed to and modified by readers, may also come to the fore. Fan fiction

offers a model here. In these contexts, the conversation does not need to be led or even initiated or by the writer or publisher, but happens between reading community members across the community, meaning that it can happen at scale (Russell 2016)

At such a scale, in fact the collective identity is not so much a community as a public. These kinds of consumer publics, while constituting valuable intangible assets for the brands around which they gather, also exert considerable power over that brand (Arvidsson 2013) and, while they can significantly 'magnify its signal' (Kennedy 2016), they can equally take the conversation in unanticipated and unwelcome directions (Henry 2016). The shift towards shared valued creation thus opens up the possibility for the ethical and social concerns of consumer publics to have increased influence on the commercial decisions made by companies (Arvidsson 2013, Henry 2016, Balaram 2016). However, the other side of the coin is that the commercial decisions made by businesses in order to maximize their commercial exploitation of this co-created value, can also greatly impact the social and personal lives of their users, and indeed the business models of those who are also using their platforms as a marketplace. The Amazon incidences cited above are one example of this, the recent Facebook 'fake news' controversies another.

In a world economy dominated by a

neo-liberal version of market capitalism, businesses and their customers in all sectors of the economy are grappling in different ways with new kinds of relationships that mix commercial transactions with social exchange and blend public and private interactions. This is eroding the traditional separation between commodity and gift economies in ways that can lead to misunderstanding, breakdown of trust and other ethical concerns, but may also offer some potential alternatives to the marketization of all aspects of society that has already taken place and continues to expand (Jenkins 2013, Davies 2017).

The networked information economy constitutes a 'technological-economic feasibility space' (Benkler 2006: 31) within which the market value of communities continues to rise, in tandem with a renewed interest in and understanding of the value of non-market activities to society in general. This is a delicate balance to maintain. While it may be commercial logic that drives mainstream publishing towards a business model of shared value creation, it is to be hoped that such developments will not crowd out alternative and smaller publishers, who have currently found a new space in which to operate, where it is not only market values that are in play. It would be preferable, and certainly possible if, in parallel to the commercial pivot towards communities as tools of marketing and revenue generation, their

renewed value also made it possible for collaborative approaches to production and promotion to thrive; sustaining alternative publishing practices and giving them a stronger market and cultural presence.

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PANEL 3 | THE WRITER AS CATALYST & COLLABORATOR HOW DO WRITERS COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS AND WHAT RESULTS FROM THESE COLLABORATIONS? 27/04/2016

PANELISTS:

ANNIE HOLMES, WRITER, CO-AUTHOR OF 'BREACH'

OLUMIDE POPOOLA, WRITER, CO-AUTHOR OF 'BREACH'

JEAN-PAUL FLINTOFF, WRITER, COACH, AUTHOR OF 'HOW TO CHANGE THE WORLD' AND 'WHAT IF THE QUEEN SHOULD DIE?'

SARAH HAYNES, HEAD OF MEDIA PRODUCTION AT THE LIVERPOOL SCREEN SCHOOL, JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY, CREATOR OF 'THE BUTTON JAR' & 'THE MEMORY STORE'

MAYA CHOWDHRY, POET & INTERACTIVE ARTIST, CO-CREATOR OF 'TALES FROM THE TOWPATH' AND 'RIPPLE'

ANNIE HOLMES & OLUMIDE POPOOLA

Olumide and Annie collaborated as writers on the book *Breach*, published in 2015. It is a short story collection, which tells the story of the refugee crisis through six voices based on interviews with residents of the (now defunct) refugee camp in Calais (the 'Jungle'). The book was thus also a collaboration between them and the people who told the writers their stories – where they had come from, how they had arrived at the camp and what their lives were like now. Olumide's and Annie's intention was not however to produce direct retellings of the stories of the people they had met, but to use them as a starting point for fiction. By doing so they wanted to offer a different perspective to that provided by journalistic accounts and so to provoke different ideas and debates to those that had become perhaps over familiar from the almost daily media reports that were in circulation at the time.

All the people the writers interviewed were informed that it was a fiction project and signed a release form on that basis, knowing that their story would most likely not appear. The resulting short stories amalgamate and rework the actual experiences recounted by the people they met, rearranging them to create effective plot points and fulfill other narrative

exigencies. The stories are also a result of what Annie and Olumide themselves experienced through spending time in the camp, what they thought and talked about. Olumide describes this process of adding to, reworking and, in particular, cutting the real life stories of people she had come to know well as necessary, but difficult. However, in her experience, the important thing to consider in any project is always what everyone involved is getting out of it. Her experience in the camp, as everywhere, was that people want above all to be seen and heard by other people, they want their experience to be recognised and that the face to face human connection of talking to her and Annie may be more important to them than their lives appearing verbatim in a book.

In Annie's view, the process they adopted was a particular version of what is always the writer's process. Writers always

'I think as human beings we like to be seen and heard and of course these are very traumatic stories... you try to see them, as a way of acknowledging their humanity and then you go away and you start to make a story that's based on plot points... and it's quite heartbreaking...'
Olumide Popoola

Annie Holmes and Olumide Popoola explain their process of collaboration and engagement with refugees in Calais.



take from reality, 'anyone who writes steals from everyone'. When working with the refugees in Calais, the borrowing from real life was more extensive and the responsibility was greater, but she does not see it as a question of whether you should do it, so much as of how you do it and how you manage the collaboration. She added that the initial interview was not necessarily the end of the connection. Some of the people they interviewed they couldn't find again, but they have kept in touch with several of them and it has become a process and a dialogue rather than a one off interview. The refugees have read drafts of the short stories and then fed back to the writers their reactions, they've discussed them as they've taken shape. She also made the point that, once people have left the camp, they don't necessarily want to dwell on or be identified with those moments in their lives. The book is aimed at creating understanding and provoking debate amongst people who have no experience of being a refugee and haven't visited the camps, to bring that experience to them, rather than to the refugees themselves.

