Soul Food, and Music: Research and Innovation for Creative Business

BY KIM ERRINGTON, NEIL MAYCROFT AND JIM SHORTHOSE

ILLUSTRATIONS – SOME BY JON BURGERMAN AND SOME BY ALI HAZELDENE
SOUL FOOD, AND MUSIC: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR CREATIVE BUSINESS

ISBN: 9781842331347

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Graphic Design

Graphics by Steve O’Brien. www.1512design.com, email: steve@1512design.com

Printing

Printing by Ashford Colour Press. www.ashford-colour-press.co.uk

Proofreading

David Blayye. davidblayye@gmail.com

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The Authors

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You can contact Kim on info@Feedideas.com and find out more about the FEED Project at www.feedideas.co.uk.

Neil Maycroft is Senior Lecturer at The Lincoln University, where he focuses upon the Design M.A. Programme and supervising Ph.D projects. His other research and publications focus upon material culture and a critique of consumerism. His address is nmaycroft@lincoln.ac.uk.

Jim Shorthose co-developed the Nottingham Creative Network, and before that Creative Collaborations, in a space halfway between Broadway Media Centre in Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University. He works on other related creative industry projects for Broadway Media Centre and combines this with University Lecturing. His address is jshorthose@ntu.ac.uk.

DEDICATIONS

A lot of people have helped us whilst putting this book together in all sorts of ways. We could never repay them fully, but we dedicate it to them anyway.

Raya Pescopo Maycroft

George Claude Ellis

Ella Greenhill Naylor

Tim Rundle

Anta Lo Catto

Jayne Childs

Eleri’s bar

Jim Errington

Charlie Errington

Sheila Shorthose

Jim Shorthose (my Dad)

And also to Deborah McKesson.
When I read the first Nottingham Creative Network book, Fish, Horses and Other Animals, this is what I emailed back to them,

This book is amazing. I got given a copy and I have read it cover to cover. It’s just totally right! It’s the only thing I’ve read where I’ve thought, ‘yes! somebody gets it’. Having your own business is so lonely in so many respects and it just hits the nail on the head for so many things!!

I meant it. Running your own creative business can be a very isolating experience, where everything is up to you all the time. You have to put your heart and soul on the line everyday. So when I read Fish and Horses, and realised it was part of growing a creative network in Nottingham to bring creatives together more, it was like a breath of fresh air compared to all the traditional business stuff.

When the NCN team told me that they were writing another book in the series, I decided to put my money where my mouth was, quite literally. I felt so strongly about it I put some of my own real money into the project! The first book gave me such a lot of soul food, and I am sure this second book will too, when I really get to grips with it. So I am really pleased to have been able to add something to the overall project and I hope you all enjoy reading these books as much as I have.

The Design Responsibility – by Martin Knox

Martin Knox is a business designer and brand developer.

Creatives have power.

Creative people and organisations have the power to change the way a consumer thinks about a product or a brand. But it doesn’t end there. The creative industries have the power to affect the way we perceive ourselves and the world around us. They can influence an individual’s and society’s decision making and affect behaviour. Creatives can change outlooks on particular objects or ideas. Whether subconsciously or consciously, the work of the creative can have a profound impact on the lives of many people. And with this power, comes responsibility.

The Design Responsibility is a (moral/social/ethical) obligation on the creative industries to use this power positively and respectfully. It is not a requirement to abstain from working with companies, industries or institutions that might come with negative perceptions. It is an ethical responsibility to use every opportunity to impart a positive message upon that individual, company or institution, through the creatives response to a brief or an ongoing interaction with their audience, (In this way, a positive message can reach both the client and the consumer).

Times are changing. The citizen is changing too. To survive in this age of a “desire to trust and see that trust honoured”, creatives and audiences are compelled to adapt alongside the society they operate in. And the first step is to take responsibility.

EXCITED TO BE IN OUR OWN BACKYARD – by Andrew Cooper

Andrew Cooper is a partner at Berryman Solicitors.

People don’t tend to celebrate a city for the things it enjoys in common with others – its shops, roads, hospitals and schools – important though these things are to the everyday lives of its citizens. The things that mark one city out from others are its distinctive features. Too often, we say that British cities and towns look the same and have lost their distinctiveness, and too often that is true, especially in the built environment. But deep down cities do differ, because the people who live and work there make that difference.

