Digital Convergence and Collaborative Cultures

Publishing in the context of the wider creative industries

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the position of publishing within the arena of the creative industries and set an agenda for research into a particular aspect of change in the relationship between publishing and other creative sectors. In most definitions of creative industries, publishing is listed alongside other creative activities (from film making and fine art to heritage services and advertising), fitting within different sub-categories depending on the models used. However, it might be more useful to align the activities of publishing with the wider creative industries, identifying which characteristics and behaviours it shares with these sectors in order to position itself more effectively alongside them; by taking this approach publishing can recognise its strengths, share the issues that face many creative sectors and collaborate more effectively given new challenges.

Digital convergence and the Creative Industries

Digital transformation in production, distribution and consumption of creative products has led to a growing overlap between different creative activities. Convergence culture and the blurring of boundaries between different sorts of creative products (eg between a book app and a game) mean that definitions of these products and the industries that produce them are changing (Jenkins, 2008). With shifting formats and multimedia, these converged products seem less defined, despite efforts of producers to keep control of them (Jenkins, 2008); these product/format distinctions however seem to be irrelevant to consumers: as commentators point out, the format of the book means less to the consumer than the desire to read something (Lloyd, 2009).

Meanwhile transmedia story telling, where content around particular stories may be consumed in different formats, from books and animations to games and film, is becoming more prevalent. The term transmedia story telling needs some definition (Weedon et al, 2014) but broadly different producers and writers may well be involved as the story moves from one format to another, different formats often filling in different parts of the story or following different characters. Gaining consumer participation to track down the story and get embedded in the process can be regarded as an important part of this (Jenkins, 2008). Participatory culture also influences the rise of ‘prosumers’, consumers who have become their own producers (Rifkin, 2014); this indicates the blurring of boundaries between the producer and consumer. In publishing terms an example of this might be fan fiction writers, where consumers can produce and customise works without needing intermediaries; consumers can get involved directly in the popular culture of which they form a part (Jenkins, 2008). Similarly, opportunities for self-publishing allow a fusion between publishing services and creators who seek a more seamless connection with readers (Baverstock, 2011) while, taken further, consumers such as scanlators can appropriate a role in the representation and distribution of material, questioning further the need for the traditional cultural intermediaries such as publishers (Lee, 2012).

In the developing behaviours of these industries further blurring edges can be observed as these industries face similar issues such as copyright, market control moving downstream to distribution, the new technology intermediaries, the rise of self-publishing, disintermediation and lack of direct customer relationships to list just some (Baverstock, 2011, Bhaskar, 2013, Jenkins, 2008). Examining the reaction of the creative sector to these challenges highlights similarities in their approach; and as they recognise blurring boundaries, it appears they are collaborating more widely than they did before with different creative producers, further illustrating structural convergence.

This paper sets the context for an exploration of an aspect of organisational behaviour that appears to be a growing phenomenon in publishing. Collaborative activity has been part and parcel of the publishing arena throughout its history and essential to innovation whether developing new products or finding new ways to market, whether preparing major new digital initiatives or developing new operations. However rather than collaborating with one main type of creative producer – the author - or with other suppliers very much from within the publishing industry space like printers and software developers, publishers are now collaborating more often cross-creative sector, and doing so in new ways. The way projects are financed, the number of players involved, the market places being considered and the issues around ownership of intellectual property are becoming more complex in some of these new collaborations. The expected outcomes are also sometimes different; success and failure may be measured differently and collaborations that may well be primarily exploratory rather than transactional.

The paper aims to understand more fully the way publishing sits within this wider context in order to then understand the nature of these new styles of collaborations. The paper starts with an overview to position publishing within four main models of creative industries; then explores the various characteristics that are usually applied to creative industries as a whole to examine the fit publishing has within those; taking this further the paper then outlines the main challenges faced by publishing that chime in with those of the wider industry; and finally, by moving on to explore albeit briefly the greater economy in terms of innovation theory and network enterprise, highlights the particular phenomenon of collaboration. Longer term research is proposed that will explore this phenomenon and examine the impact that it has on the changing structure of the industry. Throughout points that the proposed research will explore are identified and the paper concludes with a brief outline of the research to be undertaken.

