

# CREATIVE CITIZENS

**Creative Citizens' Variety Pack**  
Inspiring Digital Ideas From Community Projects



Royal College of Art  
**THE HELEN HAMLYN  
CENTRE FOR DESIGN**

**Nesta**



The Glass-House  
COMMUNITY LED DESIGN



The Open  
University



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



**CONNECTED**  
COMMUNITIES

**EPSRC**

Engineering and Physical Sciences  
Research Council

Edited by Dan Lockton, Catherine  
Greene, Alice Casey, Lizzie Raby  
& Abbie Vickress

Designed by Lizzie Raby  
& Abbie Vickress

Printed by Circle Services Group, 7  
Stock Road, Southend on Sea, Essex,  
SS2 5QF

Published by The Helen Hamlyn Centre  
for Design, Royal College of Art,  
Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2EU

The text, images and layout of  
this document, are, except where  
otherwise noted, licensed under  
a Creative Commons Attribution-  
NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0  
International Licence:[http://  
creativecommons.org/licenses/by-  
nc-sa/4.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

## Contributors

Emma Agusita  
Giota Alevizou  
Katerina Alexiou  
Charlotte Blakemore  
Alice Casey  
Ruth Catlow  
Jonathan Dovey  
Louise Dredge  
Mary Flanagan  
Catherine Greene  
Dave Harte  
Olu Jenzen  
Jennifer Jones  
Samantha Jones  
Rachel Keller  
Ann Light  
Dan Lockton  
Alison McCandlish  
David McGillivray  
Gayle McPherson  
Alan Outten  
Robert Phillips  
Lizzie Raby  
Gail Ramster  
Lara Salinas  
Shawn Sobers  
Jerome Turner  
Abbie Vickress  
Theodore Zamenopoulos

If redistributing or  
adapting the work,  
please credit the original  
contributors.

ISBN 978-1-907342-97-4  
[varietypack@rca.ac.uk](mailto:varietypack@rca.ac.uk)

Allsorts Youth Project, Brighton,  
Birmingham City University -  
Birmingham Centre for Media & Cultural Research,  
Blackburn Girl Geeks,  
Connect Cannock,  
Engage Liverpool,  
Furtherfield,  
Homebaked Community Land Trust,  
Horizon Digital Economy Research,  
Lancaster University - Creative Exchange,  
Lancaster University - HighWire Centre,  
Liverpool City Council,  
Liverpool John Moores University,  
Liverpool Vision,  
Nesta,  
Northumbria University - School of Design,  
Open University - Department of Engineering & Innovation  
RedNinja,  
Royal College of Art - Design Products,  
Royal College of Art - The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design  
South Blessed, Bristol,  
Technology Will Save Us,  
The British Beekeepers' Association,  
The Glass-House Community Led Design,  
The Honey Club,  
The Mill E17, Walthamstow,  
Tidworth Mums, Wiltshire,  
Tiltfactor,  
University of Brighton - School of Art, Design & Media  
University of Liverpool,  
University of the West of England -  
Digital Cultures Research Centre,  
University of the West of Scotland -  
Media Academy Knowledge Exchange,  
Wards Corner Community Coalition.

With special thanks to Ingrid Abreu Scherer, Vince Baidoo,  
Louise Dredge, Margaret Durkan, Ian Hargreaves,  
Gail Ramster and Harriet Riley.

## Introductory Material

*Foreword*

Alice Casey

*Welcome to the Creative Citizens' Variety Pack*

Dan Lockton, Catherine Greene, Lizzie Raby  
and Abbie Vickress

*Reflective Citizens:*

*Some Creative Tactics for Communities*

Ann Light

## Case Studies

### Supporting Each Other Locally

Using digital media to bring people with something in common together, connecting and supporting each other in their local area.

*Tidworth Mums*

Louise Dredge and Charlotte Blakemore

*Social Media @Allsorts*

Allsorts Youth Project, Brighton

Olu Jenzen

*Connect Cannock*

Jerome Turner and Dave Harte

### Telling Stories

Enabling people's voices to be heard, locally and beyond, using digital tools to create and share.

*The Story Machine at The Mill*

Dan Lockton, Catherine Greene, Gail Ramster,  
Alan Outten and Lizzie Raby

*Digital Commonwealth*

David McGillivray, Jennifer Jones,  
Alison McCandlish and Gayle McPherson

## Case Studies Continued

### Placemaking

Bringing together physical spaces with digital tools, enabling new opportunities for communities to make a difference locally.

