

Media, Community and the Creative Citizen

A research project funded by AHRC and EPSRC for the Communities, Culture and Creative Economies Programme.

Research Plan – Phase 1 (June to December 2012)

Please note: this is a live document created and used by three research teams working in a single, collaborative project. The document begins with an overview of the project's research plan, followed by separately authored sections and free-standing accounts of each of three strands of research. Each section has been designed as an independent working document for the relevant strand. The document as a whole therefore contains repetition and overlap (eg of academic references and approaches to methodology). We welcome comments on our work.

Research overview

Our central research question asks: 1) How does creative citizenship generate value for communities within a changing media landscape and 2) how can this pursuit of value be intensified, propagated and sustained?"

We are interested in this question because we sense that in many domains, the attributes and goals of citizenship, including creative citizenship, are changing as a result of new forms of media engagement afforded by the shift to Web. 2.0.

Creative citizenship has been associated with a range of phenomena in the literature from cultural activism and participation in the public sphere to everyday acts of creativity (Andrew et al. 2004; Burgess et al. 2006). This reflects an evolution in the concept of citizenship from one involving "rights and obligations to a state" to "practices of association among co-subjects." (Hartley, 2010)

The potential for these practices of association is enhanced, arguably very significantly, (e.g. Shirkey 2010) by the emergence of new forms of media and personal communication in the Web 2.0 environment, usually called "social networks". Sceptics counter-argue that the effects of these changes in media will not necessarily be constructive in civic terms because they are too narrowly focused upon individuals and subject to manipulation by web-based business (Pariser: the Filter Bubble); dependent upon free labour (Andrejevic 2008/9 and Hesmondhalgh 2010) and because new media displace or disrupt old media, resulting in the loss of media forms which are said to be more deeply rooted in civic goals, practices and traditions (eg McChesney and Nichols 2010). There is a need to understand in greater depth and in different domains whether and to what extent these new forms of media support the wider production and distribution of both professional and everyday creative outputs, with benefits for society

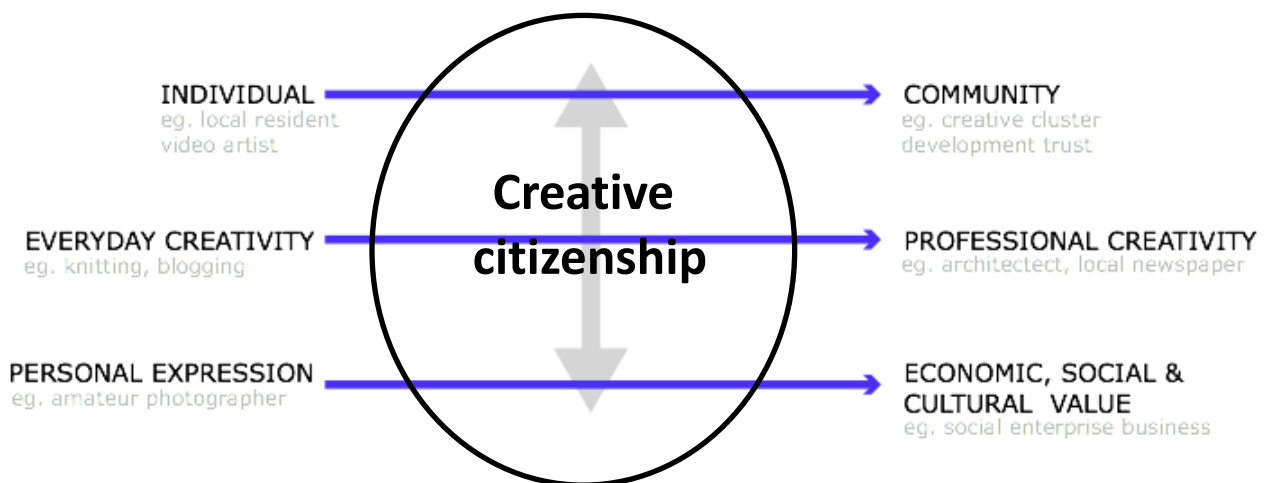
as well as for individual citizens. There have been several attempts to resolve the argument between “techno pessimists” and “techno optimists” at a theoretical level (eg Steigler 2010).

Our research considers different forms of value arising from these new interactions of mediation and civic activity within one very broad domain of civic activity; namely that which can be considered “creative.” Our definition of creative refers to any act which involves the creative powers of the individual, from artistic or cultural expression to innovative ways of collaborating in, for example, community-led design and the production of local news.

It is the value and potential value of these acts of creative citizenship that this research explores. Our definition of value is inclusive, ranging from the straightforwardly economic and monetized (what your creative output is worth in the market) to types of value (cultural, social, personal) which sit beyond the market, resulting in other forms of satisfaction and reward. The resulting benefits arising from this wide range of activities frequently attracts labels from the financial and economic world, as in cultural, personal and network capital, or assets. We explore procedures for mapping such assets.

In summary, we wish to discover whether the emergence of new forms of “social” media are having the effect of increasing the scale and potential of creative citizenship and if so how these effects may be further embedded and magnified. Figure 1 summarises the debate above and our research axis.

Figure 1: Creative citizenship and its value for individual and communities – our research axis



To explore these questions in practice, we have chosen three strands of study, which reflect various aspects of creative citizenship within different types of communities

The first strand looks at communities of place (community journalism); the second at communities of interest (community-led design); and the third at communities of creative practice (creative community networks). These strands have emerged in discussion with our six research partners.

As well as contributing to the resolution of our main research question, each strand of study has its own agenda of specific concerns arising from the interplay of digital media with citizenship. The detailed research plans which follow this introduction show how each research team is seeking to respond to the challenges and focus of our six research partners. This form of working is indispensable to the aspect of our project which seeks, in addition to the generation of knowledge, insight and data, the co-creation of solutions to specific problems arising in the practice of the areas of creative citizenship under study. This co-creation is an important feature of phase two of our project, to be undertaken in 2013.

We thus intend that our research will address throughout questions and issues which are genuinely “useful” to our practitioner partners. This in turn raises a challenge to the research team to show awareness of the risks to balanced scientific analysis when engaged in sustained co-creation with each research “subject”. These tensions in perspective also give rise to ethical considerations, more fully explored in what follows.

An example of a partner-inspired research element arises in strand one, which studies community news services (more usually referred to as hyperlocal news publishing). There is a substantial current public debate about the extent to which these new forms of online collaborative journalism can be compared with or considered a satisfactory substitute for the services provided by local newspapers, which are in rapid decline as their advertising revenues are sucked away by “digital” competitors. Ofcom requires a better understanding of this local news environment, to support its regulatory judgments. As a result, we have been able to work with Ofcom to contribute a section to Ofcom’s 2012 Communications Market Review. This data will also feed into the project’s broader analysis of the scale and potential value of the acts of creative citizenship which lie at the heart of hyperlocal news.

A further challenge in our research design is to ensure that the unavoidable diversity of the communities we are studying does not prevent us making comparisons and drawing conclusions about the value of creative citizenship across strands. Our response to this requirement for comparable data across the whole project is to ensure that the approach to case studies and interviews in each strand are built around common elements.

For the first phase of our research, from June to December 2012, we intend to focus upon two sub-questions:

- What are the new digital and physical media ecologies and practices currently emerging within communities and how do these impact on the extent and effectiveness of creative citizenship practices?
- What are the different forms and meanings of creative expression, participation and production that these new media ecologies enable within communities of different types and towards what civic or community goals are they directed?

The research plans outlined below address these questions through a mix of quantitative and qualitative research. The methodologies deployed range from high level, UK-wide online surveys of hyperlocal publishers and the use of focus groups, to in-depth interviews designed to explore the motivations, practices and impacts of an individual entrepreneur and his inner city work in video, music and news. While each strand present a coherent research design, we have included common lines of inquiry and specific questions to the maximum extent possible, in line with our overarching comparative research approach.

The second and third phases of our research will address the second element in our research question (“how can this pursuit of value be intensified, propagated and sustained?”). This will require engagement with questions that are political in character, as they involve matters such as the allocation of resources to support creative citizenship, along with questions about the extent to which we can rely upon self-motivating communities to deliver goods, services and other benefits of creative citizenship in a way which is sustainable. It is from this aspect of our work that we will be able to draw lessons with regard to the propagation and sustainability of the work of creative citizens. The detailed research plans for phase 2 and 3 of the research will be provided at the beginning of each phase.

By the time that we reach the main reporting phase of our work, in 2014, we aim to make useful high level points about the value of the creative citizen in a world of social media and to identify the further potential of these and other practices of creative citizenship under a range of policy approaches.

RESEARCH STRAND ONE: HYPERLOCAL NEWS

1) Main research question

Our research strand hypothesises that citizenship practices around Hyperlocal Publishing will be found to generate value in a range of different ways. It will: keep people generally informed about local news, enabling them to make practical decisions about how to live their lives; convey local information from local government, public sector, civil society, and cultural groups/organisations; act as a forum for, and facilitator of, debate about issues of concern to people in a locality; and in a limited way, act as a chronicler and archivist within a local community.