Publishing Looking Outwards

Publishing has operated within reasonably solid boundaries for many years; this is not to say it has not been very effective in developing creativity and innovating around new products and businesses (Victorian entrepreneurs , Allen Lane and Penguin paperbacks, DK and visual communication etc.). Indeed it has been innovative around supply (Nash, 2010) and creating a smoothly oiled value chain that has been honed over many decades, but the operation of the market, and the models that are applied to it, have allowed it to work in a reasonably self-contained way; consider the value chain (Hirsch, 1972; Thompson, 2012; Clark and Phillips, 2008; DeFillippi, Grabher and Jones, 2007) and the communication circuit (Darnton, 2009) for instance. Radical change to the way the market operates has led to disruption that means publishing, along with other creative sectors, is now facing a variety of challenges (Banks and O’Connor, 2009). Commentators are remarking on the way publishing needs to reassess its position, if not its purpose, in light of this, whether in more academically oriented calls for new theory (Bhaskar, 2013), adjusted models to allow for digital transformation (Ray Murray and Squires on the digital communications circuit (2013)) or in business reports and surveys from actors within the industry (such as Natwotka interviewing Stephen Smith (2013)) who recognize the need to identify areas for growth in a changing landscape that go beyond traditional publishing. Indeed Simon and Bogdanowicz (2012) in their JRC report The Digital Shift comment that the media and content industries are among the industries that have been first and heavily hit by the digital shift. Innovation needs now to be around demand not supply (Nash, 2010); the reader-centred approach (Lloyd, 2008,2009;Tian and Martin, 2011) is a way to move on from thraldom to particular formats and legacy systems. Nor is it a case of seeking a simple, if painful, transformation to a digital business; change in not going to stop so a continuously adaptive business is going to be required (Hall, 2013; Healy,2011).

The Creative Industries – four models

While publishing is exploring its outer boundaries from within, those studying the broad area of ‘creative industries’ find ways to categorise it that pose different questions around definitions of creative activity. Using four main models as identified by Flew (2013), one can see very different approaches, but ones that are not always satisfactory in combining the cultural and commercial imperative (or indeed paradox) that so often is at the root of many creative industries (Hesmondalgh, 2011, Banks and O’Connor, 2009, DeFillippi, Grabher and Jones, 2007). On the face of it trying to draw links between very different industries would appear obviously very challenging but attempts can be worth making. The four models are as follows:

1. DCMS (Department for Culture Media and Sport in the UK)– this model, established in 1998, is regarded as ‘ad hoc’ by Flew (2013) based on the fact that characteristics and links between these industries are not very clearly defined; the focus is upon creating a list of sectors and a single definition of creative industries in order to make some sort of monetised assessment of value to the economy (IP becoming key part of the debate here). They define it as involving individual creativity while also providing the opportunity for wealth creation. The area of government policy is one that is beyond scope for this research but the definition sees publishing as creative content producer as outlined by NESTA (National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts) in a report that explores ways to subdivide creative industries into manageable categories (2006).

2. The concentric circles model, developed by Throsby (2008), attempts to tackle the issues of creative activity, placing creative inputs right at the heart with layers radiating out for those involved in wider production (or reproduction) and distribution of the creative works. This attempts to deal with the issue of value around the created cultural content, while placing the more administrative activity of distribution in the outer circle. Publishing here fits into an outer ring of wider cultural industries alongside, for example, sound recording and heritage (Thosby, 2008); this might make sense by placing art and literature (creative product ) for instance at the centre, but does not necessarily allow for the complex relationship between, for example, literature and publishing.

3. WIPO (2012) takes the approach which focuses on IP as the embodiment of the creativity –there is value in the created product – rather than in the creating source – which is economically clear, so producers like publishers and film companies become much more central in this model; the danger though being that it appears to emphasise one of the key issues that many find problematical: the perception that IP can equal control and limitation (Jenkins, 2008, Lanier, 2011, Naughton, 2012) in an age of the democratic internet and which is possibly inconsistent with a move to zero marginal cost and the new economic processes that might follow (Rifkin, 2014).