*Wards Corner Community Plan*

Katerina Alexiou, Theodore Zamenopoulos  
and Giota Alevizou

*Play Your Place*

Ruth Catlow and Mary Flanagan

*Open Planning*

Lara Salinas

*Homebaked: An Oven at the Heart of Anfield*

Samantha Jones

### Building Skills Through Making Together

People creating and learning together, using digital tools to make craft, art and technology for themselves.

*Tell-Tale Technology*

Rachel Keller

*Bee Lab*

Rob Phillips

*Indigo Babies with South Blessed*

Emma Agusita, Jonathan Dovey  
and Shawn Sobers

## Useful Resource and Search Terms

## Foreword

**Alice Casey**  
**Innovation Lab, Nesta**

Communities have a great deal of untapped creative potential. When people get together to shape their communities, they unlock latent potential to make a positive impact in a variety of ways. This is something that has been going on within community organisations for many years. At *Nesta*, we saw it in our work on 'Neighbourhood Challenge' in 2011, and have found it reflected once again through the Creative Citizens projects in 2014. What is now changing is the complexity of community life and its challenges - and the widespread uptake in use of digital tools.

**Practical Creativity:** Digital media and other technologies are changing the way communities are shaping their surroundings and tackling local challenges, but it is a gradual process, not a revolution. You can see examples of this happening everywhere across the UK and beyond in many and varied ways: from the ambitious and large-scale, to the small and informal.

The multiplicity is reflected in this Variety Pack. People are pragmatic in their use of technology, picking and mixing elements that appear to 'get the job done', often combining digital media with traditional methods of engagement. Examples include: creating 'hyperlocal' media outlets, running crowdfunding campaigns, using physical prompts to bring offline content online, collaborating on local visual plans, and developing new and creative skills.

**Sharing Knowledge:** Sharing these - often undocumented - uses is vital if we want to accelerate knowledge-sharing and good practice, to help communities make more of what is available to them to tackle tough challenges, more quickly. We compiled the Creative Citizens' Variety Pack to capture and share a snapshot of this wealth of creative applications of digital tools being developed at the grass roots. We hope it will help equip communities and funders with a greater understanding of the nature, value and variety of this activity.

We are still in the early years of the development of the internet, and there are many more changes to come. Communities need to be supported to take up digital tools to full effect: to manage resources, to create, to share. Funding and support institutions for communities must also learn from these stories and adapt their own processes to support and mesh with digital grassroots initiatives in more meaningful and effective ways.

This means skills, expertise and good practice being shared. This Variety Pack is one small way of doing this. We hope it will help prompt explorations, and that it will be just the start of more work to support this new wave of digital, diverse, locally-led change.

## Welcome to the Creative Citizens' Variety Pack

*Dan Lockton,  
Catherine Greene,  
Lizzie Raby,  
Abbie Vickress.*

*The Helen Hamlyn  
Centre for Design,  
Royal College  
of Art.*

Welcome to the Creative Citizens' Variety Pack. This is a small collection of community projects from around the country, which all make use of digital tools in creative and interesting ways. They enable groups to develop, achieve their aims, and sustain themselves. As Alice Casey says in her foreword, the collection is a snapshot of inspirational ideas and tips rather than a comprehensive guide, but we hope you'll find something useful here whether you're currently involved in a community project yourself, are looking for possible future ideas for your group, or you consider yourself a 'creative citizen'.

As you'll see, the groups and their projects in this Variety Pack are all very different, but they have lots of challenges in common and so we've broadly grouped them into four themes: Supporting each other locally, Telling stories, Placemaking and Building skills through making together.

Among the organisations and creative projects featured, we have beekeepers and bakers, newspapers and graphic novels, mobile games and apps, and communities of many different kinds. Each includes a set of practical tips and suggestions 'from the field' about what others can learn from the process. These range from specific advice about how to manage particular digital tools, to more general insights about how to engage people and keep them motivated. Ann Light from Northumbria University—who has experience working with many different community groups on using technology and design in their activities—has also contributed an article with more detailed discussion of techniques for reflecting on what you do, as a way of supporting creativity.



## Creative Citizens and Digital Tools

### What do we mean by ‘creative citizens’?

Everyday millions of people do something creative, from knitting and genealogy to photography and choirs, sometimes organised in community groups and networks, sometimes not. The crossover into ‘citizenship’ begins when there is a social, political or civic element to the creative work.