Many of these values relate to the maintenance of local democracy and local community identity, all of which are important, especially given the backdrop of the decline of mainstream local news' ability to play many of these roles. But Hyperlocal is a precarious and transitory practice which is difficult to sustain because of the voluntary nature of much of the labour which produces it. It follows that the enabling of a more sustainable model for producing hyperlocal news might be considered critical to the intensification and propagation of this seen as critical to this form of creative citizenship.

The research in this strand also has the opportunity to contribute to an emerging area of media practice currently attracting much policy interest. We have designed our research activities so that we can ensure we create value for our research partners and to support the wider public interest in this area, whilst ensuring that we address the central research questions of this project as a whole.

We expect that our work in this research strand will accomplish the following objectives, which might be considered specific to this strand:

- provide a deeper understanding of the 'Hyperlocal blog' as a significant media form.
- produce improved data on the value, scale and potential of UK Hyperlocal publishers and how they interact with traditional media;
- working with our partner (Talk About Local) generate insights into the conditions likeliest to support the development of successful Hyperlocals and the tools needed to achieve this;
- understand the place of Hyperlocal media/news services within a UK framework of public service news provision.

These aspects of our work will also contribute to our pursuit of the project's central research question, which can be couched for the purposes of Strand One as: How does creative citizenship around Hyperlocal news publishing generate value for communities within a changing media landscape and how can this pursuit of value be intensified, propagated and sustained?

From this, the following research questions arise:

- What are the new digital and physical media ecologies and practices around hyperlocal news currently emerging within communities and how do these impact on the extent and effectiveness of creative citizenship practices?
- What are the different forms and meanings of creative expression, participation and production that hyperlocal news outlets enable within communities of different types and towards what civic or community goals are they directed?
- How can we describe, evaluate and stimulate the contribution of creative citizens to the conduct of public debate and deliberation in these news outlets?
- What is the value (civic, cultural, social and economic) of micro-level acts of everyday creative productivity around hyperlocal news to the communities they serve?
- What are the most effective frameworks, policies and interventions to support and enhance creative citizenship in the hyperlocal news context?

2) Academic background to our research questions

The Value of Local Media for Citizens and Communities

The value of news and journalism has most often been studied through the prism of its relationship with democracy. Most of the ways in which news could (and should) relate to democracy and democratic participation have been with us in the UK since the early eighteenth century, and can be explored in relation to four principal (and inter-related) roles:

- The news as a source of information for citizens in a democracy
- The news as a watchdog/fourth estate
- The news as a mediator/representative of communities
- The news as an advocate/participant (McNair 2009, pp.237-240)

It is generally accepted that representative democracy can enable good government only if the decisions taken by citizens is reasoned, and rational (Chambers and Costain, 2001). This has also been recognised at a policy level, for instance, the UK department of Culture, Media and Sport's "Digital Britain" report notes that "It is important for civic society and democracy for people to have a range of sources of accurate and trustworthy news at all levels, local, regional and in the Nations as well as UK-wide and international news that is guaranteed, beyond market provision" (DCMS 2009 p.141). The normative viewpoint underpinning this assumption is clear. People need independent, reliable, and accurate information on which to base their decisions, and it is part of the journalist's job to provide it.

Related to this function of the media is the “fourth estate” or “watchdog” role. Some of the information provided to the public by journalism, it is suggested, should be information that political and other elites may not want widely circulated. In order to prevent abuses of power, under this model, journalists are charged with scrutinising the actions of those who govern in our names (Hampton 2010, p.5). The news has also been seen as a valuable enabler and mediator of civic debate. As well as being a representative of the citizenry (as with the watchdog function) journalists can also facilitate audience members in directly accessing political debate.

Historically there have been a number of participatory forms for audience feedback. Letters to the editor were integral to early newspapers (Nord, 2001) and radio phone-ins (Loviglio, 2002), television talk shows (Livingstone & Lunt, 1994) and vox pop interviews (Lewis, Inthorn & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2005). Such participation and discussion has been greatly amplified in volume since the rise in the development and uptake of fast interactive technologies such as text messaging, email, and internet-enabled feedback mechanisms around blogs and social media, and this has led mainstream news media at all levels to embrace and encourage audience participation in discussing, finding, and in some cases co-creating the news alongside professional journalists (McNair 2009, p.239, Williams et al 2010, Wardle et al 2010).

These functions derive from what has been the dominant theoretical framework for understanding the democratic value of news and journalism: Habermas’ notion of the public sphere, and independent deliberative space, or commons, where citizens can learn about and debate politics as equals, independent of government or other elite interference (Habermas 1989). Independent and strong news media are central to the existence this space: they distribute the kind of reliable information needed for citizens to make informed choices; they enable the formation of public opinion by providing a trustworthy forum of debate; and they enable people to shape the conduct of government by articulating their views (Curran 1991, p.29).

These traditional and influential social roles will be very important pillars in our theoretical framework when measuring the civic value of hyperlocal news. However we will *also* seek to measure the importance of such community news in relation to other, less traditionally rationalist, indicators of “cultural” (Miller 2006, p.35) and “creative citizenship” (Hartley 2011). John Hartley provides us with a very useful historical review of important models of citizenship which, it is claimed, allow us to understand the opportunities for playful creative expressions of citizenship which trouble and sophisticate traditional rationalist models of citizenship such as that offered by the Habermasian public sphere. He builds on the established work of scholars such as Michael Schudson and TH Marshall, adding insights from Toby Miller (around his notion of “cultural citizenship”, and Hartley’s own “DIY citizenship”) to produce a new schema for more fully understanding the different elements of citizenship in a world where the old barriers to self-expression, and more importantly self-publication and/or broadcast, are significantly reduced. While these categories are presented chronologically he is keen to argue that each does not eclipse or subsume the last. On the contrary,

contemporary “creative citizenship” involves generating the new and old expressions of citizenship simultaneously (Hartley, 2010, p.242).

Before we can assess the value of local news for communities across the UK it is necessary to understand in broad terms the principal insights from academic study of three different kinds of local news: that produced by the mainstream news media (principally the publishers of daily and weekly newspapers); alternative news produced by small groups of highly politically active citizens; and the new generation of online community news produced since the rise of blogging and web 2.0 during the last decade.

Mainstream Local News

The quality of the public sphere depends largely on the quality of access (as sources) enjoyed by a wide diversity of groups and views to the news media. But studies of the mainstream news have often found structural obstacles to less powerful groups being able to access space in mainstream local media, and biases towards official elites (Gans 1980, Franklin 2006, O'Neill and O'Connor 2009). This trend has at least in part been accentuated by the professionalization of media relations in both the public and private sectors in the UK since the 1980s (Miller and Dinan 2000, Davis 2002). It has been found to have a marked effect on the quality and independence of the news as (increasingly over-worked) journalists relied on “information subsidies” such as press releases (Gandy 1982) from well-resourced sources at both local (Franklin 1986 and 1988, Franklin and Vanslyke Turk 1988, O'Neill and O'Connor 2009) and national levels (Lewis et al 2008a and 2008b, Davies 2008).

For much of this period publishers have had to contend with very challenging market conditions in which the economic value of local news has declined steeply for audiences, advertisers and publishers alike. Circulations in the regional and local press in the UK have declined rapidly as audiences have opted out of paying for news about their locality upfront (Williams and Franklin 2007) and advertisers are increasingly turning to more lucrative outlets such as online search and dedicated classified sites (Freedman 2010). Although the readership of many of the new online local and regional news outlets has grown impressively the companies providing them have so far been unable to generate anything near the level of profits they used to generate from print advertising. This is illustrated by simply comparing recent revenues from print and digital advertising at Trinity Mirror's (the UK's largest newspaper group) regional news division. In 2003 the company's printed newspapers made £521.5m in profits, but by 2010 they were only making £298.8m. Steady decline in print revenue has been accompanied by some profit increases online; in 2003 the company's local news websites made £3.8m, and last year £32.4m (Williams 2012). This is impressive, but some argue such comparatively small growth is unlikely to be enough to provide the resources needed to sustain public interest journalism on the scale newspapers used to provide it (McChesney and Nichols 2010). The large publishers of local news in the UK have attempted to maintain their historically very high profits by consolidating further, shedding journalistic and other

staff, and arguably contributing to a mediascape which consists of poorly resourced, less monitorial, and less distinctively local news (Franklin 2006).

Alternative Local News

A smaller sub-section of the scholarship on local media has devoted its attention to the study of alternative news which positioned itself in opposition to providers of mainstream local news (Atton 2002, Atton and Hamilton 2008). Today's online hyperlocal publishers also have some forebears in the UK's autonomous alternative press in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, and the (online and printed) activist, community media of the 1990s and early 2000s.

Although it would be reductive to talk of the UK's alternative local press of the 1970s, 80s and 90s as a homogenous entity most of these publications were united by their overt left-wing or autonomist politics, small circulations, the precariousness of their existence and their reliance on unpaid voluntary labour to sustain them. They were also often committed to providing news which was seen to be lacking in the mainstream local media, and to report events from perspectives under-represented in most local papers.