On the other hand, the human interaction and friendships between the writers and the people they met in the camps has endured and is still a part of their lives. They are still in touch and some of them have successfully migrated to Britain. As well as the book itself, these friendships are another outcome of the project, which is just as important.

'The friendship and what we've built is something, it's personal and I think the account of what people in general have gone through matters to the people we spoke to, but it means something different to all of us' Annie Holmes

JEAN-PAUL FLINTOFF

It was initially Jean-Paul's interest in theatrical improvisation that inspired him to involve collaborators in the creation of his novel about Queen Anne, *What If The Queen Should Die?* Jean-Paul found improvisation to be a positive creative

process, one that allows one to suspend one's critical faculties and experiment freely, participating in a supportive and stimulating collective experience. He thought improvising around some of the scenes from the novel could be helpful in developing the story and so, despite his fear that nobody would be interested, eventually plucked up his courage to ask some actors if they wanted to participate in a workshop doing just that. To his surprise, the response was very enthusiastic. As keen improvisers, they were interested in the experience and accepted his offer of free food and the chance to 'play'.

'it's relaxing not to have to be the one presiding genius.' Jean-Paul Flintoff

The results contributed greatly to his final draft of the book. To recognize the contribution of the workshop participants to the story, he used the faces of all the improvisers on the different portraits of Queen Anne that are featured in the book. This experience confirmed Jean-Paul in the view that 'you just have to ask.'

Based on the success of the improvisation workshop, he decided to crowd fund the publishing of the book through the publishing company Unbound, which uses crowd funding as part of its revenue model. In addition to the book itself, which



Jean-Paul Flintoff explains how working with others through workshops and improvisation created a new way of writing for him.

is usually the bottom rung reward for finance contributions, crowd funding involves creating additional 'rewards' for people to pay for. He had to think up other things that people might want to do, such as offering potential backers improvisation or coaching sessions, in return for more substantial finance. However he stressed that he wanted to crowd fund the book not only because he wanted people's money, but also because he wanted to involve more people in the process of producing the book. He wanted to engage the collective genius of the people who were backing him, in the same way that the improvisation workshop had done. He sent out a message to his 200 backers, asking if anyone would like to read the book and give him feedback, telling him 1) what they liked, and 2) what they would like even more. He ended up with a group of 25 people, to whom he sent the draft book to read with a deadline for a month for providing feedback. He got 48 quotes for the back of the book and also got comments, which prompted him to make some changes and additions to the book.

Jean-Paul made the point that in collaborations it is important to establish trust and also for all participants to know that they can say no. He greatly enjoys the experience of being part of a collective endeavour, but, like Olumide, he stresses that it is important for everyone to get something out of it. However, he also adds that it is not always possible to define what this will be at the start. In his view the important thing is to make the offer, to ask if people want to get involved and then let them decide why they might do it and what they might get out of it. However, in trying to provide a context for this to happen, he says he has also tried to follow the example of the editor of a newspaper he used to work for, who likened his job as editor to 'creating a party that people want to come to'.

SARAH HAYNES

Sarah Haynes is particularly interested in co-writing and in the question of whether it is possible for people to have creative experiences that involve reading and writing at the same



Sarah Haynes describes the co-writing projects she is currently engaged with and the ability to work with others through the internet.

time. She has created two digital narrative spaces, *The Button Jar* and *The Memory Store*, in which her approach is to create a structure and some kind of story ‘stub’ and then to invite people to contribute to expand and develop the story.

The Button Jar is a website that provides readers with a page of buttons, to which people can attach stories (each one involving the button in some way). In setting up the project, Sarah encouraged people to read each others’ stories and to create hyperlinks to other stories where there was some kind of connection, but in practice she found that people didn’t do this very much. They mainly seemed interested in putting their own stories into the jar, rather than connecting to other people’s. They seemed to want to write, rather than read. Sarah hopes to engage participants more fully in a process of

‘It’s very much about giving people an experience, very different to traditional media where people know how to access the story in a book... an experience that maybe needs a bit more directing, a bit more coercion or a little bit more leading.’

Sarah Haynes

both reading and writing in her new work *The Memory Store*. This latest work has a central core story, which writers will be invited to expand. She hopes in this way to encourage them to read each others' work, as well as to write their own stories. *The Memory Store* is set in a fictional Liverpool of the future. The main thread of the work, which Sarah has written herself, is a detective story, the investigation of a missing person. The central character, a 'pattern surveillance officer' is trying to piece together what happened from the memories in the memory store, in order to solve the case. Other writers will contribute memories to the store. Sarah is taking some of the same approaches she used in *The Button Jar*. She is creating specific items for which people can generate content, as she has found this to be attractive to writers, who are inspired to write by a specific image or artefact. Furthermore, the concept of the memory store, like the button jar, is designed to provide an overall receptacle for the stories that makes sense of them as a story universe. In order to manage the overall coherence of the content, but still allow writers the freedom to invent and imagine what a future Liverpool might be like, she is also using the device of 'verification ratings'. When people submit content they will get a verification rating, which might be 10% or 90%. This allows for more than one story to be attached to each item and she hopes that this will also allow the co-existence of potentially