4. The symbolic texts model, as outlined by Hesmondhalgh (2011) in his text (summarised by Flew, 2013), focuses on the cultural industries, the industrial production and circulation of symbolic texts central to our understanding of ourselves; here the media industry is at the core in this activity. By focusing on the content, this model moves away from the problems some models have using definitions of the creative activities at their centre, when these activities may well play a key part in other industries (eg creativity in innovation or design/marketing ) that would not be considered as creative industries. This model focuses on the products, and specifically those that create social meaning; here publishing features as a core cultural industry and possibly this side steps both the financial imperative, the IP issues and the creative act that are key to the other definitions.

Emergent themes from These Models

As can be seen these models come from different positions and many experts from different disciplinary backgrounds have explored these more closely, most commonly taking economic, organisational behaviour or cultural studies standpoints (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011), but in all these models there is an acceptance of the difficulty of defining and convincingly linking various aspects of creativity: indeed the range of models reflects this complexity (Flew, 2013). It raises questions about how far one can, or should, separate the creator (eg author) from the wider activity that supports it (eg publisher). With digital transformation across these industries, any separation can leave open debates around which parts of the industry are still needed (Bhaskar, 2013).

Two themes in particular, that exercise all these models, revolve around issues that appear to be becoming more significant in light of digital transformation. The first is where to place creativity that uses the activities of the core creative industries in other industries: this is not just with reference to being creative in any company that needs to innovate, but more specifically about applying creative skills, for instance the creative roles such as designers and social marketing teams within any sort of industry or the large brand that wants to run its own publications. This becomes an important point in the argument that creative industries engender key creative benefits to the wider economy (Bakhshi and Throsby, 2009; Defillippi, Grabher and Jones, 2007). This could well be an important characteristic to explore when identifying new collaborative trends in publishing, a characteristic that shows the collaboration is both learning from, and able to create knowledge for, other industries.

The second is how to tackle the complex relationship between art and commerce: how far should economic value be included as part of these definitions? Digital transformation of the economics of creativity may lead to a re-evaluation of this relationship; Banks and O’Connor (2009) suggest a new approach is needed to this continuing debate. Specifically within publishing Thompson’s (2012) analysis of symbolic value is important as a way to understand the cultural work that publishing undertakes, supporting talent that may not sell very well, but is a necessary part of creating a canon of culturally meaningful texts.

However in all these models there is the inclination to draw lines either between different creative industries (e.g publishing and graphic design) or between different activities (e.g. author and publisher). These lines can be artificial and do not very well depict the connections between various aspects of the creative industries, particularly in an digital environment of increasingly blurred boundaries; furthermore, they may also be detrimental, in making it apparently easy to cut a player out of the picture: if the publisher becomes defined as distributor of cultural product (Throsby, 2008), then it becomes easier question why they are necessary when creators (authors) can go to the market direct (enabled by the tools now available on the internet).

While digital media seems to establish more autonomy and control for the creative individual, it does not leave the wider creative industries necessarily redundant, nor deny their own innate creativity that is instilled within the original created work as they develop it, thus increasing cultural value and significance. These apparently ‘distributive’ industries (Throsby, 2008) may well need to redefine themselves in light of the prosumer economy where these models of creative industries fall short. Going further this also illustrates the embedded nature of the original sole creator and the final created product: publishing has the position not simply as a value-adding supply chain but as a key participant in the creation; it is this that can be unpicked further within the nature of collaboration. Research needs to consider collaboration around content, owned or licenced, to create new creative products (cultural in some way or other) in terms of the enhancement of that product by the very act of collaboration.

Characteristics of Creative Industries

To position publishing effectively in the wider creative industries it can also be valuable to assess the characteristics most often identified as key to the creative industries and explore those as applied to publishing.

For the purposes of this paper these characteristics have been broken down into categories; this categorisation is based primarily on the common themes that emerge from readings of Hesmondalgh (2011) and Davies and Sigthorsson (2013), while the aspect of craft which emerges, is further elucidated by Gauntlett (2011). Flew (2013) raises the wider aspects of the creative industries in terms of the urban and policy thinking which is out of the scope of this article. This list starts with the more abstract aspects of the creative industries moving to encompass the business and work characteristics.