The most frequently used news sources in such alternative media tended to be those "marginalised by the usual processes of news production" (Franklin and Murphy, 1991, p.126). In their stories they relied far less on the official pronouncements of local elites and official public services, preferring instead to report the voices of "people living on housing estates, of those involved with community groups, of rank and file trades union activists, the unemployed, and those active within the women's and gay movements and black communities" (Harcup 2006, p131). Visibility and low audience levels were a problem for local alternative news: at its peak prominent alternative news outlet the Leeds Other Paper had a readership of only 2,500 and audience research carried out by the staff found that many people in Leeds had never heard of the paper despite its relative longevity (it ran between 1974 and 1994) (Harcup 2006, p.134-5).

The rise of the internet, and the consequent lowering of the costs associated with publishing and/or broadcasting, has also seen a bolstering of alternative media (Deuze 2003, Platon and Deuze 2003). It continues to offer "counter-hegemonic alternatives to mainstream media" and, in the process, supports "active citizenship and help nurture a healthier public sphere" (Harcup 2006, pp.137-8) as a different, and arguably wider range of news sources get their voices aired and heard in the new media environment (Atton and Wickenden 2005).

The Rise of the Citizen Journalist

As indicated above we are currently living through massive changes in the nature of news and journalism. In a relatively short period even these once self-evidently clear terms have become slippery, unstable, and ill-defined. The rise of citizen, open-source

(Deuze, 2003), participatory (Bowman and Willis, 2002; Nip, 2006), networked (Jarvis 2006), distributed (Gillmor 2005), and grassroots (Gillmor, 2004) journalism has enabled significant changes in new modes and genres of audience participation in the production and consumption of news, and this has been well charted since the turn of the century (Deuze 2008, p.107). What unites all of these accounts is an emphasis on describing the increased role of the public in producing material which would formerly have been the preserve of professional journalists. Another common scholarly theme is the idea that communication is no longer a one-way practice, and is becoming more collaborative and consensual. To use a common metaphor, traditional journalism was like a lecture, but today's citizen journalism is more like a conversation (Kunelius, 2001, Gillmor, 2004). In the new online environment members of the public can, it has been claimed, be "pro-sumers" of the news, as traditional producer and consumer roles are disrupted (Toffler, 1971; Bruns, 2005). Put simply, journalism today "must be seen as a praxis that is not exclusively tied to salaried work or professional institutions anymore" (Deuze et al 2007, p. 323). In the words of Henry Jenkins, citizens can now act as self-publishing "monitorial" citizens journalists who can supplement (and sometimes even supplant) the work previously only done by professional journalists (Jenkins 2006, p.208).

Hyperlocal News

As the mainstream local news industry continues its decline (one which was severely hastened by the economic crisis of 2008 and the ensuing economic recessions (Kurpius et al, p.360) in Europe and North America, the last five years has seen the slow growth of a seemingly distinct form of (largely) citizen-produced news website that has gradually taken the name "hyperlocal". There has been little academic research into the phenomenon of hyperlocal news publishing in the UK context. Metzgar et al (2010), in attempting to define hyperlocal in the context of US experience, emphasise that they are "indigenous to the web" (p774) but that alone doesn't make them a viable concern. Ultimately discussions return to business models (Kurpius et al. 2010) and it is at this intersection of technology and sustainability where much of the debate in the UK is situated.

Damian Radcliffe (an Honorary Research Fellow of Cardiff University) has provided the most detailed picture so far of the UK hyperlocal scene and usefully defines the phenomenon as "online news or content services pertaining to a town, village, single postcode or other small, geographically defined community" (Radcliffe 2012, p.6). The shift to mobile technologies (smartphones and tablets devices) has "made it easier to both create and consume hyperlocal content" he argues (p41) but financial sustainability is still the greatest challenge. Ultimately, Radcliffe's call (p40) for further research combined with 'practical experimentation' is the space in which our research strand is best situated.

3) Understanding creative citizenship within hyperlocal news

In broad terms the aspect of 'Creative Citizenship' here can be defined as the setting up and running of hyperlocal online media and/or news services, usually in the forms of blogs, websites and social media. This research strand understands 'Creative Citizenship' as being within the contributions that citizens make to such Hyperlocal Publishing, both those that are acknowledged (as proprietors, as writers, as commentators) and those that are, as yet, unacknowledged. These unacknowledged contributions may come in the form of other online forms of publishing that as yet aren't regarded as part of the nascent Hyperlocal 'sector', such as individual Facebook pages or informally networks of such pages. For this strand, the notion of the 'Creative Citizen' as 'Produser' (Bruns 2006), making what we might consider as creative micro-contributions as both audience/users to Hyperlocal, is useful.

4) Our community partners and case studies

Our two community partners

Ofcom – Our initial work with Ofcom has been to make a contribution to their Communications Market Report (2012, published 18th July) about the scale and scope of Hyperlocal Publishing. Ofcom will work with us in subsequent years to repeat our initial study with a view to continuing to publish and develop this data. Ofcom are supportive of any further work we will do about the broad nature of Hyperlocal and will work with us to examine ways to better understand the ways in which audiences engage with news through social media on mobile devices.

Talk About Local – TAL play a vital part in supporting communities to make better use of online publishing tools. They train individuals and groups and also undertake high-level lobbying to ensure that Hyperlocal is recognised by policy-makers. In our research strand they will make valuable contributions to the broad research we are doing to understand the value of Hyperlocal as part of the UK's media landscape. Their work in updating the Openly Local directory contributes directly to our strand's contribution to Ofcom's Communications Market Report. TAL will work with us on framing the questions for our survey of existing Hyperlocal proprietors. TAL will advise us on other ways our broad research can better contribute to an understanding of the sector.

Our community case studies

Two communities have been chosen, based on a number of factors:

- Each has an existing online news site that would be regarded as a form of Hyperlocal Publishing.
- They are to some extent representative, they are not edge scenarios. Part of our research would identify how typical and representative they are of hyperlocal blogs.

- We are likely to be able to establish co-operative and co-creative relationships with them.
- They are relevant because they represent two differing models and modes of engagement.
- In each case the specific communities we are working with are currently unconfirmed so we therefore outline the different types:

Case study one: Hyperlocal as an extension of existing community media production in a regeneration area.

This case study will examine a community where relations between citizens and media producers are strong and where community media production is a well-developed practice. By and large the producers of such media don't take account of the ways in which new digital production tools might allow for greater engagement with their community. There is some reliance on other media forms such as a print publication and radio. This urban community is chosen partly as its hyperlocal publication sits amongst other community media forms but where all forms are produced by a single organisation, linked to the area's regeneration organisations.

Case study two: Hyperlocal site developed by a single producer.

This case study would best represent a more typical example of Hyperlocal. The publication is web-only and is produced by a single author who is resident of the area but whose links to community organisations are less mature. Typically the hyperlocal is very good at using social media tools and encouraging participation through such tools. The publication's approach is very much 'Web 2.0'. It is less clear at this stage how effectively they reach their audience, and how their perceived/ proposed community respond.

5) Research Methods

We propose to use a mixed method approach.

QUALITATIVE: ACROSS THE TWO CASE STUDIES OF COMMUNITIES/BLOGS:

- Desk research: mapping media landscape over time, demographics, etc
- Aggregating existing data about socio-economic makeup of communities, current and past media consumption habits, and media eco-system in the areas
- In-depth semi-structured interviews with producers of our two hyperlocal publishers to; determine new media practices; gain a producer perspective on civic and community goals (motivations) and understand the different elements of the value of HL publishing from a producer perspective
- Participant observation

To gain further insights into forms and meanings of creative expression/participation/production;

- Focus groups with community audience / producers to understand: new / 'analogue' media ecologies and practices emerging in the communities; determine the meanings of creative expression, participation, and production; analyse to what civic/community goals these forms of expression are directed

QUANTITATIVE: ACROSS THE UK

Quantitative content analysis

Using a quantitative content analysis of a large sample of UK Hyperlocal news we examine their form and content along the following lines

- Numbers of stories, **volume/regularity** of coverage
- Localness of coverage
- Authorship of story (am/pro-am/pro?)
- Topic areas/subjects
- Source groups used (who speaks/is quoted? who has authority? First person address?)
- Types of interactivity, and the extent to which they're used, looking at built-in social media options, comments, opportunities to submit/publish content, opportunities to influence content/coverage) with a smaller sub-sample, we will determine the extent and the nature of the "**social media footprint**" of hyperlocal news providers (how is social media used? For what purposes? How interactive and how one-way?)

We will carry out this content analysis in order to:

- determine new media ecologies and practices emerging in communities
- determine the meanings of creative expression, participation, and production
- analyse to what civic/community goals these forms of expression are directed

Quantitative analysis via internet survey of Hyperlocal Producers:

We will have completed a draft script for our survey of UK Hyperlocal news producers by December 2012.

We will carry out this survey from Jan 2013 in order to:

- determine new media practices
- gain further insights into forms and meanings of creative expression/participation/production
- gain a producer perspective on civic and community goals (motivations)
- understand the different elements of the civic, cultural, social and economic value of HL publishing from a producer perspective

5) Choosing the co-creation initiatives to be undertaken in 2013:

They will be informed from the first phase, from which we will emerge with a much-enriched understanding of the behaviour of audiences. We anticipate continuing to work closely with the hyperlocal producers in case study one, where the publishing takes place within a mature organisation. The research we undertake in case study two may result in knowledge that could be better iterated across a range of Hyperlocal blogs.