In his wonderful book Chatham Vines (2006), Nottingham-based artist John Newling (writing about regeneration and quoting his own earlier work Transactions and Agreements, 2005), says, ‘Communities are not plans; they are us’ – Proper regeneration finds us all excited to be in our own backyard… it is a substantive shift in how we view where we are.

One of Nottingham’s greatest distinguishing features is its vibrant and successful creative community, a group of creative producers, artists and businesses which has the potential to regenerate the city – to shift not only how Nottingham views itself, but also how the rest of the world views it. Jim Shortfoot’s first NCN book Fish, Horses and Other Animals played a big part in raising the collective profile and self-confidence of Nottingham’s creative community, and this new book, co-written with Kim Errington and Neil Maycroft will take this process forward. As a long-term board member of Broadway, a founder of the Nottingham Creative Business Awards and a passionate advocate for the creative hot-bed that is Nottingham, I commend this book to you. Berryman are delighted to have given support, both financial and through the specific contribution from John Buckby, to its publication.

I FELT SO STRONGLY ABOUT IT I PUT SOME OF MY OWN REAL MONEY INTO THE PROJECT! – by Susi Henson

Susi Henson is a fashion designer and director of Eternal Spirits

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And I meant it. Running your own creative business can be a very isolating experience, where everything is up to you all the time. You have to put your heart and soul on the line everyday. So when I read Fish and Horses, and realised it was part of growing a creative network in Nottingham to bring creatives together more, it was like a breath of fresh air compared to all the traditional business stuff.

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We are not pleasantly surprised anymore by the contributions of the numerous people whose expertise and experience appear in this book. We have grown to expect them to generously give of their intellect in a way that makes these books far, better than they would otherwise be. They always do.

Neither are we pleasantly surprised anymore by the genuinely sharing and mutually supportive attitude of the creative community of Nottingham and the East Midlands, because they are always like that. But we still want to thank them anyway for their fantastic input.

In alphabetical order, expert contributions have come from,

Adam Barnard – to find out more about Adam's work go to www.ntu.ac.uk
Debbie Bryan – at www.debbiebryan.co.uk
Paul Cox
Annie Dickson and Adrian Reynolds of Evolver Talent – to find out more go to www.evolver-talent.com
Carla Martinho – of Creative Launchpad – at www.creativelaunchpad.co.uk
Francine Pickering – of Clarity in Communications – at www.clarity-in-communication.com
John Whittingham – of Plant a Card, at www.plantacard.com

The interviewees who have graciously given their time, expertise and energy are,

Wolfgang Buttress – at www.wolfgangandheron.com
Mik Godley – to find out more about Mik's work, go to www.nottinhamstudios.org.uk/artist/godley
Paul Matosic – at www.matosic.org.uk/artist.htm
John Newling – to find out more about John's work, go to www.ntu.ac.uk
Raj Pathak – to find out more about Raj and LBK Pictures, look for him on MySpace
Michael Pinchbeck – at www.michaelpinchbeck.co.uk
Terry Shaw – to find out more about Terry's work, go to www.ntu.ac.uk
Jennie Syson – at www.betterlandprojects.com
Nick Wood – you can find out more about Nick's work at www.dooliew.com/PlaywrightsW/wood-nick.html

Due to the costs of design and print, this book would not have happened without the financial support of various public organisations and private businesses. We are very grateful to,

Berryman Solicitors – at www.berryman.co.uk
Broadway – at www.broadway.org.uk
Eternal Spirits – at www.eternalspirits.com
Greater Nottingham Partnership – at www.gnpartnership.org.uk
Martin Knox – at www.mknox.co.uk
Lincoln University's Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design – at www.lincoln.ac.uk/aad
Nottingham Trent University's Business, Innovation and Creation Team – at www.ntu.ac.uk

Finally we would like to thank Mark Shaw, at www.standingrock.co.uk for again providing invaluable editorial advice.

PREFACE

A BOOK SERIES

This is the second in a series of publications that aim to be a vehicle for the collective voice of the creative community of Nottingham and the East Midlands, and at the same time provide useful and interesting ideas for the creative industries of the city, the region and beyond.

The series is financed in part by public funding and in part by business sponsorship. All revenue from sales goes directly back into a fund for the design and print costs of the next book in the series.

The authors, along with other collaborators are currently working on the third book in this series, which will try to say something about Ethical Creativity, a theme that has emerged out of discussions with the creative community itself.