• Issues around value, cultural production and symbolic texts

• The art/commerce debate/paradox

• Distinctive market behaviours

• Work/experience of labour/working conditions

• Management and organisational practices

• Subsidiary debates around the culture of crafts, collaboration (Gauntlett, 2011) and gift economies (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013) – that may be becoming more of an influencing factor in the behaviour of creative industries and indeed the wider economy (the collaborative commons of Rifkin (2014))

• Other aspects of analysis around characteristics of creative industries such as government cultural policy or urban planning around creative clusters, while related, are out of scope for this article.

Of these, the first is one that attempts to unpick the essential elements of the cultural product and assess its value in various ways. The concept of value is open for debate in itself; the value to society of the aesthetic sensitivity and the societal commentary vested in cultural texts is certainly to be considered, as is the operation of value and its fluctuation within the unique structural behaviour of the field of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993). When considering who has the ability to say something has artistic merit (artist, critic, audience etc.), the gatekeeper (Bourdieu, 1993, Hirsch, 1972) emerges as a term that certainly arises much more commonly now in the realm of the open internet, reflecting the need to select and curate the best of our cultural texts. Developing this line of thinking further the concept of symbolic capital, as delineated very clearly by Thompson (2012) in relation to publishing, offers a useful analogy of the way something can be significant without necessarily having the most economic value but the fine relationship between these challenges those concerned with how to describe the art and commerce balance.

The art and commerce debate (Ryan’s ‘art-commerce relation ’, 1992, cited in Banks and O’Connor, 2009) is in itself something that reflects a special characteristic of the industries and certainly one that engages debate in publishing; most publishing has some sort of financial imperative in order to break even, very little is entirely subsidised; but it also has a belief that it is doing something important either for entertainment or for information and education that means it is an industry around which certain specific rules may apply (over sales tax for instance).This tension can be enacted by more micro activity within the industry too , observed for instance in the different approaches of marketing, sales and editorial (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011). This uncomfortable connection continues to exercise commentators; some see here that the main issues are around control; others that it is part of the condition to inspire creativity while a further approach is that the boundaries are too blurred to distinguish (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011), the latter linking to the problems of clear demarcation as mentioned earlier. It also connects back to the first point where some aspects of culture will have limited commercial value but important cultural value, which can in turn give rise to issues of archiving, dissemination and preservation, while, as another example, the micropublishing activity of artists will not lead to much commercial return, but is central to their own artistic practice.

The next point establishes that characteristic market and economic behaviours can be identified in the way the market works; Hirsch (1972), though writing some time ago, identifies systems around publishing activities that, for example, combine filtering while producing surplus, and the use of intelligence agents at the input and output (from talent scouts to bookshop reps); Thompson also illustrates the structural nature of the industry as he observes various activities within the value chain. Balancing risk and supply is critical to creative industries, (Hirsch, 1972;, Davies and Balkwill, 2011, Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013). Characteristics identified here then certainly apply to publishing.

The nature of the work, as particularly studied by Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011), focuses on the experience of the individual and the characteristics of their work – project based, often freelance, precariousness combined with glamour, portfolio careers, benefits of autonomy, low pay, sacrifice for the sense of ‘good’ work are all features that can be seen to directly apply to publishing, extending this also to the interplay between the overall publishing business and the various projects within it and how creative labour is managed. This applies both to those working directly within the industry as well as creatives such as illustrators or writers; many of this latter group will find a downward pressure on their pay while ownership of their work may well rest with the larger media conglomerate.

This moves us to the wider context of work, exploring management styles, managing creative processes and creative people, combined with understanding of organisational behaviour where networks feature strongly around project formation and execution, and organisations need to work flexibly and engender an entrepreneurialism (Flew, 2013). Here publishing can clearly be seen to fit, whether a project is drawn together from within a company or makes more use of freelancers, whether it is an author and illustrator with a small publishing team or a very specific project team gathered to start-up a new online reference project. This project-based trend appears to be growing in strength and so another aspect of the proposed research is identifying where this is becoming more embedded structurally and where publishers are reconfiguring (eg Sweet and Maxwell and the growth of contract-based management) to allow for further management of product innovation.