6) Ethical considerations of working with partners and communities

All research will be conducted with the full consent of partner organisations in the case studies. The process of obtaining informed consent will be rigorous and ongoing, and will include sharing detailed research plans with key gatekeepers and participants, as well as the more usual commitment to obtaining written consent from all participants at each discrete stage of the research. Anonymity will not be possible for producers of hyperlocal news because of the small number of case studies, and the necessity of exploring content and investigating location-specific hyperlocal publications. The option of anonymity in all research and other outputs from the research will, however, be offered to all members of the audience focus groups.

7) Timeline up until December 2012

Research activity	July	August	September	October	November
Case study 1	desk research	interview producers	focus group 1	focus group 2	focus group 3
Case study 2	create relationship	media mapping	producer interviews	participation observation	audience interviews
Content analysis	data cleaning	analysis	analysis	write-up	
Producer survey				design survey	design survey

8) Outputs to be presented at the December 2012 research meeting.

- Top line results of content analysis.
- Initial findings from case studies.
- Audio/visual materials produced during the initial phase.
- Draft survey script for national hyperlocal publishers

References – Strand 1

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RESEARCH STRAND 2 – COMMUNITY-LED DESIGN

1) Main Research Question

Community led design is a practice where individual citizens are given the opportunity to engage directly and creatively in the formulation of solutions for their own environment, whether these are physical spaces, buildings, neighbourhoods or services. Web 2.0 technologies and social media offer new opportunities for community-led design, ultimately transforming the ways in which people take part in the process and their ability to make an impact. Community and third sector organizations with an interest in design have been rapidly embracing new media but to date we have no systematic understanding or evidence of how these technologies can enable and/or hinder their practice.

Our strand's overarching research question is:

How can media generate creative engagement in community-led design in a way which raises the potential of creative citizenship?

We take creative engagement in a broad way, meaning to embrace acts of individual creativity and expression, but also communication, participation in collective creative activities, articulation of cultural and social goals and values, and co-creation of new spaces, services and businesses.

Our main question is accompanied by two sub-questions:

What is the value (community assets) generated from the use of new media in community-led design and how can we capture it?

How can physical and digital media be used to assist the development and sustainability of peer-to-peer community led design support networks?

The first sub-question, is concerned with filling the gap in our understanding of the impact of media in community-led design and the value it generates. We hypothesise that the use of media helps generate new assets for individuals and the communities they participate in, whether these are skills, knowledge, a shared vision and culture, a more connected or cohesive community, or a stronger local economy. This requires developing new ways to capture these assets at the level of the individual creative citizen and the community.

The second sub-question, is concerned with understanding how traditional and new media practices, physical and digital media, can be used together to create new ways to facilitate community-led design. Here we essentially test the promise of new media in complementing current community-led design facilitation practices, by offering a platform to help communities network with each other, support each other and share

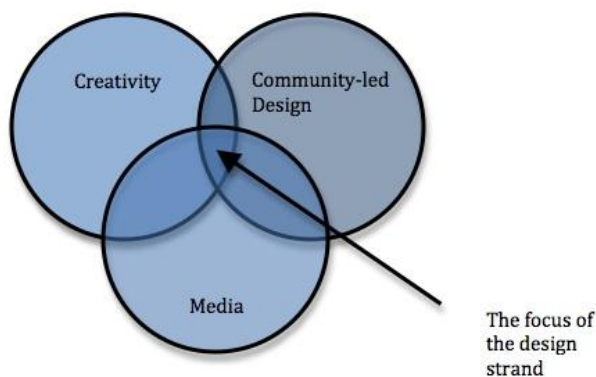
good practice, resources and advice. Throughout, we seek to understand the value (as represented in our identification of assets) of this enhanced media deployment.

Research hypothesis:

Our working hypothesis is that the use of media helps generate new assets for individuals and the communities they participate in and that this offers potential for more effective and more widely adoptable practices of community-led design. This stronger asset base in community-led design represents a potential augmentation in the value generated by acts of creative citizenship in the field of design. Our research, and its co-creations, offer pointers to specific ways in which additional value can be secured.

2) Brief academic background supporting the main research question

Our strand focuses at the intersection of three fields of research: research on community-led design, research on creativity, and research on media.



Community-led design is a particular practice which aims to engage people directly in decision-making throughout the design process, from visioning to implementation. The idea comes from a long-standing tradition related to participatory design, collaborative design and co-design especially in the context of urban design, planning and architecture (see Sanoff, 2006 for a historical account). Despite this long-standing tradition community-led design is not wide-spread in design and planning practice. A main reason for this is that the benefits of the approach have never been thoroughly measured and articulated. This is particularly important in the context of new design and planning legislation. The new localism bill and the national planning policy framework bring important reforms in the planning system, a significant objective being that of 'taking power away from officials and putting it into the hands of those who know most about their neighbourhood - local people themselves'. This new recognition of the need for early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with communities requires new research, new methods and new tools for understanding and supporting best practice.

Our research aims to capture the value of community-led design, as this is transformed through the use of media, and explore emerging opportunities for enhancing its practice.

Our research is also strongly linked to research in **creativity**. While creativity is often understood strictly as an individual capacity, there is an increasing body of literature on collaborative creativity and an emphasis on the importance of the social environment within which creative acts are situated (see e.g. Csikszentmihalyi, M: 1988, Feldman et al, 1994). Across the creative industries, and particularly between practitioners and organizations that seek to develop sustainable solutions to complex problems such as regeneration and social innovation, there is an increasing understanding that creative solutions are beyond the reach of a single individual or professional group. The knowledge and skills needed to address these problems are distributed among a variety of experts and stakeholders: ‘more’ creativity can be derived from the interaction between them (e.g. Fisher, 1999, 2000; Alexiou and Zamenopoulos, 2008; Alexiou, 2010). ***Our research focuses on understanding how media can be a vehicle for connecting people together to exploit and cultivate their creative potential.***

Media is the third important area of research for our strand. With the emergence of the second generation Web services and tools, much research has focused on examining the ways in which mediated platforms demonstrate how individuals and local or interest-based communities make their mark, express themselves, and shape their relationships or environment (Wellman, 2001; Haythornthwaite and Kendall, 2010; Burgess & Green 2009; Lundby, 2008). The premises of new media are based on both technical possibilities (e.g. more user-friendly and accessible tools for ‘making’, sharing and ‘publishing’), and the social, collaborative ethos of Web 2.0 (Bruns, 2008). It has been argued that this particular technology’s ‘architecture of participation’ (Harrison and Barthel, 2009: 155), has significant implications for citizens’ opportunities to involve themselves *in* media, and *through* media, via design and creative production. ***Our research aims to understand how individuals and communities involved in community-led design represent themselves in and through media and use these engagements to enhance their creativity and so the value of their civic contribution.***

3) Understanding creative citizenship within community-led design

We treat creativity as a social and analytical category to explore forms of cultural citizenship and alternative forms of civic engagement, collective memory and personal expression within the context of community led design. Certainly, dominant definitions of citizenship involve an ensemble of relations (including legal status, resources, communal membership and identity) to describe moral behaviour, social practices, and cultural values, and what is collectively known as ‘civic virtue’ (Stevenson, 2001). Our understanding of creative citizenship combines notions from cultural sociology - a field that addresses the cultural needs of the individual and puts forward the representation of excluded or non expert groups (Stevenson, 2001; 2003) - with definitions of ‘creative

communities' stemming from the social innovation context. Such communities are defined as "groups of people who cooperatively invent, enhance and manage innovative solutions for new ways of living' (Jégou et al., 2008: 32). This is consistent with an understanding of citizenship which focuses upon Hartley's "practices of association among co-subjects" rather than a notion of "rights and obligations to a state."

We aim to explore 'creative outputs' within particular 'symbolic domains' (architecture, local services) where professionals, stakeholders and the general public come together to develop sustainable solutions to complex problems such as regeneration and social innovation, through *processes* of co-design or co-production (Reich et al, 1996; Sanders and Stappers, 2008; Lee, 2008). These processes can include the co-creation of common public space, communal and public services, as well as digital or hybrid tools for citizen participation, which in turn can generate more mediated innovation through novel media sites and newly designed technical systems that may reflect the ontologies of particular communities (Karasti and Syrjänen, 2004; Gurstein, 2007). Responding also to the changing media ecology within the field of co- and community- led design, we thus seek to address the following principles pointing to novel versions of mediated creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Gauntlett, 2011):

- new tendencies towards visibility and self-representation
- a renewed impulse for sharing contributing to everyday creative interpretations
- the emphasis on '*process, emotion and presence*' rather than simply an outcome
- the connection of creativity with social capital and networks

4) Our community partners and case studies

Our two community partners

Our community partners are the Glass-House Community Led Design and NESTA's Public Services Lab.

The Glass-House Community Led Design is a national charity that gives both communities and regeneration professionals the skills and confidence to lead and contribute to design and neighbourhood planning that involves and benefits local people. They are the leading organisation which explicitly focus on and support community-led design. The organisation uses its experience of supporting neighbourhood projects throughout the UK to promote discussion and to influence policy and practice around community led design.