### What do we mean by ‘digital tools’?

We’ve drawn the boundaries quite loosely here, aiming to include a spectrum from common, social networking platforms such as Facebook, to ‘one off’ creative technology projects. Many projects have a common link, through digital technology, to physical spaces—such as a building or a neighbourhood. Others have a common link using the opportunities that digital technology provides, creating physical media such as printed newspapers or graphic novels. The term ‘transmedia’ is sometimes used for these kinds of projects.

### The connected communities programme

The Variety Pack has been produced as part of the project ‘Media, Community and the Creative Citizen’ funded by the Connected Communities programme. A number of the projects in the pack have come out of this UK-wide programme designed to help connect community groups with academic research. The projects aim to help researchers to understand the changing role of communities, particularly how they encourage health, economic prosperity and creativity. It is jointly funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.

### Getting involved

Would you like to see your community’s project in the Variety Pack in the future? The online version, at [creativecitizens.co.uk](http://creativecitizens.co.uk), will continue to be expanded with new projects, so please do get in touch: [varietypack@rca.ac.uk](mailto:varietypack@rca.ac.uk).

## Useful Resource and Search Terms

**Here is a small collection of some resources that contributors have recommended, we suggest that you use a search engine to find them. If you have any others to suggest, please get in touch: [varietypack@rca.ac.uk](mailto:varietypack@rca.ac.uk) or add them at: [creativecitizens.co.uk](http://creativecitizens.co.uk)**

### Generally Useful

Community Design Exchange  
(The Glass-House)

Community Media Association

Connected Communities Media Collection  
(community media from across the UK)

Our Digital Community

Nesta Neighbourhood Challenge

Making Media with Communities: Guidance for  
Researchers by Northumbria University, 2014

Doing Research Together: How to make sure things  
are fair and no-one is harmed, by the Centre for  
Social Justice and Community Action, Durham  
University

Donald Schön, (1983) *The reflective practitioner: how  
professionals think in action*, Basic Books, New York.

Making the future, one prototype at a time (a  
collection of social design methods and toolkits  
compiled by Nesta).

Nesta DIY Toolkit (participatory tools)

## Supporting each other locally

- How to set up a Facebook group
- How to set up a WordPress blog
- A Survivor's Guide to Hyperlocal Media

## Telling stories

- How We Made it Happen: Community groups making programmes for local radio, with recommendations
- Community Media resources: radio, TV and film
- Raising Your Voice: Digital Storytelling to Create Change
- Representing Communities project
- Digital tools for storytelling (via the Digital Commonwealth project)

## Placemaking

- A Compendium for the Civic Economy
- Neighbourhood Planning LinkedIn Group
- Commonplace
- Stickyworld
- PlanLoCaL Localism & Neighbourhood Planning resources

## Building skills through making together

- Make magazine (DIY technology projects)
- Instructables (community of makers creating instructions for others)
- Maker Faires and Mini Maker Faires (Newcastle, London, Brighton, Edinburgh)

## Digital tools mentioned in the case studies

**Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter, Storify

**Blogging:** Tumblr, WordPress

**Video:** YouTube, iMovie, Filmic Pro, Videopad

**Photography:** Flickr, Adobe Photoshop

**Audio:** AudioBoo, SoundCloud, Audacity

**Mapping:** Open Street Map, Google Maps, Stickyworld

**Fundraising:** Kickstarter

**Websites:** Wikispaces, Mozilla Webmaker

**Linking Together Digital Tools:** If This Then That

**Graphic Design:** Adobe Illustrator and InDesign

**Game Design & Coding:** Javascript, PHP, MySQL, Box2D physics engine, Github

**Printing:** Newspaper Club

**Hardware:** Smart phones, tablets, Apple iPad, Apple TV and mini-projector

**Electronics:** Near Field Communication (NFC) tags, prototyping kits from Technology Will Save Us

**Licensing:** Creative Commons, GNU General Public Licence



The Creative Citizens' Variety Pack is a collection of 12 inspirational community projects, all making use of digital tools in creative ways for social benefit, with practical suggestions and advice.

From beekeepers to bakers, storytelling to social media, and newspapers to graphic novels, we hope you'll find something useful here whether you're currently involved in a community project yourself, are looking for future ideas for your group, or just consider yourself a 'creative citizen'.



Royal College of Art

**THE HELEN HAMLYN  
CENTRE FOR DESIGN**

**The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design**

**Royal College of Art**

Kensington Gore London SW7 2EU

[www.creativecitizens.co.uk](http://www.creativecitizens.co.uk)

[varietypack@rca.ac.uk](mailto:varietypack@rca.ac.uk)