For the other points, they lie beyond the scope here but many aspects of these further characteristics easily apply to publishing; so for instance, as cultural production diverges (Jenkins, 2008) between conglomerates (such as global media companies) and grassroots producers combining entrepreneurial and craft approaches to creation, we can see evidence of that too in publishing: while large companies believe in the importance of merging in order to retain some power in the market place (e.g. Penguin and Random House) or developing relationships that allow them to exercise more influence together (e.g Faber Alliance, Independent Publishers’ Guild) others focus on the niche and the crafted product as a way of developing new concepts (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013; Jenkins, 2008)

Creative Industries and challenges

Having mapped recognized characteristics of creative industries in general onto the publishing industry, it can also be useful to map issues publishing face particularly with the challenges of digital transformation back to the wider creative industries in order to unpack the boundaries between these different creative sectors further.

Many areas of concern that publishers now face can very easily be recognized in other industries. For the purposes of this paper, only key issues have been summarised, though there are others that could be added to the list.

• Copyright – discussion as we know resonates in a number of areas – whether open access or Google settlements (Hall, 2013), freedom for creators to share, freedom for fans to enjoy (Jenkins, 2008)

• Changes in consumer behaviour where ownership is replaced by licensing, micro payments around use substitute one-off transaction and service and subscription models become more commonplace; the value of content changes in relation to the value of access. The actual content is potentially commoditised. Film and music industries will of course recognize both these first two points, (Jenkins, 2008, Healy, 2011).

• Discoverability – issues related to the long tail (Andersen, 2006) and making the niche findable become critical for all; ‘publish then filter’ (Shirky, 2008) also reflects a changing consumer, together with the demise of the expert reviewer (or reinvention among the crowd (Jenkins, 2008))

• The prosumer producing and consuming without the need for specialist creative intermediaries; the only intermediaries required (and they certainly control a large amount of space) are the global technology companies, the producers of tools (Shirky, 2008; Gauntlett, 2011; Rushkoff, 2009). From self-publishing to viewers of You Tube, producers and consumers easily merge and by-pass creative distributors.

• The new competitor landscape –as a result of disintermediation – with the new entrants such as Amazon, Apple and Google etc. entering the arena with different visions and valuation of content (Hall, 2013); content for them is a subset to their work yet they can command immense resources, so creative industries may well need to recognize more publically the need to collaborate to compete with these much larger companies that are operating in very different ways from the creative industries.

• And all overlaid with the general belief that internet should be a collaborative space, where the professional may in fact be regarded as a controller and become a destructive, economically-motivated force around creation and sharing, (Shirky, 2008, Jenkins, 2008).

We can easily recognize that these issues affect many creative sectors and readily find examples across music industry, film and TV production, newspapers, photography etc.

Network Enterprises, Innovation and the Wider Economy

The creative industries therefore have a variety of characteristics and face a range of issues through which similar threads are woven. Out of these themes, the issues of collaboration emerges as one that appears to be becoming more central. Actors find work/creative activity through networks and conduct work through collaboration whether the freelancer developing the next project through their network or, on a much larger scale, creative companies collaborating across networks they develop in a global space(Davies and Sigthorrson, 2013). So the network itself enables a collaborative enterprise.

The network society as envisioned by Cassells (2010) explores the way network behaviour is a critical aspect of economic change. He identifies a trend in the behaviour of business and economic systems that is increasingly based more on networks – not just on the need to have networks to build effective global companies, but the need to be flexible and quick to respond – the agility being necessary in an internet age where change is taking place much more rapidly and new systems developing quickly. So the network behaviour of publishing activity needs to move up a notch but is perhaps illustrative of what he is meaning about the network enterprise. That diffusion and learning from other industries becomes a critical aspect of the collaboration, not just the collaboration itself. And that in turn leads to the increasing value of the network.