The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta) is an independent body with a mission to promote innovation. Through its programme 'Neighbourhood Challenge' Nesta is developing new ways of supporting community-led innovation that unlock the assets and creative potential that exist in all communities. Neighbourhood Challenge worked with 17 community organisations from across the

country showing that communities have the potential to generate their own solutions to their own priorities. Nesta uses its experience of projects such as these to inform policy and practice around the delivery of public services.

The research will involve communities who have collaborated with these partners. As such our partners, their methodologies and their relation to these communities will also become part of the research. The team will take a sensitive approach to this ensuring confidentiality and maintaining an independent and neutral stance with the view that insights gathered will be beneficial to both partners in helping them improve their practice and through the provision of new tools and methods.

Our community case studies

We are focusing on communities defined in relation to a community-led design project in a particular geographic area. So a community is a set of people involved in a local project (whether this is the refurbishment of a building, the development of a space, a neighbourhood or a new service). This includes local stakeholders, residents, businesses, as well as local authority representatives and experts (architects, planners, designers, facilitators). Although our focus will be on project-related groups, we will also seek to understand the relation of these core groups to the wider geographic community (reached by local and social media). We will look both at projects that have already been completed, as well as new projects.

The criteria for the selection of communities for phase one are the following:

- **Existing communities** that have already collaborated with partners (Glasshouse, NESTA)
- **New communities** that have surfaced recently and are known to us through personal connections/networks, and/or have received some media attention. Networking between existing communities that have participated to GH/Nesta interventions and those outside (for example, those that may have had expert support or self-organized) would be interesting.
- **Urban/metropolitan:** In the first instance we will focus on urban/metropolitan communities due to the strong link between cosmopolitanism and creative industries. However, a comparison with rural communities is also relevant and the inclusion of rural communities in later stages is also possible.
- **Diversity:** We will focus on areas with high concentration of ethnic, socio-cultural and socio-economic diversity or transience as this will allow us to consider a wider set of issues surrounding cultural and social representation.
- **Problems/Crises:** We will aim to consider not only communities that are formed around a particular project but also communities that seek to mobilise in respect to particular problem (e.g. <http://www.saveyourriverside.org/>) seeing how this energy can be turned to a positive design outcome.
- **High and low media density/use and/or web visibility:** we will consider both communities that have experience in using digital media and web2.0 tools in

their project (e.g. Wards Corner <http://wardscorner.wikispaces.com/>), and communities that are less experienced.

5) Research Methods

Our hypothesis is that media interventions co-designed with our chosen communities will impact on people's perception of community assets, as these are evidenced in asset maps. This impact can be measured in terms of creation of new assets as well as better connectivity between assets. Some possible measurements include:

- People become more connected
- People on the periphery become more connected
- We observe more links, more people become part of the network
- New media have a more central role
- More outcomes/ better outcomes are produced
- There is greater cultural diversity/inclusivity (people previously excluded are now represented, could be young, old, BME, etc)

The Design Strand plans to use 4 main research methods.

Firstly, ***focus groups*** will be used in Phase 1 to uncover current perceptions surrounding media practices and aspirations about media use in community-led design projects.

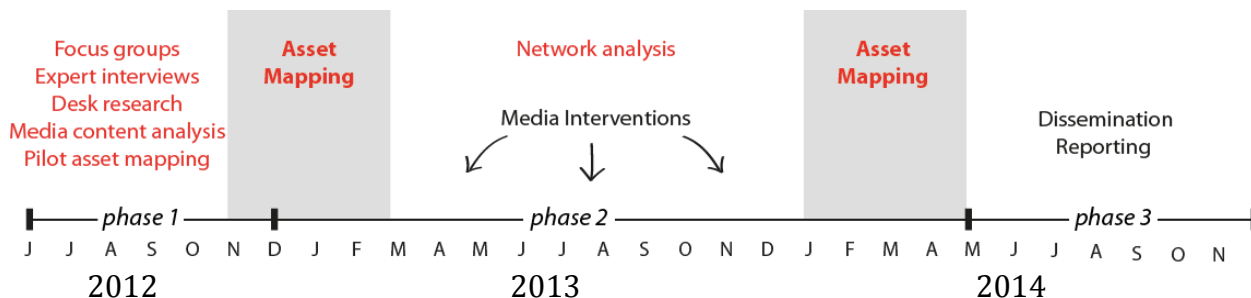
Secondly, ***longitudinal analysis of participants' media practices*** will be used to closely explore what media are being used and for what purposes. We will follow genre-oriented analysis (e.g. thematic cataloguing of media sites and (online, mobile and analogue) tools, as well as content analysis of social media outputs (e.g. twitter feeds, facebook comments, flickr outputs, etc) during different stages in the development of projects.

Thirdly, ***asset mapping*** at the individual (producer) and community group level will be used in order to record and evaluate the value generated from the process of community-led design and the media interventions. Asset mapping will be conducted at the beginning of Phase 2 (benchmarking) and again at the end of Phase 2 (evaluation).

Fourthly, we will look at the value of peer-to-peer community networks, using ***network analysis***.

Alongside these we will conduct ***expert interviews***, and also look at ***secondary data*** related to the project (data from community partners, project reports).

The methods are shown in terms of our timeline in the diagram below:



Asset Mapping

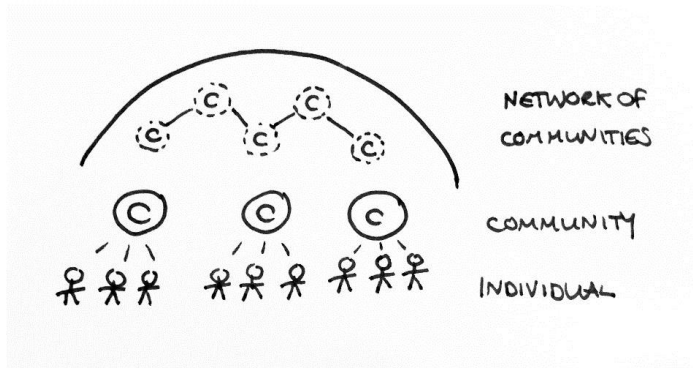
Asset mapping is a way of visually representing an individual's or a community's assets. Asset mapping, as a methodology, emerged out of the principle of asset-based community development, the premise that communities will be better equipped to develop their project if they can identify and mobilise the assets they already have (which often are unrecognised). This allows them to respond to and build on these existing capabilities rather than focusing on what they don't have (Mathie and Cunningham 2002, McKnight and Kretzmann 1996).

Assets can be different things:

- People (e.g. An individual's skills, knowledge, time, associations)
- Spaces (e.g. library, park)
- Groups (e.g. recreational, support groups)
- Cultural identity (e.g. history, diversity, annual festival)
- Community Services (e.g. council, local government)
- Media (e.g. local newspaper, noticeboards, online forums)
- Businesses / local industry

Our hypothesis (as outlined above) is that media interventions will impact on a community's perception of their assets. Hence asset mapping will be used before and after the media interventions in order to record any changes and therefore value added due to the project.

Asset mapping will take place at 3 levels of observation - the individual participant in a project ('producer'), the community project as a group, and the network of community projects.



Asset mapping at the individual and community level will be carried out with 5 different communities, 2 per institution and one shared. These will be selected from those that we engage with in the first phase. Asset mapping at the network level will be carried out with a wider pool of communities.

Individual: Asset map created through **one-on-one interviews** with each community-led design [CLD] project participant, showing their personal assets and connections within the project, and other connections that they could bring in.

- 3-6 individuals from each of 5 communities = **15-30 individuals**

Community Group: Collective asset map created in a **workshop**.

- 2 communities per institution + 1 shared = **5 communities**

These two levels of asset maps will be conducted at the beginning and end of phase 2.

Network level: The movement of assets, information and resources between communities, through a peer-to-peer network of community-led design projects, will be captured throughout Phase 2 and analysed using **network analysis**.

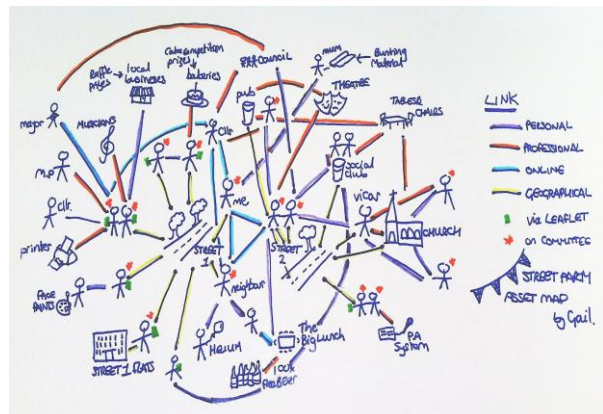
- **10-20 communities** from a pool of ~ 50 (40 from Glass-House, 17 from Nesta, + new communities)

As well as being a research methodology for this project, we envisage the asset maps to be useful artifacts in themselves helping the participating communities visualise and identify future opportunities. Consequently effort will be made to present these in an accessible and visually compelling way and to make these available to each of the communities.

Examples of asset maps:



1.



2.