*Sarah Haynes
explains her latest
hybrid media project
'The Memory Store.'*



conflicting visions of the story universe, which she sees as one of the potential problems of co-writing. Co-writing, like improvisation, requires all involved to say 'yes' rather than 'no' to the contributions of other participants and to build on them in order to create a collective narrative. However, while this is a well established technique in improvisation, Sarah's experience is that, if people are co-writing a story and dissonances occur between what they read in other people's stories and their own, this can put writers off. Sarah hopes that the verification rating system will mitigate this. Sarah cites Jane McDonnigal's term 'organised serendipity' to describe what she is aiming at. She sees the role of the author in this kind of work as something like that of a conductor: orchestrating and directing content and attention.

It follows, therefore, that it is necessary to do some work to lead people to these kinds of stories and guide them as to how to get involved. For *The Button Jar* Sarah gave a talk and a demonstration at a literature festival in Liverpool and also gave out postcards so that they had the link. She found that the story contributions would go in waves. Someone would contribute and then they'd show their friends or writing class and that would produce a few more contributions, then a gap, then the same thing would happen again – it went in batches.

When it came to writers contributing content, Sarah didn't want people to just be able to upload content, as this would inevitably result in some inappropriate material, so the process was that people would find a button that was free, write a poem or a story that related to it in some way and email it to Sarah to upload. One of the things that she found was that when she emailed people back to suggest some edits or additions, she had a number of interesting conversations with people about their stories. This became a much more important part of the project than she had anticipated originally, as did the responsibility she felt towards these other writers' stories. People would email asking her to change the alignment or spacing and she felt she had to do it immediately, because it was other peoples' work that

she was presenting to the public. One of the things that *The Button Jar* taught her was that there is a great responsibility in working with other peoples' content and a need to treat it with respect.

MAYA CHOWDHRY

Maya's is interested in the capacity for interactive work to be a catalyst for thought and action. Her interactive work, *Tales from the Towpath*, used geocaching and augmented reality to involve people in a site specific story about Manchester's waterways, encouraging them to think about how we use water. The story was dispersed around the city and people needed to travel around the city to discover the different episodes of the story. Some episodes were contained in geocaches. These told the story of Manchester waterways in the past. Others, telling the story of what might happen in the future, were in the form of augmented reality content that could be accessed using a mobile phone application to unlock content from stickers posted around the city. The work featured in the Manchester Literary Festival, where it culminated in a live performance on a canal boat, which told a story set in the present. During the festival, the project creators also used projections onto water to make people aware of and encourage them to seek out what was a very hidden story.



Maya Chowdhry explains her process as writer and artist and how working with others creates new and unique pieces

Maya is interested in giving readers and viewers ‘the space to occupy the work themselves’ and sees the writer as ‘a sign-writer illuminating the way, or a compass showing that there are many directions’. During the Manchester Literary festival she ran some guided tours to lead people through the story. She took on the character of the tour guide to help people along and ask helpful questions and prompts and found that the literary audience, in particular, wanted extensive guidance, as they were not used to this kind of interactive experience and unsure how to approach it. However, the project also tapped into the geocaching and the canal boat communities. Both communities, for different reasons, were keen to be involved and required less guidance and support. Not only are geocachers very familiar with the process of seeking out hidden content, but they also have very established networks of communication set up already. They log their finds and this encourages others to seek them out.

‘In certain types of interactive work, people take an action and it might lead to activating people politically, a lot of my work is political.’ Maya Chowdhry

Maya also collaborated with another poet and artist to make *Ripple*, three artist’s book sculptures that are augmented with audio in the form of poetry in Urdu and in English. The work addresses the subject of climate change and aims to stimulate thought and debate. Maya says that different cohorts of participants in this kind of interactive experience will be looking for different things in different contexts (e.g in a gallery compared to out in the city). However, they may not necessarily know in advance what this will be, as they may not have tried anything like it before. Therefore, like Jean-Paul, she thinks that rather than assigning a role to participants in advance it may be necessary to allow them to find it through their participation of the project. These new forms of storytelling are by their nature experimental and exploratory. Creator and audience are going on a journey together.

WRITING & THE ETHICS OF COLLABORATION

BY ROSAMUND DAVIES

Collaboration in writing has a long history. Writers have always depended morally, creatively and materially on family, friends and lovers to support them in their endeavours. From the family collaborations of William & Dorothy Wordsworth, the Brontë sisters, or Percy Bysshe & Mary Shelley, to wider ranging associations of individuals, such as the Bloomsbury group, or movements such as the Harlem Renaissance, these connections have been essential to writers' success. Writers also collaborate with other professionals: prose writers work with agents and editors, screenwriters take notes from producers, script editors, directors, actors, distributors and financiers. And of course writers need readers. Dickens was acutely aware of his readers, writing for them in installments, and going on frequent public reading tours.

So it was not digital technologies that made writing an interactive and collaborative phenomenon. However, digital technologies have made such collaborative processes more visible and more scalable in contemporary culture as public or semi-public online networks of interaction and collaboration reach far beyond family, friends and close professional associates. Meanwhile contemporary cultural practices, such as

social media and fan fiction, have made online writing and reading feel more like a back and forth conversation than a one way process of production (by the writer) and reception (by the reader) (Thomas 2011, Jenkins 2013). On social reading and writing sites, such as Wattpad, which commands a 65 million strong global user base (Wattpad, 2016a) writers actively engage readers in the development of their work, while new business models, such as crowdfunding, also bring many active collaborators besides the writer into the writing process.