We are not pleasantly surprised anymore by the contributions of the numerous people whose expertise and experience appear in this book. We have grown to expect them to generously give of their intellect in a way that makes these books far, better than they would otherwise be. They always do.

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John Newling – to find out more about John's work, go to www.ntu.ac.uk
Raj Pathak – to find out more about Raj and LBK Pictures, look for him on MySpace
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Nottingham Trent University’s Business, Innovation and Creation Team – at www.ntu.ac.uk

Finally we would like to thank Mark Shaw, at www.standingrock.co.uk for again providing invaluable editorial advice.
A COLLECTIVE CREATIVE VOICE

There are lots of people with lots of experience in various forms of creativity and the different aspects of creative business. for Fish, Horses and Other Animals we interviewed some of them. And we have done the same here. We strongly believe that this adds sophistication, subtlety and deeper understanding to anything we alone could write. Giving space for this collective voice means that this book series will be infinitely more instructive, entertaining and useful. But it is also a contribution to the vital dialogue that the creative network can have with itself, which is in and of itself one of the best sources of research, innovation and creative business growth.

The book series started with Fish, Horses and Other Animals has a Nottingham focus because it grew out of the Nottingham Creative Network project. This time we have been able to work in a concrete way with creative businesses in Lincoln, and with The Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design at Lincoln University. We hope that future editions in this series will have an even broader regional scope, so as to contribute to the collective voice of an East Midlands Creative Network. Themes for future books and other contributions are up for discussion, and the series organisers are always interested in discussing potential collaborations.

So get in touch. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Chapter 1 – An Introduction: Mozart and the Innovation Economy

STORY
Making a Good Dish of it

When I am, as it were, completely myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer — say, travelling in a carriage, or walking after a good meal, or during the night when I cannot sleep, it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. Whence and how they come I know not; nor can I force them. Those pleasures that please me I retain in memory, and am accustomed, as I have been told, to hum them to myself. If I continue in this way, it soon occurs to me how I may turn this or that morsel to account, so as to make a good dish of it, that is to say, agreeably to the rules of counterpoint, to the peculiarities of the various instruments etc.

All this fires my soul, and, provided I am not disturbed, my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodized and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind, so that I can survey it...

When I proceed to write down my ideas, I take out of the bag of memory, if I may use that phrase, what has been previously collected into it the way I mentioned.

This is taken from a letter written in 1789 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.
The first book in this series, Fish, Horses and Other Animals: Professional and Business Development for the Creative Ecology, dealt with issues concerning creative nervousness — how to understand them, work with them, mutually develop them and grow your creativity and business within them. We thought that this work need not be confined to research, some organisational and "management" ideas that help to find routes to innovation and the planning involved in keeping these things within your creativity, your own or through collaborative working with other people.

Before we go any further, we have an editorial point. We will use the term 'creativity' throughout the book. We could have used the term 'creative business' or the term 'creative activity' practice. We do not see any big distinction between these two terms. Rather we see them as part of a spectrum.

At one end of the spectrum, some people see themselves as creative practitioners who may or may not be formally established as a business as a result of their creative activity. At the other end of the spectrum, some people very much see themselves as a formal Business-with-a-capital-B.

We don't want to get hung up on which terms to use, but for clarity's sake, we are telling you now that we will use the generic term 'creativity' to mean this whole spectrum of activity. We hope that the points we make in this book about creativity, research and innovation are relevant for both ends of this spectrum, as well as for people somewhere in between.

The innovation economy

Before we get into the details of research and innovation for creativity, we want to give you a few comments about the context against which the themes of this book are set.

In Fish, Horses and Other Animals, we noted the following points about the new cultural economy and the context within which creative business is situated:

- Changes in the nature of Western economies have seen a shift towards the 'knowledge economy' or the 'weightless economy' and the relative rise in the economic importance of ideas, images, information, knowledge and meanings.
- The increased speed of innovation has meant that economies of scale, (being big and mass production) has often been replaced by economies of speed, (being small, flexible and able to respond quickly).
- The answer is not in looking for the next big constant skills development and the need to constantly develop new ones.
- It also means the need for new professional skills as creative businesses increasingly focus around the world.
- It means a change in the way that creative organizations will need to be asked: Can I use my creative skills in this way? The globalised economy brings the need for new professional skills as creative businesses increasingly focus around the world.
- It means a change in the way that creative organizations will need to be more sustainable.
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Before we go on to more details about research and innovation, we need to make some broad comments about the context against which the themes of this book are set.