1. Commissioned illustration of Govanhill's asset map - <http://thrivingtoo.typepad.com/thrivingtoo/assets/>
2. Rough sketch of the assets of a community group who are organising a street party <http://creativecitizens.co.uk/community-led-design/community-asset-mapping-and-a-jubilee-street-party/>

6) Co-creating Interventions

The interventions will be determined together with participating communities following Phase 1 and will be based on the insights collected from the focus groups, content analysis and asset-mapping. The interventions will be ICT / media based. We will consider technologies used for the purpose of communication, collaboration, information and creativity. Examples could include the development of a wiki of community-led design (peer-to-peer information sharing and collaborative co-creation), an online social networking tool (such as Open Design Studio) or the creation of an online, asset mapping tool.

7) Ethics

Participants and Recruitment

Participants in our studies will be citizens from community-led design as well innovation projects and experts who are involved in the co-design activities (architects, planners, local authority representatives and stakeholders in public services including those from Glass-House and NESTA). Community representatives will be identified in collaboration with the Glass House/Nesta mainly from the pool of existing contacts. Two additional communities with little or no contact with the partners will also be identified. Preference will be given to those who have expressed interest and willing to participate in relevant studies/networks. Information about the nature of the study and consent forms will be appropriately distributed to them.

Consent

Information about the study and a consent form will be given in advance of any activity and all participants will be given the opportunity to withdraw at any time. In such case their data will be excluded from the analysis. We comply with the guidelines of the British Psychological Society for conducting research on the Internet and activity in public online spaces within platforms that we will develop, or other online communication/publishing platforms. Consent will be sought for using and disseminating the textual and visual stories of people uploaded on any online tool we develop/co-design (e.g. Asset Maps, ODS) (which will be covered by a Creative Commons license). A terms and conditions note will be included in those tools when participants register to the sites.

Iterative evaluations of these sites will involve levels of observation (e.g. analysis of interactions between individuals as well as individuals' creative media contributions). These will be guided by the code of Ethics and Conduct provided by the British Psychological Society, which will be also published in the website (see Terms and Conditions), and communicated in advance to participants.

Confidentiality

Research Records will be kept confidential. The raw data of our studies may be seen by our project partners and other professional researchers within the project. Analysed results will be published in scientific journals and the project blog as well as presented at academic conferences and meetings. Images and video may be used for training and dissemination. Although participants may be identified from their association with specific projects, communities and organisations, their names will not be used in any public forum or publication, unless prior consent has been achieved. Other personal information will remain confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

Benefits Context and Knowledge Transfer

The project activities will be of direct benefit to participants, engaging them in participatory visioning, enabling them to reflect on the value of participation and of the design process, and appreciate the diverse needs, aspirations, knowledge and contributions of different stakeholders involved in community-led design and services. The project partners constitute critical hub points for connecting research and practice, and working together with the project academics, will play a critical role in identifying and reaching relevant stakeholders and communities. This engagement will be constant throughout the lifecycle of the project and will be achieved both by utilising existing relationships and partnerships, and by developing new links through the project activities. In addition, we anticipate that ODS/[online asset maps and communities' own websites] will produce a highly visual and content rich gallery showcasing achievements and networks for creative interchanges and peer support. We are committed, to the maximum extent feasible, to publish the results of our work iteratively, as the project unfolds, based upon open data principles.

Additional information regarding relationship with communities - tensions surrounding reflexivity and independence: Our research will involve communities who have collaborated with NESTA or the Glass-House. As such our partners, their methodologies and their relation to these communities will also become part of the research. As we mentioned earlier, our team will adopt a participatory action research approach (Kindon et al., 2007). While we take a sensitive approach to partners' and communities' practices, maintaining confidentiality, we will also strive to maintain an independent and neutral stance as reflexive researchers, with the view that insights gathered will be beneficial to all partners in achieving their goals and the wider research community.

8) Timeline for phase 1 (2012)

- 1) Review existing literature and secondary data

Review existing literature and gain insights from secondary data from project reports (e.g. RSA) and our project partners (Nesta, The Glass-House) on a) current practices and patterns of media use; b) practices of, and challenges surrounding, participation and creativity; c) issues regarding community governance and sustainability. We expect to develop a multidisciplinary framework with strands that range from the social sciences and media studies, participatory design and urban planning, as well as urban informatics.

- 2) Explore existing practices and networks

Investigate existing networks for community-led design that are based on online media - e.g. own sites and hyperlocal microsites, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter and analyse their practice.

- 3) Focus groups

2 x focus groups with ~12 people each - 2 representatives from each of 6 community projects drawn from existing projects (Glasshouse and Nesta) and emerging projects.

Aim of focus group is to understand and map current *patterns of media use*.

How are community projects using media?

What new media practices are emerging?

What are communities using media for and for what goal? (creativity / content / communication)?

First focus group facilitated by OU at end June / beginning July (synergy with 'Valuing Community-led Design' research project with The Glass-House)

Second focus group facilitated by RCA in September.

- 4) Expert interviews

Interviews with practitioners and enablers from previous related projects - e.g. Spacemakers, The Civic Crowd, RSA Connected Communities

- 5) Pilot asset mapping

Develop the asset mapping tools/methods that will be used to capture change in assets available to community projects over the course of research project. We will focus on ways to identify and record assets (and the perception of assets) in order to measure the value generated by community-led design and the use of media.

9) Outputs to be presented at the meeting in December 2012

Patterns of media use of our communities

Confirmation of participating communities

Asset map tool and first maps

Preliminary ideas of interventions for phase 2

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STRAND THREE – CREATIVE NETWORKS

1) Main research question

Strand 3 will address the overarching question of the project '1) How does creative citizenship generate value for communities within a changing media landscape and 2) how can this pursuit of value be intensified, propagated and sustained?' by exploring creative citizenship activities generated within two creative community networks.

We wish to understand better how the attempted transition of these creative community networks from informal to formal creative economy creates value for themselves and their communities. This involves consideration of a range of types of creative citizenship, from the everyday or vernacular to the professional.

2) Understanding creative citizenship within strand 3

The idea of cultural citizenship builds on the notion of public sphere developed by Harbermas (1992) and is based on the proposition that 'bona fide citizenship is practised as much through everyday life, leisure, critical consumption and popular entertainment as it is through debate and engagement with capital 'P' politics.' (Burgess *et al.*, 2006:1). Our focus in this strand is less on the Frankfurt School public sphere tradition represented in relation to the Internet by eg Poster (1997) or Kellner (2001) and more on the idea of citizenship predicated on creative and cultural engagements. As such, 'cultural citizenship can be defined as the process of bonding and community building, and reflection on that bonding, that is implied in partaking of the text related practices of reading, consuming, celebrating, and criticizing offered in the realm of (popular) culture (Hermes (2005) quoted by Burgess et al. 2006: 4). In this context, media citizenship can be defined as 'the pursuit of self-organising, reflexive, common purpose among voluntary co-subjects, who learn about each other and about the state of play of their interests though the media.' (Hartley 2010a:17). Today creative citizens represent the entire population i.e. users, consumers, entrepreneurs, workers, artist... (Hartley 2010b) resulting in a continuum of creative practices from the vernacular to the professional. There is a slippage in this brief history from consumption to production which is predicated on the newly available tools of digital media and social networking.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) such as internet and cell phones have fostered a transition 'from place-based inter-household ties to individualised person-to-person interaction (cell phone, email) and specialised role-to-role interactions (online communities)' (Wellman, 2001: 21) changing the way various communities form and interact (see Lister et al 2009 209-221) Usage shows that ICT through broadband, wireless and mobile computing combined with social media (blogging, wikis, social networking...) is playing an increasing role in everyday life (Haythornthwaite and Kendall, 2010) and have generated a 'paradigm shift from

industrial-style content production to (...) *produsage*: the collaborative, iterative, and user-led production of content by participants in a hybrid user-producer, or *produser* role.' (Bruns, 2006: 275). This results in an increased production, mediation and public visibility of vernacular creativity or everyday creative practices (Burgess, 2010) including new forms of participatory media (Jenkins et al 2006, Rheingold, 2008) and as such fostering, it is argued, new modes of cultural/creative/media citizenship.

Thus, for instance, in the prototypical work of Henry Jenkins we see a move from the study of creative textual interpretation (as in Hermes above) to the formation of active 'fan communities' and the adoption of 'producerly' dispositions as citizens find new opportunities to connect and to create. Jenkins et al (2006) define key features of a participatory culture as:

'Affiliations — memberships, formal and informal, in online communities centered around various forms of media, such as Friendster, Facebook, message boards, metagaming, game clans, or MySpace).

Expressions — producing new creative forms, such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan videomaking, fan fiction writing, zines, mash-ups.

Collaborative Problem-solving — working together in teams, formal and informal, to complete tasks and develop new knowledge (such as through Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming, spoiling).

Circulations — Shaping the flow of media (such as podcasting, blogging).'