These innovations of writing in a digital era bring to the fore questions about how such interactive and collaborative processes might characterize writing in general and also about the ethics that govern them.

The use of the term 'ethics' here denotes the particular set of principles that guides the behaviour of people who are engaged in a collaborative endeavour; which determines what they consider to be the right (and, by implication, wrong) way to collaborate and what they understand to be the rights and responsibilities of those involved. These ethics include both explicit and tacit rules of engagement.

In this chapter I will analyse and discuss a range of examples of collaboration within the field of writing, attempting to identify the ethics that govern them and highlighting similarities and differences between them. I will explore how the established ethics of collaboration in writing and publishing relate to writing and collaboration in digital culture and seek to establish some normative principles that might have a general application for all forms of collaboration within the field of writing.

PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIONS

The role of the professional editor in the creative process is both important and variable. The term ‘editor’ encompasses the tasks of commissioning, managing and promoting a book (commissioning editor); revising, restructuring and otherwise shaping and refining the final content of a book (structural editing), and detailed editing of presentation in such areas as spelling, grammar, style, checking facts, dates, timelines etc. along with other aspects of consistency and accuracy (copy editing). In any particular publishing project, the term ‘editor’ may denote one, two or all three of these roles (Blake 1999). In the contemporary context of a consolidated publishing industry (see previous chapter), the editor’s role often focuses on commissioning. Their key responsibility is to sign the right talent, identifying and promoting potential bestsellers. In this context, the creative participation of agents has become more

important. In 21st century publishing, the agent has increasingly moved into territory that was once largely the domain of the publisher. Not only do they act as an initial talent scout for previously unrecognized talent, they may also work extensively with the writer editorially, before submitting work to mainstream trade publishers (Thompson 2012).

Despite these different potential axes of collaboration between writer, agent and publisher, such collaborations involve the same basic understanding. Each collaborator has a clearly defined stake in the final output of the collaboration. The agent will claim his or her percentage from the writer’s income, the editor at a publishing house is licensed to exploit the writer’s copyright. In each case, a contract lays out the terms and conditions. It is, furthermore, standard practice in trade publishing, whether or not the editor and/or agent have made creative contributions to the completed work (even to the extent of co-writing the book) that the writer be explicitly identified as sole author of the work (Athill 2000).

These well established ground rules and practices do not mean, however, that the ethics of this process are entirely unproblematic or transparent. Various circumstances, from the historical moment to more individual contingent factors, mean that power relations will always be uneven and shifting between these different parties and the agreed ethics of their collaborations

will shift accordingly. In the 1970s, for example, established practices and standard contractual terms began to be challenged as unfair and untenable by a new kind of agent, focused on getting a better deal for writers. The crucial change here was that agents no longer saw their moral imperative as being to represent the interests of both parties, acting as ‘intermediaries, mediating between author and publisher’, as had traditionally been their role. Instead they saw the writer as the ‘star’ and themselves as ‘dedicated advocates’ for the author, acting exclusively in the latter’s interests (Thompson 2012: 65). The terms of collaboration between writers, agents and publishers changed accordingly. More recently, the development of digital platforms led again to a debate between agents (on behalf of writers) and publishers, as to who owned the additional rights to publish on these hitherto non-existent platforms and what was a fair division of the revenue that came from their exploitation (Davies & Sigthorsson 2013).

In the contemporary publishing landscape, publishers and authors have engaged in various battles with Amazon over pricing (Ellis-Peterson 2014, Anderson 2015), while independent (self-published) authors challenge the ethics behind the transfer of the majority of profit from sales to the publisher, as well as the author’s lack of control in the process (Ross n.d). Different business

models thus invoke and necessitate different understandings of the ethics that should underpin the business of publishing.

UNOFFICIAL COLLABORATORS - FRIENDS AND FAMILY

There are several well-known and documented examples of sisters and wives acting as unofficial assistants and editors to male writers, notably Dorothy Wordsworth (Wordsworth 2002) and Mary Shelley (Gordon 2015). Indeed, according to Gordon (2015), the work Mary Shelley did in editing and publishing her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley’s work posthumously was significant in making him the household name he has now become. Historical examples of support given to female writers by men also involve editorial input but rarely, it seems, administrative assistance. Men have more often helped women and indeed other male writers through the exercise of professional status, public profile and influence. Although Mary Shelley’s mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, relied on her own talent and strength of character to forge a career writing about political and social issues – seen at the time as properly the sole territory of male writers – she was also supported in this by a series of male friends and acquaintances, who had connections and influence in this world, among them her husband William Godwin (Gordon 2015).

Unfortunately, Wollstonecraft found

that, despite Godwin's public support for her work and for the principles of sexual equality, he was in practice unwilling to take on his share of childcare and other domestic work to allow her time to write (Gordon 2015). She was not alone in experiencing the nitty gritty of romantic entanglements and domestic arrangements to be bound up with professional struggles in complex and conflicting ways. The loves, lives and work of writers are intertwined with those of others and this can be crucial in determining the success or failure of a writing endeavour.

The writing career of Anaïs Nin, whose diaries record the overlaps between her numerous romantic, sexual and professional relationships, is a particularly public and notorious example of the ways in which professional and private relationships mutually construct each other and can be both highly productive and severely restrictive in a writer's career (Nin 1995, Bair 1995, John-Steiner, 2000).

