Ephemeral emergents and anticipation in online connected creativity

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Overview

• Challenges of research in creative industries
• Background to current project: Community art, participatory sensing
• Collaboration on Sensory Threads*
• Analysis

*Sensory Threads is a practice project supported by Creator: Creative Organisations Research
http://www.creatorproject.org
Issues for firms & researchers

- Diverse range of interlocking industries (arts, culture, heritage, gaming, performance, sports)
- Production of (aesthetic) artefacts and services possible
- Digital technology -> new resonances between social practices and values and the techno-creative milieu
- Entrepreneurial & innovative collaborations around new projects – multi site, including users
- Interconnectedness and novel combinations for which there may be no precedent
- Disintermediation of industries, no precedent for new business models
- Values issues regarding interchange of artistic, cultural, social capitals (subversive or challenging)

- Diversity, fluidity, multiple contexts and levels of analysis presents a challenge to traditional models of research into business innovation and entrepreneurship
- Fast moving, high uncertainty, indeterminate outcomes

- A METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGE: How to capture multiple observations at multiple levels of analysis over time across different sites
Community art

- Is rooted in a shared sense of place, tradition or spirit
- Is as much about the process of involving people in the making of the work as the finished object itself
- Is situated in more public, accessible and resonant places, geared to a specific audience and a specific time

The Art of Weaving Faiths

*Great Leap, LA*
Participatory sensing

- People as a system resource
  - mobility
  - social network
  - community
  - meaning

- Urban environments
  - higher people density
  - patterns
  - ownership
Snout Performance
New questions

• How to move beyond technologies designed for individuals
• How to create tools of ‘collective sensing’
• How to foster emergent behaviors in groups rather than offer pre-defined choices determined in advance
• How to represent such collective experiences
• How to make such representations persistent
• How to archive processes for research and analysis
• Four party exploration of the urban
• Each group member is collecting data via a different sensor and receives audio stream generated on the fly
• *Wearables*: new update of our participatory sensing platform
• Audioscapes generated by the co-ordinator unit which receives all data and feeds into generative audio
• Audio transmitted back to the Explorers via Bluetooth earpieces
• Also takes into account shifting proximities of the Explorers to each other
Resonator Installation

- Recorded sensor streams/audioscapes captured through actual experiences
- The Resonator translates the data from the Explorers’ sensors into a tactile ‘landscape’ which can be felt by touching it
- Embedded display and audio
- Participants can navigate through the timeline of each ‘Exploration’ by tilting the Resonator box
- Parabolic Cones suspended around the Resonator create localised zones where the audio heard by the Explorers as they moved through the environment is played back.
Traditional models of technology innovation

- Linear -> crossing the ‘valley of death’
- Technology roadmapping
- Language of business/management: business models, business plans, revenue streams
- Research approaches tend to focus on one level of analysis, the individual, the firm, the network
- Trajectories over time, policy support for incubation
- The discourse of tech transfer -> form a business, around a business model
The Valley of Death

- Resources
- Level of Development
- Existing Research and Development Resources
- Existing Commercialization Resources

Discovery  FFE  Product Development  Commercialization
Technology - Product – Market Linkages

The most basic building block of a Business Concept
More new questions

• This doesn’t reflect richness of this environment
• Constructed in precompetitive space
• About anticipation and emergence, non linear
• Grounding insights in complexity theory, possible to identify construction of temporary structures, or ‘ephemeral emergents’ that acquire causal power -> a form of anticipatory strategising at the periphery
Sawyer’s model (cf Archer, critical realism)

The Emergence Paradigm (Sawyer 2005, p.211), showing the ‘circle of emergence’ (p.220), i.e. that area which is subject to social emergence.
Data sources

• Rich but diverse and challenging
• Meetings [different participants over time], conferences, emails, informal conversations
• Basecamp – 435 interactions, files, archives, field notes
• Huge mass!
Analysis – ongoing track through:

• Identification of temporary structures -> those which became part of the project and those that did not

• Identification of interconnected behaviours that contributed to online connected creativity -> experiments, reflexivity (identity), organising domains, sensitivity
How does this help?

• Theoretically grounded perspective that will produce stream of high-quality RAE papers
• Adds value for ethnographic or rich longitudinal studies with focus on emergence of novelty
• Captures [and may therefore archive] twists and turns in projects
• Articulation of value to funders, eg Research Councils, customers, industrial collaborators
• Better vocabularies for Arts funders who engage with business/management discourse
Main outcome

• More innovation in a connected world