This analysis takes popular form where arguments are made that the new affordances of digital media and social networking are creating new modes of capitalism, (Tapscott & Williams 2006) transformative modes of 'cognitive surplus' (Shirkey 2010) and new modes of collaborative innovation (Leadbeater 2008)

However the idea of creative citizenship is by no means uncontested and this strand of inquiry into the border between informal and formal creativity will have to confront the developing post Marxist critique that has taken shape around Terranova's influential work adapting Negri's idea of the social factory (2003). This critique of participatory culture sees the forms of creative expression afforded by digital as a form of free labour exploited and appropriated for capital accumulation by corporations, brands and advertising. This critique can be identified more recently in the work of Andrejevic (2008/ 2009), Hesmondhalgh (2010) Axel Bruns 2008 and Christian Fuchs 2012, for who, 'Exploitation happens any time unpaid labour is appropriated, converted and realized as money value.' For our strand the recent coinage of Kuehn & Corrigan of 'Hope Labour' is a useful addition to this critical literature describing as it does the typical efforts made by unpaid creatives in order to build track record and portfolio that can become a route to professional employment.

Concepts for the resolution of these conflicting accounts of Creative Citizenship can be found in the works of Bernard Stiegler. Stiegler (2010) views such efforts outside formal work spheres as an expression of '*otium*', or '*studious leisure*' (ibid.: 52-53, emphasis in original, citing Jean-Marie Andre 1965). Significantly, Stiegler stresses its connection to 'freedom'. In this respect, such alternative ways of working in the context of the 'digital *pharmakon*' that is saturated with cognitive technologies, are well placed in the economy of contribution. Stiegler offers this observation about the alternative 'formation of an *associated sociotechnical milieu*':

The associated sociotechnical milieu opens a field of industrial and commercial relations which nullifies the producer/consumer opposition: it constitutes a *new commerce*, that is, a new regime of psychic and collective individuation, producing long circuits of transindividuation – the contributors are those who contribute to this creation of long circuits. (ibid.: 49-50, emphases in original)

These conceptual backgrounds will underpin our production of empirical evidence of how external value is created by the struggle of creative citizens to become professional contributors to the creative economy.

3) Our community partners and communities

Contrary to strands 1 and 2, our community partners in this strand are also our case studies. They represent two different modes of creative community networks' transitions from informal to formal creative economy operation for which creative citizenship in the new media landscape play an important role.

One, Moseley Exchange, is an example of the co working environments which have been flourishing in Europe in the last 5 years. Created by Moseley Community Development Trust, the ME has both commercial and community goals. In contrast, South Blessed is an example of a entrepreneurial web based video and music production operation with a community ethos. As such, these two sites offer productive contrasts between the designed community driven intervention and the unofficial street level operation driven by an explicitly entrepreneurial but ethical local vision of cultural empowerment.

In order to capture the interplay of creative citizenship practices within these networks and the value for their wider communities, we will focus our research on the following levels of membership:

- Creative entrepreneurs: Vince Baidoo/members of the Moseley Exchange;
- Creative community networks: South Blessed/Moseley Exchange;
- Wider community: Saint Paul and South Blessed users/Moseley Village and Moseley exchange users

In addition to being contrasting examples of creative community networks, our two case studies and partners are also distinctive: one being focus around a physical co-working space – the Moseley Exchange and the other around an online community media platform – South Blessed. As such, their studies also raised the following theoretical sub-questions:

- The role of online media in co-working spaces' creativity processes and representation - the Moseley Exchange;
- The role of online media in community media democracy models.

4) Overall research design

In order to answer the overarching project research question as well as positioning our case studies in their specific theoretical field of enquiry, the strand will adopt a comparative case study approach and compare and contrast the two different modes of creative community network transition from informal to formal creative economy operation and their related creative citizenship practices and media ecologies. Both the Birmingham and Bristol teams will adopt comparative research methods. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted in three phases mapping the aspirations, motivations and media use of key personnel, key network members and wider users and audiences for each operation. This data will be correlated against and compared with social network media use. However, findings will be reflected through three main theoretical fields:

- Creative citizenship – both case studies
- Co-working spaces – Moseley Exchange
- Community media – South Blessed

Detailed research plans for the two case studies with their additional literature review are thus presented below.

5) Moseley Exchange

I. Sub-research questions

This part of the strand explores how creative citizenship generates value for *co-working communities* in the context of web 2.0 by responding to the two sub-questions of phase 1 of the research project.

- What are the new digital and physical media ecologies and practices currently emerging within co-working communities and how do extensive social media and

mobile devices impact on the extent and effectiveness of creative citizenship practices?

- What are the different forms and meanings of creative expression, participation and production that these new media ecologies enable within co-working communities and towards what civic or community [economic, cultural] goals are they directed?

II. Academic background on co-working spaces, media and creative citizenship

The co-working space concept emerged in the mid-2000s in the United States (Fabbri and Charrue-Duboc, 2012) with the increase in telecommuting supported by the IT revolution. While recent work from Spinuzzi (2012) shows that ‘co-working’ may mean different things to both their proprietors and their members, Leforestier (2009: 3), reviewing the emergence of the concept, argues that ‘co-working consists in renting a desktop in an open space for a very flexible period. The space is shared by other people coming from very different backgrounds: entrepreneurs, associations, artists, students, researchers... The “co-workers” can interact so that everyone brings his own talent to a project, improving the outcome.’ The number of co-working spaces has grown rapidly in Europe in the last few years: from 20 co-working spaces in 2008 to more than 140 in 2012 (Entreprise Globale 2010; European Coworking Space Conference, 2010ⁱ). The emergence of these types of spaces offers an alternative to coffee shops to respond to the challenges of working at home such as social isolation, distraction, lack of space to meet clients... for independent contractors, freelancers and professionals. In addition to offering basic services such as a desk, free Wi-fi and other IT and office facilities..., these spaces tend to offer formally or informally some forms of support to entrepreneurial activities notably through informal discussions with other co-workers or specific events and activities run by the space proprietors... (Leforestier, 2009; Fabbri and Charrue-Duboc, 2012; Spinuzzi, 2012).

Many assumptions have been made about the positive impacts of co-working spaces in terms of innovation, support to star-ups, social networking and the strength of weak cooperation... Interestingly, some authors describe co-working space as part of ‘a physical manifestation of the “techno-space” that facilitates greater public engagement and social interaction’ (O’Brien, 2011:1). Despite the central role played by internet and online media such as blogging, twitter, wiki... in the running of co-working spaces (Aguiton and Cardon, 2007; Leforestier, 2009), little research has explored the way these online activities match informal and formal physical activities taking place in co-working spaces or how it contributes to the development of creative professional identities, creative processes and citizenship. This research strand aims to fill this gap. Another gap is to try to understand if and how these co-working spaces play a role in the development and formalisation of creative professional activities over time.

III. Moseley Exchange as an example of co-working spaces and creative community network

The number of co-working spaces has been increasing in the UK in the last few years (Snowdown, 2011). There are co-working spaces in at least 28 cities in the UK todayⁱⁱ. Our partner, the Moseley Exchange (ME), is one of two co-working spaces located in Birmingham. It is an established co-working location with over 50 members from the creative and independent business sectors, including architects, artists, photographers, video producers, TV and Radio producers, Marketing Experts, Business Advisers, Web Designers, Programmers, etc..., the ME is an open co-working and creative space in the heart of Moseley Village in Birmingham where members can meet, work, learn and exchange ideas.

Of particular interest to this research will be to try to understand what the ME represents for:

- The members of the ME – the creative professionals working at the Moseley Exchange
- Its proprietor – the members of the Moseley Community Development Trust (MCDT) and the team of the MCDT and ME;
- Other temporary users of the ME i.e. people coming for artistic events or talks;
- Other representative organisations of Moseley Village.

Given our research interest and questions, it will also be helpful to compare to the extent possible the ME with other co-working spaces in the UK (and potentially Worldwide), to other identified/formal creative places in Birmingham and to creative community organisations such as South Blessed.

IV. Research tools, Co-creation Decision and Timeline – 1st phase (2012)

Given the lack of research on co-working spaces and creative citizenship as well as the lack of clarity on the value generated by such activities, our research design is based on case studies approach and a mixed methods approach using both inductive and deductive processes of data gathering and analysis.

The objective of the first research phase is to develop an understanding of the objectives behind Moseley as a co-working space and its distinctive identity/branding, to what extent it is linked to the use of online media at both individual and collective levels, the degree of creative citizenship taking place around the ME offline and online media, the types of identity and content generated from the ME members and how they interact with ME activities and identity, the value of these practices and in which media ecologies they take place and finally how they could be fostered. A detailed list of the various research activities and tools, their objectives to be carried out in the first phase of the research can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1: research tools, objectives and timeline – Moseley Exchange – June/Dec 2012

Research tools	Objectives/Questions	Timeline
Literature on media ecologies and practices (expression, production, participation, everyday creativity and citizenship) – with a particular focus on coworking	Refine sensitising concepts	June/july
Brief portrait of online media creative citizenship of coworking spaces in the UK	Online ethnography of online media activities of UK-coworking spaces. Survey?	July-September
Background data on moseley village and existing media	characteristics of the wider neighbourhood place of cdt and Moseley exchange	June/july
Start with a discourse analysis of ME documents and virtual ethnography of existing online media + other media in Moseley –	Image of CDT/ME, what creative expressions, who is following the ME, what media are used? To what extent culture/creativity is there? How are media used?	June/july
Introduction of project to the moseley board	Discussion and feedbacks about research and proposed plan.	23 rd july
Participant observation at ME + interviews with cdt/me board members and staff + some me members	Co-working area – what is going on? who is there? how people interact physically? Vision/identity of cdt vs me Media usage Creative citizenship? Who is there? not? Creative media networks? – Social network analysis Role of me/cdt in creative practices? Value?	August/september
Interviews of neighbourhood representatives about cdt/me and image + views of some other local/UK ‘competitors’	Vision/identity of cdt vs me? Media usage? How does it participate in the neighbourhood creative citizenship? Who is included/‘excluded’? Competition/collaboration with other activities? Creative networks?	September
Brief MEDIA survey of me members + staff members	How do they use media in relation to creative practices? co-production?	September/october
Seminar/workshop with some other UK coworking spaces + provocation scenarios – what is needed?	How are other UK co-working spaces branding/mediating themselves? what media expressions/practices are needed to foster creative citizenship and coworking at the ME?	october