Money is one of the factors that can impact on such relationships, where the writer may rely on a spouse, lover or other family members for financial support. For female writers in particular, financial dependency has made it difficult to carve out time and space for writing, amidst the many other duties with which their lives are charged. Virginia Woolf persuasively argued the importance of financial independence to female

writers' success (Woolf 1977). However, it is also true that the financial security of marriage has provided middle and upper class women with the material support to write. Nin, married to the banker Hugo Guiler, is a case in point here (Nin 1995, Bair 1995). Nin relied on Hugo's money, not only to support her own writing career, but also to support her lover, Henry Miller, in the early stages of his career. Meanwhile their friend Lawrence Durrell was supported by his wife Nancy Myers (Bair 1995), demonstrating that writers of both sexes may rely on financial support from spouses and lovers in order to produce work.

It is, of course, not only such significant others who may take on the role of patron to the impecunious writer. Henry Miller had other patrons (Bair 1995) and patronage has been practised by both men and women of means, offering them the reward of influence and status in return for their financial support, as well as a sense of sharing in the creative process and making a contribution to culture and society. Lady Ottoline Morrell is a famous example from the nineteenth century, providing support to D.H Lawrence, T. S Eliot, Lytton Strachey and other members of the Bloomsbury Group and making herself the centre of 'a social environment saturated with bohemian glamour' (Godsen-Hood 2016).

Friendship between equals, without the attending complications of sex or

money might seem a less loaded mode of interaction for writers and certainly has also played a significant role in their personal and professional development. Charlotte Brontë's friendship with fellow writer Mary Taylor, who she first met in her teens, both sustained and challenged her writing in equal measure (Midorikawa & Sweeney 2017). However, friendship, like any other relationship, has many layers. The one between Woolf and Mansfield, for example, while built on mutual admiration and creatively stimulating for both, was also charged with professional jealousy and even suspicions of the appropriation of ideas (Midorikawa & Sweeney 2017). This was complicated by the fact that some of Mansfield's work was published by the press owned by Woolf and her husband, Hogarth Press.

Friendships between publishers and writers may be common and often highly beneficial to both, but they can also become problematic. While the professional aspect of the relationship may be underpinned by a contract that lays out the benefits, rights and duties of each, no such clear cut legal framework governs the personal. The clash between the two can create conflicts of interest that are hard to resolve (Athill 2000).

In the myriad of different cases in which the support and collaboration provided to the writer develops partly or wholly as an extension of a personal relationship, the ethics of the collaboration remain

tacit and implicit. Its rules are both unique and improvised between participants and substantially determined by the wider social assumptions and power relations of the time, relating to gender, class etc. – what should a sister do for a brother, a wife for a husband, a lover for his or her beloved, one friend for another? Where the personal and professional intermingle, the mismatch between personal and business codes of behaviour may produce confusion, conflict or breaches of trust.

The aim here is not to suggest that such situations of ambiguity and complexity can or should be avoided. It is rather to stress the importance of the following points. First, how commonly the process of writing, most often represented as the product of one sole author, is characterized by these kinds of collaborations, without which the final written work would not have come to be. Second, that an honest and nuanced recognition is necessary, in the sphere of writing as in other spheres, of the power and influence of social relationships and connections in the pursuit of professional goals and the problems and opportunities that they present (Bourdieu 1990, Gill 2007, Grugulis & Stoyonova 2012, de Waal 2017).

PEER NETWORKS

Peer networks play an important role in helping writers develop social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1990) through connections with other writers. The

recognition and support of peers tends to instill in writers the confidence to persevere and encourages them to take more risks than when they are working alone (John-Steiner 2000). It is a process that novelist Ireosen Okojie describes as ‘building a structure around myself’ (Okojie 2017).

The term ‘network’ is a fairly contemporary one, however, the formation and growth of artistic circles in particular places have long provided vital moral and material support, as well as creative stimulation to writers, who have gravitated towards such circles, further increasing their appeal and influence. In the early 20th century, for example, Paris became an established centre for writers of many nationalities, including Anglophone writers, such as Ernest Hemingway, Ford Maddox Ford and James Joyce, who lived, worked and socialized there between the two world wars.

Such writers’ networks may develop a particular collective identity or a common theory and practice of creative work, usually combined with a relationship to the wider culture that is either oppositional (uniting its adherents in a critique of established institutions), or alternative (providing its adherents with facilities for production or publication of work that is excluded from the mainstream) (Williams 1981: 70). Such formations are often referred to as movements, achieving public

recognition of their work partly or chiefly through this group identity (Williams 1981). In this category, we might include the Romantic poets of the early 19th century, the Harlem Renaissance of the early 20th century or the Beat poets of the mid 20th century.

In addition to such well known movements, however, many large and small scale informal groupings and associations of writers have also existed and continue to exist, which provide an important context of mutual support, interaction and development for writers, without having a particular creative, political or other agenda. Such groups might form through existing friendships, or in the past they might have advertised for members in libraries. Now they also proliferate on the networking site, Meetup.com, which facilitates the membership and arrangement of millions of groups and events worldwide, bringing together online people who share a common interest, so that they can meet in person.