The globalised economy brings the need for new professional skills as creative businesses increasingly focus around the world. This brings a whole range of risks and opportunities for different ways of doing creative things. This is why it is important to understand how creativity and research connect to each other, and how the research useful for creativity connects to innovative applications for business.

As we will explore all these issues in detail below, in terms of how initial creative inspiration and research connect to each other, and how the research useful for creativity connects to innovative applications for business.

Research and innovation: Two sides of the same creative coin

People bandy around the term ‘research’ all the time, in lots of different ways. Innovations and creativity are very closely entwined with each other. The way we think about new things and what we do with them is a great deal of usefulness for the actual day-to-day thing of creative innovation – which often entails a fairly ‘philosophical’ discussion – and tried to do this we have taken some important background concepts for research and innovation.

CHAPTER PLAN

The chapter plan reflects this balance, as well as the initial statements made by Mozart.

Chapter 2 is entitled Behind, In/Through, For and in Front Of: Research Starting Points because we are aware that some of the more philosophical issues, which remain constant, are quite abstract and involve some jargon. It introduces some general concepts and sets up the basic contours of the Behind, In/Through, For and in Front Of model of research that we will use throughout the book.

Chapter 3 is entitled Thinking About the Way to do Thinking: Epistemology, and gets into detailed discussions relating to the themes raised in Chapter 2. It presents some of the more philosophical ideas and debates concerning the grounds for doing research and the different conceptual frameworks one can bring to bear when thinking about what your research is, what it is for and how you are going to approach it. Chapter 4 is entitled Different Methods: Which Tools to Use, Why, When and How. Chapter 5 gets down to the ‘brass tracks’ of using specific research tools for creative innovation, depending upon creative inspiration and the nature of the theme.

Before we go any further, we have an editorial point. We will use the generic term ‘creativity’ to mean this whole spectrum of activity. We hope that the points we make in this book about creativity, research and innovation are relevant for both ends of this spectrum, as well as for people somewhere in between.

So what is all the fuss about?

Mozart implicitly suggests the following:

- People have been thinking about research for a long time.
- There are lots of different, often quite personal ways of doing research for creativity.
- Different methods – in a ‘carriage, walking after a good meal – that is different – different methods’.
- Creativity innovation can come from unknown places. This does not really mean, so long as they come sometime – that is so, as long as the idea flows.
- Creative people usually become aware very quickly that they are working within a particular tradition of creativity – for Mozart, these were the rules of opera and the instruments of his time.
- Innovation can happen in any unexpected place like this.
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advantage of the new possibilities opening up, and able to deal with the competition. For instance, Geoffrey Hodgson has shown how we are now living in a learning economy such that innovation and change is the only constant, and uncertainty is the only think you can take for granted. These ever-present innovations are intimately connected to economic growth.

QUOTATION
... new growth theory ... postulates that technological change and economic growth are intrinsically connected, since the well spring of growth is innovation in products and processes, and new ways of combining inputs to generate new types of outputs. As economist Paul Romer puts it, "Human history teaches us ... that economic growth springs from better recipes, not just from cooking more."

Even back in 1789, Mozart knew you had to make a good dish.

CASE STUDY
Post it... Plant it... Love it – by John Whittington

Plant a Card was launched upon an unsuspecting public in November 2007. However, John’s active role in the creative industries began well over 10 years ago, working on anything and everything, from computer games packaging, to pharmaceutical advertising, to the simple annual report.

What?
Born entirely through the frustration of not being able to find any well-designed greetings cards, an idea was born that is practical, functional, and environmentally friendly. I decided to design and manufacture a capsule containing seeds which could be attached to greetings cards and mailers, or any other type of disposable packaging for that matter.

How?
The capsule is made from a water soluble compound which instantly breaks down within ten minutes of being planted and watered, releasing the seeds into the ground for germination.

Why?
Unlike most greetings cards and mailers that just get thrown away, this will give the recipient a chance to plant a section of the card after it is no longer needed. This secondary function enables the customer to plant a long lasting visual image, be that a plant, a tree, or a shrub, for that special occasion and/or event. As well as the obvious practical implications, it is also environmentally friendly, helping neutralise carbon emissions plus giving everyone who purchases greetings cards or recycles direct mail a chance to combat the greenhouse effect by covering their carbon footprint.