V. Ethical considerations

The research will follow the research ethical codes of practice of the University of Birmingham. This will involve insuring informed consents and publications of the

findings following anonymity principles whenever agreed with research participants. Given the importance of our community partners in the research, it will also be important to ensure mutual benefices of the research for both researchers and community partners. Various discussions have already been held with some of the Moseley Exchange representatives about the nature of the research, its objectives and its potential outcomes. Regular communications and involvement of ME representatives at key points of the first phase of the research are planned. In addition, both ME proprietors and ME members will be involved in the provocation workshop aiming to determine the co-creation practices to be implemented in the second phase of the research. Finally, the use of qualitative research tools will be based on an interactive dialogue with research participants with regard to the transcriptions of the research interviews and the analysis of the findings.

VI. Outputs of the research to be presented at the December 2012 research meeting

The output of this first phase of the research will be a research report giving:

A portrait of key media practices of UK co-working spaces;

An understanding of how Moseley Exchange compared to this national portrait;

A map of both proprietors' and members' understandings of ME as a creative co-working space and its identity;

A map of ME members related online media practices versus other creative practices and their perceived values and how it relates to ME media activities;

An elementary mapping of ME's identity/branding within Moseley Village and the links with ME members' identity and branding;

A diagnosis of existing gaps in Web 2.0 media practices;

6) South Blessed

I. Sub-research questions

- What imagined or actual transformational effects does creative and media engagement have on the individual lives of the subjects in this network?
- How does the South Blessed creative community add value to their wider community of family, friends, associates and the audiences of their creative content?

II. Brief literature background: Community media and new models of digital democracy

The concept of community media emphasizes a common concern for media democracy, framed by a discourse of access and participation, enacted through localized, grassroots organization that enables community participation in the creation of media

communication and content. Community Media is dually typified by public sphere claims to broadcast activity and activity with a more direct educational imperative (Sobers 2010).

In the global-political North and West, emergent forms of community media became visible as a result of social action struggles during the 1960's, where the potential use of newly available electronic media for mobilization and communication were recognized (Nigg & Wade 1980). In the UK, the 1970's and 80's saw community news and photography groups and film and video collectives use media to document and articulate social struggles. Community Arts emerged in a similar fashion, as a means to support cultural and political movements, challenging social and cultural hierarchies through the promotion of arts as a socially relevant mechanism for communication, cohesion, expression, education and transformation (Sinker 2000: 156).

Community Arts and Media became aligned through arguments for public subsidy of cultural production, which featured strongly in community regeneration policies, particularly in the 1990's, when policy makers identified the effectiveness of arts and media participation in ameliorating the effects of social disadvantage and deprivation (e.g. DCMS 1999). Subsequently the assumed benefits of community arts and media participation formed part of a wider discourse that located the orthodoxy of culture as a driver for urban economic growth (Miles & Paddison 2005: 833).

As digital content has become an enabler across all industries in information and communication sensitive economies the claims democratic public sphere access through media have been challenged by the ubiquity of media production technologies. Rather cultural production and consumption have been constructed as playing an integral role in driving innovation and growth (e.g. Cunningham et al 2005). Emphasising the value of arts and culture in stimulating creativity and innovation and seeking to mainstream the creative industries sector in economic and policy thinking, the *Creative Britain* strategy (DCMS/BERR/DIUS 2009) set out a manifesto for 'unlocking the nation's creative talents' to ensure Britain's future prosperity.

In the digital age, the potential for cultural production as well as consumption has heightened the expectation that use of media can foster community membership, which has become synonymous with civic participation (Lewis, 2008). However, the concept of 'community' in community media discussions is fast being superseded by the notion of 'networks' and media is recognized as 'social spaces for interaction' (Miloni 2009) underlining the assertion that the medium that carries the message has shaped change as well as the message itself (Beaumont 2011).

The proliferation and convergence of new forms of media technologies has challenged democratic media practitioners to consider their appropriation for the pursuit of media democracy. It is recognized that whilst new networked technologies such as web 2.0 can be used to open up dialogic possibilities that afford value in enabling people to engage with society of their own terms and through their own networks and processes, there is

also a need for critical discussion that questions the assumption of democracy and examines technocratic and economic models of exclusion and control (Halleck 2002, Malina & Jankowski 2002).

III. South Blessed as an example of a community-based network of creative citizens

South Blessed, our partner organisation led by a local cultural entrepreneur Vince Baidoo, is a community-based network of creative citizens, whose work is aggregated on a video based online platform, which showcases talent from across the South West including music, fashion, dance, skateboarding and news and journalism. The organisation has a strong sense of both entrepreneurial and ethical mission. South Blessed also operates a street-front studio in the St. Paul's area of Bristol which is an inner-city suburb. The area has a turbulent history, having witnessed rapid change, neglect and renewal – after sustaining damage in world war two, post-war St. Paul's subsequently became home to a large population of immigrants - the area became infamous for a riot in 1980 in which local youths fought against the police, though deemed a race riot, the social unrest was viewed by many to be a response to social injustice and racial discrimination by police. In the late sixties community organisers in St. Paul's developed an African Caribbean carnival, representational of community culture, which became one of the longest running carnivals in the UK attracting almost 70,000 visitors at its height (Burton, 2010).

IV. Research Methodology, Co-creation Decision and Timeline

The basic approach to identifying research subjects will be snowballing out from Vince Baidoo at the core of the South Blessed network working through Phases 1 – 3 from his world to the understandings of subjects peripherally involved in his network. Our initial aim will be to help him develop and articulate a South Blessed strategy for the next two years with a view to the Creative Citizens project supporting its implementation. This overarching aim at the opening of the research is a key to building a safe ethical framework for the project.

Phase 1-3 July-Dec 2012

Timeline	Activity	Goal	Approach
Phase 1 July – August 2012	Focus on Vince Baidoo	Understanding his motivations, aspirations and working practices.	Observation, Interviews, trust building events.
	Summative content and discourse analysis of SB content and interactions with users and audiences. (Including production, upload and viewing patterns on the SB site but also an analysis of the SB Facebook site).	Understanding of the usefulness of Facebook in such network building actions but also a comparative frame for understanding the dynamics of face to face and online interactions in the SB creative citizenship community. This will provide a narrative of the history of SB in relation to the various productions, interactions and formats presented on the SB platforms. This will be analysed within the context of VB's own narrative and motivations as identified in semi-structured interviews.	This analysis will identify VB's methods of engagement with SB audiences, and highlight regular contributors, co-creators, commentators, 'likers', and audiences. This will start to build a picture of the SB radius of creative citizens, wider community, and their responses to SB activity. We will also investigate the suitability of Social Network Analysis methods to understand this SB offline and online network.
Phase 2 September 2012	Research with SB co-creators - working with the immediate and most active users of the SB network.	To understand how SB co-creators experience themselves as Creative Citizens.	Observation, focus group and interviews.
Phase 3 October – November 2012	Map creative citizens in the wider SB community in relation to each other and map creative citizens in relation to media use, and how media aid their creative pursuits.	Investigation of the SB brand as community asset. Understanding the wider SB user community and the impact that SB has. We are interested to consider the SB 'affect' as a community asset here. This phase will also have a sub focus on the relationship between locality and the Creative Citizen network which will consider the context to the specific Wilder St location and investment pattern in 'creativity' and entrepreneurship there.	Methods will be observation, focus group and interviews, ensuring that we get to the edge of the immediate VB network here. Looking for a cross section of people who might use the SB site or who might experience it as a community social enterprise. Representatives of the wider community of SB users.
Phase 4 December 2012	Co-identify a field of action research & delivery that supports the strategy identified in phase one.	To co-create and analyse action research in relation to VB's aspirations for the intervention.	Group workshops and sessions.

V. Ethics

In addressing the ethical dimensions of the collaborative research process, we will develop a memorandum of understanding between South Blessed and the research team that will establish realistic expectations and intentions for the project. This is intended to emphasize the importance of transparency in building and sustaining the research partnership. The MOU will be revisited every three months in order to ensure it is fulfilling its purpose and in order to make any necessary revisions. We aim to ensure that the research is a genuinely co-creative and collaborative project that aims for equity of mutual value.

The research will follow ethical codes of practice established by the University of the West of England. Written consent will be sought when carrying out interviews and focus groups and every effort will be made to ensure all contributions are anonymous.

VI. Outputs for December 2012 meeting

- Initial headlines from data offering an analysis of the aspirations, motivations and values at work in the SB network.
- An initial map of value production inside and outside the SB network.

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