What ethics govern such peer networks and associations? When formed through existing personal connections, they tend to be governed by similar tacit interpersonal ethics to those discussed with regard to collaboration between family and friends. Where they are temporary formations around the nexus of particular events, e.g. meeting and discussing with other writers or publishing professionals at talks, book

launches, festivals etc. or other social events, they are likely to be governed by the same ethical principles that govern other kinds of public association and interaction, which are again tacit, non explicit, reliant on the shared social experience and norms of the actors involved.

However, if set up more intentionally, as a vehicle for forging connections between previous strangers, a particular structure of participation needs to be determined by the conveners in advance. They need to decide on the aim of the group, the activities it will engage in, when and how often it will meet and where. This is the type of information that writers groups on Meetup.com state in their group description, allowing potential members to decide whether they should join the group. As a group becomes more established, further rules tend to ensue. The group might become more picky about who can and cannot join, about the kind of people they are looking for, the maximum number of members they are prepared to admit.

However, according to the organisers of one local writers' group that was studied as part of this research, more detailed rules of membership and engagement (e.g. level of experience required; minimum time commitment required; appropriate modes for giving each other feedback and further etiquettes of interaction; the importance of punctuality), were not, in

fact, established in advance when the group was set up, but rather remained implicit within the group. The view of the founders of the group, who had all previously participated in other creative writing groups, was that they had led by example to encourage certain behaviours and expectations and so established the tacit norms of a culture to which new members assimilated.

Nevertheless, as writers' groups grow and develop, it is often necessary for them to make certain more explicit ethical decisions with regard to the group's structure and finance. Some contemporary writers' groups are run as for-profit ventures for their organisers and may have several thousand members (e.g London Writers' Café). Members are charged to attend events – which may often include professional speakers or the chance to pitch to agents. Other, often smaller, groups remain gatherings of peers that are resolutely not for profit ventures. Even if they charge for events, the revenue is ploughed back into the activities of the group and not taken as profit by the organisers (Local Writers' Group 2016). These two approaches represent distinct ethical choices. This is not to say that one is ethical and the other not, but rather that the ethical framework for one is provided by the ethics of business, the other by the moral codes of social interaction. However, choices and structures change over time and the pattern of initially informal groupings developing into

more formally constituted organisations or outputs, such as clubs, journals or presses is a common one (Williams 1981). In such ventures, there is, just as in the collaborations between individuals discussed above, a need to manage the ensuing tensions between the personal and professional ethics that apply simultaneously.

WRITING, COLLABORATION AND DIGITAL CULTURE

Compared to the largely face to face social situations discussed so far, when it comes to writing and collaboration that occur entirely via a digital platform, there are often much clearer structures and rules in place to organize interaction and exchange between collaborators, to clarify the duties and responsibilities involved and provide a clear reward structure. Wattpad provides clear instructions to users that they are expected to demonstrate commitment to the activity of reading and commentary on the work of others. The joining instructions it provides explain that users need to read, vote and comment on other people's work, participate and comment in members clubs and build their social network, if they want to get readers for their own stories (Wattpad 2016b, Wattpad 2016c).

Within these structures, Wattpad users, the majority of whom are teenage girls (Davies 2017), have found a safe and inspiring space, enabling them to participate in an 'intimate public'

(Berlant 2008) through writing, but also through reading and commenting on the work of others (Kirci 2014). Many Wattpaders discover the site through reading and writing fan fiction, which makes up a large volume of content on the site. The creation of fan fiction has been recognized as a way for young women to 'narratively experiment with gender roles, primarily by casting young females as protagonists, and to participate in ongoing exchanges related to themes and concerns from their lives' (Black 2008, p. 50). In this context, collaboration through writing is very closely tied up with social and personal development and Wattpad's rules of engagement offer an ethical framework within which this can take place.

Another form of collaboration on writing projects is that facilitated by crowdfunding platforms. Crowdfunding might be understood as a contemporary kind of patronage (Davies & Sigthorsson 2013). In this funding model, the one wealthy patron is replaced by hundreds of ordinary people with a small amount of spare cash, time and attention. They may not be connected into elite networks of power and influence, but they are connected into networks of peers and can spread the word about a project through these networks.

Fundraisers on crowdfunding sites adhere to an explicit and structured set of motivations and rewards for contributors – although they may often

rely on family and friends to get the ball rolling, they will also try to draw in a wider range of backers to whom they need to clearly present the potential benefits of their involvement. The project is a commercial transaction as well as a call to support a worthy cause. Each project sets out its particular terms in advance: potential contributors are offered a scale of pledge levels, ranging from around \$1 or £1 or €1 etc. upwards. In the context of publishing, lower pledges might typically secure an online copy of the publication, a slightly higher one a printed copy, with subsequent levels offering additional rewards, perhaps a limited edition print of a visual from the publication, or free gifts that the project has obtained through other sponsors. The Kickstarter campaign for a new womens' magazine, *Ash*, for example, offered a range of prizes including an organic tampon subscription, fashion items, restaurant vouchers and life coach sessions (Kickstarter 2018).