This sort of network behaviour becomes more interesting in that behaviour that has been easy to find within the creative industries has become of more interest to the wider economy. Indeed, network behaviour and social network markets have been proposed by Potts et al. (2008) as a new way to define creative industries, a definition which they argue offers flexibility by identifying characteristics of organisational and market behaviour from within the industries to be the driving force, rather than economic and/or welfare models imposed from without; this network approach allows the benefits of creative industry practices for the wider economy, in terms of innovation and knowledge, to be more clearly presented. This is an example of the way creative industry models can be regarded as growth drivers, often in terms of innovation theory and knowledge creation. So a further interesting gloss on this is presented by Potts and Cunningham (2008), in an approach taking an economic modelling focus, which assesses the industry in light of four models that might be applied to creative industries and their relationship to the wider economy:

• The welfare approach (operating as a culturally necessary industry that needs sustaining through government policy)

• The competitive model (where operating like any other industry in a competitive environment has neither an additional beneficial nor a detrimental effect on the economy)

• The growth model and

• the innovation model – both of which have clear benefit on the wider economy, the former driving the economy by being an industry constantly ahead, learning new ways of working and leading change with new ideas; the latter leading to a more systemic change in economic behaviour around approaches to innovation.

These models are left open by Potts and Cunningham (2008) to be tested but the link to innovation theory is of particular interest when trying to explore the changing nature of publishing and consider the evolution of cross-sector collaboration in seeking new opportunities for product design, content acquisition and presentation, business models, market making and discoverability. The rapid development of new business models and product formats reflect this need to respond quickly and inventively to digital opportunities as they emerge. Publishing, while innovative in product terms, may well now need to pay more attention to the way it analyses markets and uses data to assess success, in the way that other industries focused on innovation, such as software developers, already do.

New Business Innovation

Innovation, as suggested by Potts and Cunningham’s model, can be seen in publishing in the rapid proliferation of new business models around product ideas. We see creativity and experimentation in various ways including:

• interactive digital products experimenting narrative structures (Frankenstein, Black Crown) or navigational complexity (Solar System, London app)

• multimedia digital story telling (The 39 Steps) or factual presentations ( iBooks authored books, The Magic of Reality) or highly produced fun reading experiences (Nosy Crow’s Cinderella)

• Apps for marketing - inventive products that provide paracontent (Bhaskar’s term, 2011), the surround content that enhance user experience (Wildwood or Hamlyn yoga and health apps)

• User generated content (children’s apps of HarperCollins or social media-linked apps)

• Solutions-based management of content (BMJ, Sweet and Maxwell)

• New aggregators (Oyster, Scribd and consumer subscription services, CourseSmart and student bookshelves)

• New approaches to pricing (changing prices for ebooks, apps that follow market trends until they bed down around a particular price)

• New funding initiatives (Unbound crowdsourcing)

• New publishing services (Bloomsbury Institute and Faber Factory to Lulu.com, Matador, Completely Novel)

• Innovation also around other parts of the original value chain – (slush piles managed via Authonomy, fan fic sites)

Significantly they do not all work and sustainable business models are not always quick to emerge and have many different impacts (Tian and Martin 2011). Experimentation is important and there is the expectation that some may not lead anywhere. Experimentation around new talents has always been an aspect of creative industries; oversupply of new entrants (Davies and Sigthorrson, 2013) plays a part as well as oversupply of product ideas which has always been key to the risk system of publishing (Hirsch, 1972). This seems to couple with the issue of innovation theory and methods of effective R&D.

New collaborations

In developing these new initiatives, whether product based or business based, we can see publishing is developing in new ways around collaborations. These appear to be different in structure than previous supplier-based collaboration: Faber’s The Waste Land app involves different stakeholders:

a film company, casting agency, archive materials in audio, video and textual form, expert academic advisors, app developers, as well as the poem itself ; the London app involves various content owners and developers: Macmillan, Pathé news, London Illustrated News, the Museum of London, the app developer Heuristic, Blue Guide tours, GPS (plus celebrity section and social media interaction); these complex relationships need new ways of working so that they share both the risk and the opportunity. The contractual structures, the issues around ownership of intellectual property, the partnership with authors as project members, the way these projects are initiated, jointly managed and measured, and ultimately the vision that drives them, are in some of these cases changing. Project management and prototyping methods have always been used for collaborations but a blending of different approaches drawn from different creative sectors appears to be operating in some of these instances.