'Always when you're doing a kickstarter have an entry level for nothing more than a warm, fuzzy feeling, so for £1, you don't get anything, but you'll be included on the update list... that way, all those people will get your updates, all the way through the process. So, as it nears the end of the process... when you've finished making the product and delivered it, they'll get the updates and they could very well be tempted to go up a level and decide to purchase the book.' (Russell 2016)

ETHICAL COMPLEXITIES

Although clear parameters are provided in the types of digital collaborations discussed above, they are nevertheless still potentially fraught with ethical ambiguity. In the case of crowdfunding, although the material rewards are defined in advance and it is clear what people are paying for, they are often paying over the odds for these rewards. A backer might pay £10 or £20 in advance for an e-book copy of a novel that will sell for £2.99 when published. This could result in resentment, if understood as purely a market transaction. However, the experience of crowdfunding is more than that. As poet and interactive artist, Maya Chowdhry, comments, when she backs a campaign it's for the satisfaction of helping into being a project that she values, rather than for the official reward (Chowdhry 2016). Indeed, this satisfaction is often explicitly promoted as part of the reward. In the *Ash* campaign, all funders, from lowest to highest levels have included as part of the reward the fact that their 'name will be printed inside [issue one of the magazine] on a dedicated 'thank you' page' (Kickstarter 2018). Crowdfunders of panelist Jean-Paul Flintoff's book *What If The Queen Should Die?* (2016a) went much further in their involvement with the

project. After the initial crowdfunding campaign was over, he remained in contact with his funders through newsletters, video update and social media and involved a small self-selected group of them in reading early drafts of the novel and inputting ideas for how to develop it (Flintoff 2016b).

In common with their historic predecessors, 21st century crowdfunder patrons are not only paying for the product, but for the pleasures of influence, social connection and the sense of being part of something important and worthwhile. The resulting relationship is complicated. Unlike the well established relationships between writers, agents and editors, in these new forms of collaboration, the types of contribution collaborators might make and the types of value they might create for themselves and for others through this collaboration are varied and cannot necessarily be entirely determined in advance or indeed by the initiator of the project. Their mutual cooperation, like the personal relationships that writers have always been involved in, is 'built from the ground up' (Sennett 2012).

This also raises questions with regard to the value that each collaborator is officially credited with having created as part of any particular work. How direct should and can the relationship be between this official value and the value that they seek to draw from it?

Is it more important to crowdfunders to be credited as patrons or creative contributors and what is the relative value of these compared to any material reward they might have officially paid for?

The case of Wattpad is slightly different and potentially even more challenging.

'If everyone's allowed to choose and everyone's allowed to make their own meaning out of the thing, then everyone's happy.' (Flintoff 2016)

Having established its extensive user base, Wattpad is following YouTube's example in developing partnerships with publishers and advertisers to commercially license content produced by its writers and to employ their talents for the purpose of content marketing for brands across the 40 million strong user base (Nawotka, 2015). It is selling access to its users' collaborative networks, allowing its commercial partners to harvest some of the financial value of the social capital that its users have created through their interactions with each other. As discussed in the previous chapter, the ethical question here, with Wattpad as with other social media platforms, is whether this monetization of its community compromises the integrity of that community. Is there compatibility between the existing ethical codes that govern advertising and those that Wattpad has established to govern its relationship with its users and their relationship with each other?

Much of what is new, in the context of

writing, collaboration and digital culture, is not so much the issues themselves,

'It's a responsibility and it's also to acknowledge that you're taking something and then owning it in a way that's complicated and that you have to reflect on and talk about. it's not so much are we allowed to do it...but how to do it.' (Holmes 2016)

which are similar to those discussed above in relation to earlier modes of interaction and collaboration – namely problems of unequal give and take, access to particular networks, divided loyalties, conflicts of interest, divergent goals, incompatible ethical frameworks and definitions of value, as well as disputes over creative ownership. It is their profile, visibility and reach that differ. Digital platforms facilitate large scale instances of collaboration, organized and carried out, at least in part, in the public arena of the world wide web. Furthermore, the social relationship in which the collaborators are participating is mainly a function of the collaborative project itself, rather than a pre-existing one. The difference may be largely one of dimension, rather than nature, but it does produce new outcomes: making public what might previously have been private relationships and networks of influence; producing greater complexity through the infinite variety of participants, motivations and expectations, and facilitating new and highly lucrative ways to monetize social interactions.

In the last chapter we highlighted the clash between commodity and gift economies inherent in the merging of commercial transactions with social exchange that characterizes much of the digital economy.

With regard to the ethics of collaboration, this means that the space of overlap is ever expanding between activities governed by ethics of community participation, based on personal relations, shared values and mutual trust and support and those governed by the ethics of rational self-interest, based on impersonal and indirect human relations and underpinned by formal contracts.

BOUNDARY OBJECTS AND COLLABORATION

Star's notion of the 'boundary object' (Star & Griesemer 1989) provides a way of thinking through what might be happening in such collaborations. She defines a 'boundary object' as an object that is shared between different individuals or groups and facilitates cooperation between them. Such objects are common and might be many things, including a map, a document, a form, a set of rules, a contract, or even a concept. Their defining characteristic, however, is their 'interpretive flexibility' (Star 2010). While this allows them to function as a site or tool for shared understanding, negotiation or collaboration between

different parties it can also make them a potential site of misunderstanding and conflict. A creative work can function as a boundary object, both in its production and its reception. We might, furthermore, understand any collaborative project to involve multiple boundary objects, including the intermediate and final forms of the work itself, but also such aspects as crowdfunding mechanisms and forms of accreditation and reward. One collaborator's understanding of the signification of these objects may not be shared by another, even as they function successfully to facilitate the collaboration in which they are engaged. This may cause no issue, however it does raise the possibility that at some stage the collaboration may break down, if these different meanings come into conflict.