Using classification established by Kaats and Opheji (2014) collaborations here begin to appear more than transactional or functional but are instead about being exploratory and entrepreneurial; finding new ways to grow that can only be achieved together. This builds on the recognition of the power of the network: not everyone can know everything so working with a partner with whom concepts can be shared can lead to developing something new (Cassells, 2010; Shirky, 2008). But the network in this case is with people who share similarity and are accustomed to having alternative ways of thinking to creative questions (Defillippi, Grabher and Jones, 2007). So innovation theory emerges and the need to change development strategy to try more things, expect more failure and move on quickly.

Research

There is a need for a variety of case studies in order to explore more deeply the new collaborations that appear to be emerging. Finding very significant patterns in terms of outcomes from the collaborations this early in the digital revolution may be difficult but there is a need to assess whether there are new approaches to collaboration. Case studies drawn from a variety of companies, of different sizes and motivations, should provide valuable insight into whether they are initiated, organised and managed in ways that are significantly different from previous collaborative activity (ie less transactional, more entrepreneurial). Overlaying collaboration theory and network theory with the specific collaboration characteristics of creative industries will help explore the relationship of publishing to first the wider creative industries and then further the general economic changes of a network age (Cassells, 2010); and taking the research further it may be possible to attempt to identify ways these collaborations can both be measured and sustained, and then built upon to achieve the growth, while also encouraging new ones that may well require certain changes in structure. Approaches and expectations of collaborations of these sorts may need to be adjusted and structural change that is coming anyway to the industry (Nash, 2010, Bhaskar, 2013) may need to take into account ways to fail more successfully – and maybe more spectacularly and more publically than the book that just didn’t really sell very well.

So the collaboration needs to be analysed in various ways. In part it will use Kaats and Opheij’s (2014) lens of collaboration, which distils ways to assess effectiveness, to examine a variety of case studies detailing issues around shared ambition, how everyone’s interests can be appropriately served, how working relations are developed, the organisational behaviour as they plan it out and behaviour and sensemaking while in action. This is a useful lens as it focuses less on the product of the collaboration as on its behaviour. What makes a successful collaboration? How far are they repeatable? How far are they flexible? Do they genuinely reflect an industry attempting to be more nimble around experimentation? The cases will also include analysis of the learning each party has (possibly) gained and the ownership issues also at the heart of the collaboration. Identity and unpicking the way collaborations combine identities while creating new ones too in order to understand the sustainability of a collaboration will also be examined), particularly the link to the wider emerging identity of the network and the issues of distributed creativity (Daskalaki, 2010). With an industry at the start of digital transformation, experimentation remains at the heart and assessing effective methods of experimentation is key.

Remembering the Differences Too

While the paper has explored the way publishing can be easily linked to the wider creative industries, there are also clearly distinctions between different ways of working for different creative sectors; learning about differences is also part of what is hoped will be revealed, in order to link to the arena of knowledge and learning to innovate further. So, for example, games developers bring very different approaches to the collaborative, anonymised story board compared to the individual author and brand developing publisher: these differences lead both to problems but also possibly to further innovation (Defillppi, Grabher and Jones, 2007); as another example, software engineering brings in a style of innovation where innovation is never fully completed, which maybe something publishers need to embed further in their organisational culture.

The learning across the industry, shared responses to the issues as outlined, as well as increasing both speed and effectiveness of creative process and dealing with complexity of project and learning outcomes are all key areas to explore. If the collaborations operate in particular ways it may well be possible to see in them an embodiment of the blurring boundaries between the creative industries and to examine whether a less delineated but still highly innovative creative industries arena is likely to emerge.

This understanding of the changing nature of collaboration and the link to network enterprises, could help to test how far these collaborations are entrepreneurial in terms of both Kaats and Opheij, and Potts and Cunningham; even though testing how far creative industries can be regarded as a key driver for economic growth through knowledge sharing and innovation theory may still require further work. For an already failure tolerant industry (Defillippi, Grabher and Jones 2007) understanding how to fail more /better (Jones, 2013) may take longer for publishers to embed into their changing value chains, but blending different skills from these industries, whether prototyping from games industries or visual communication from graphic artists or content enriching from publishing, does illustrate the issue of converging sectors, as well as point towards possible strengths growing in the face of wider technological and industrial challenge.

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