The kinds of collaboration that digital technologies facilitate and make visible, require an attentive consideration of the meanings that might pertain to such boundary objects. Writing is becoming a site of interaction and exchange between writers, readers and publishers, which is more varied, flexible, immediate and large scale than what has gone before. Furthermore, whether a writer has been crowdfunded by readers, or brought to prominence through their attention on social networks (see discussion in previous chapter), the blurring of professional and personal relationships that occurs means that the need for the writer to consider his or her

relationship to readers simultaneously through the lens of both personal and professional ethics is becoming more and more common.

ETHICAL SHIFTS AND WAYS FORWARD

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this means that publishers' established codes of practice are being challenged. Publishers are increasingly seeking access to social networks as well as acquisition of content, while writers are entering into closer engagement and collaboration with readers. Moreover, many writers, seeing the larger profit shares they can obtain from self publishing, are questioning whether it is still ethical for publishers to take such a large cut of profits. Within the established practices of trade publishing, therefore, as well as in a crowd funded or co-written project, there may need to be a reassessment of what value each collaborator, whether writer, publisher or reader, is creating and deriving from the collaboration. There is potentially a new balance to be established and this potential is resulting in some new business models, such as that of the publisher Unbound, which finances development and publication through its own bespoke crowd funding platform and shares profits 50/50 with authors. Other digital publishers, such as Canelo and Sapere Books have also adopted a 50/50 royalty model with writers, rather than the more usual 10 or 15%.

So what general guidelines might pertain to ethical collaboration in writing and publishing? One advisable and demonstrably successful approach is to offer a clear structure of participation to potential collaborators, whether this be a small scale project like Sarah Haynes's online collaborative storytelling projects *Button Jar* and *Memory Store* (Haynes 2016), a larger scale crowd funded project, or a global platform like Wattpad. In a small scale project, the individual writer may act as a kind of conductor or choreographer in direct dialogue with his or her collaborators, as did Haynes, receiving stories via email and entering into a discussion and editing process with all contributors before publishing their stories online as a collective work (Haynes 2016). In a larger scale project, this ongoing dialogue and guided modes of participation need to be structured into the mechanisms of collaboration from the start and can only be achieved through levels of automation.

In all such projects, however, the principles of co-design are useful to bring into play. An established theory and process within design fields, co-design, also known as participatory design, is a less familiar term within the context of writing. It is a process of design involving extensive dialogue between participants, which is deliberately and highly iterative. Co-design typically involves a design team that includes non-designers, e.g. end-users or other stakeholders; facilitates knowledge

transfer between designers and end users/domain specialists, and aims at shared problem definition and shared generation of design concepts (Schuler & Namioka 1993, Sanders, Brandt & Binder 2010). This approach recognizes that designers are not the sole authors of the final design and it might helpfully be used as a framework for designing the kinds of collaborative writing projects discussed above. In such projects it is also important to recognize that the project is a boundary object that may always mean different things to different people and so will have a multiple, rather than a completely unified reality.

The iterative approach is therefore important, not least because a project's original scope or objectives may change, often as a result of its success. This is where things can get particularly tricky, especially when commercial and financial considerations are involved – when a writers' group becomes a small press or moves from being a small non-profit collective to a profit-making business; when a social media star starts writing books for traditional publishers; when a social reading and writing site becomes a commercial operator hiring out its writers to brands, or when a digital platform for independent writers reinvents itself as a publisher and demands a bigger cut of profits. Where changes are gradual and incremental, the shifting ethical implications may remain invisible to those involved until a crisis brings them to the surface.

However, careful application of the principles of co-design to developments in the collaborative structure, activities and/or aims might help to avoid a breach of ethics, real or perceived, and to renegotiate the relationship between all collaborators in step with such changes, rather in response to a crisis.

It will potentially be necessary to draw up contracts and codes of practice that explicitly recognize a much wider range of inputs and forms of value creation than those that pertain to traditional publishing. At the same time, since some of the forms of collaboration that digital technologies are facilitating are in some aspects new and relatively unexplored, it is necessary not to presume too much in advance and to allow flexibility and ongoing negotiation during the collaboration. Boilerplate contracts will therefore be difficult to formulate for this kind of work.

Another aspect to consider is that an understanding and formulation of the ethics of collaboration require an acknowledgement of the mixing of the personal and social with the professional, and the corresponding value of social capital in all forms of writing. Digital cultural practices and the rise of network capitalism have made it impossible to ignore the value of social capital. There needs to be a willingness amongst all parties in a collaboration to engage with this explicitly, taking full account of the range of implications. Both the critique

of hegemonic networks of white, middle class, male privilege (Gill 2007, Grugulis & Stoyonova 2012, de Waal 2017) and the study of the economic power of social media and fandoms (Arvidsson 2013) have made this aspect of creative production more visible and explored some of its implications. However, there is more work to be done in this area towards full transparency and openness with regard to sociality's integral role in professional creative collaborations and its attendant benefits and issues. This has the potential to highlight exclusion and develop strategies for inclusion, as well as to acknowledge, facilitate and debate a wider range of collaborators, forms of collaboration and their role in creative production; along with an appropriate ethics to govern these structures and processes.

The new forms and dimensions of collaboration that have emerged as part of digital culture throw new light on the public and private collaborations that have long been central to writing as a practice and a profession. In seeking to develop appropriate personal and business ethics to govern the digital context, we can draw on insights from more traditional practices of writing. We can also use the new understandings obtained from the digital context to reexamine and reevaluate the ways in which such collaborations function across the whole spectrum of writing, including an analysis of how they work to the benefit of some and the marginalisation or invisibility of others,

and a reimagination of how they might work in the future.

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