Design?
During the course of 15 years in business, my client list and mix of projects has swung from one extreme to another – and back again. From a business point of view, pursuing a diversity of work with Plant a Card has been strategically important regardless of its size, subject, or budget. However, working with a wide range of clients, media, and industries, has allowed me to cross-pollinate my thinking for other design projects, enabling me to solve problems for a wide range of clients, but the design process is consistent each time, no matter how unique. Whilst we all have our favourite assignments, the diversity of work and the people I meet is what I find the most rewarding.

Solution?
Each new design project needs a complete new solution which I can never presume for any client or industry. I’m never entirely happy with my final designs, because there are always so many ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’. The most challenging thing I find is to design something simple, because simple has to be perfect. If it’s not perfect it will stand out a mile. It’s far easier to design something complex which can be interesting to look at, but for me, I always take a more subjective approach.

Future?
While the progress of technology and design continues to increase at an alarming rate, so are people’s awareness of environmental issues and the way we live our lives. This can only broaden my design possibilities for future growth in the market place and various sectors. People of all ages love getting back to basics, nurturing plants and so on, and as long as they continue to do so, the possibilities for Plant a Card are endless.

Funding?
Easy? No. Helpful? Most certainly. Contrary to popular opinion, funding is generally available without having to part with a large percentage of your company. However, a good business plan combined with a sound idea, and a half decent client list is always helpful.

Production?
Again, this can be tricky, as taking a new product to market is generally very expensive and time consuming. Once again, it is best to take your time and explore all the possibilities before making any financial commitments.

Summary?
Handwritten cards are a means of communication that touch lives, as they distinctly identify thoughts, words, and activities; they comfort, inspire, celebrate, and stir a vast range of emotions. That, in a nutshell, is what Plant a Card is all about – portraying the simplest, most powerful message to the consumer in a way they will easily understand. Simple as that!

Easy?
No.

Exciting?
Certainly.

Rewarding?
Absolutely.
Everything within the new economy column is about change, movement and the need for a smart, flexible response to an ever-changing cultural and economic environment. Everything either states explicitly, or at the very least strongly implies the need to keep up with this change. So it is fundamentally about research and innovation, whether that is within what you do with your creativity (the products, objects, services you provide), why you do it (how you put your motivations into action), for whom you do it (which markets you engage in and how), and how you do it (the ways you work, organise your relationships with other and ‘manage’ the processes involved).

**THEORY**

Theories of Creative Innovation No 1 – The Economic View

There has been a growing interest in the importance of creativity in the knowledge economy. However (some of this is) too often based upon a common but flawed understanding of creativity. The attribution of creativity to unique individual personalities loses sight of the extent to which creativity is best understood as being the outcome of a process rather than a personae, and how moments of creative discovery are characteristically the outcome of incremental processes undertaken as part of a team of people that possess diverse skills...

The growing interest in creativity outside of the traditional domains of culture is reflective of what has been termed the culturalization of economic life (from Creative Economy, by T. Flew)

But enough of this general scene-setting, let’s get into it. Firstly by looking at the general direction we want to explore in the subsequent chapters, and especially the different starting points for research.

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### INTENSIVE GROWTH AND INNOVATION

Economists make a useful distinction between extensive and intensive growth. Extensive economic growth comes about when more and more land, raw materials, resources, people, machinery etc. are brought into the economy. Growth comes about because there is just more economy out there. Intensive economic growth comes about when the same amount of stuff is used, but in a smarter way. Growth comes about because the economy is made more efficient by innovations.

And intensive economic growth is essentially what you are dealing with here.

Without overstating hard and fast binary distinctions, all this implies a shift from the ‘old’ to the ‘new’ economy. The general contours of this shift are as follows:

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**ISSUES**

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<td>Organisation of Production</td>
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<td>Key drivers of growth</td>
<td>Capital/labour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key technological drivers</td>
<td>Mechanisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source of competitive advantage</td>
<td>Lowering costs through scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of research/innovation</td>
<td>Low-moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relations to other firms</td>
<td>Go it alone</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Customers/Workers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Stable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Job-specific skills</td>
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<td>Educational needs</td>
<td>In-house training or degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of Employment</td>
<td>Stable</td>
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(this is a slightly adapted version of an original table from Getting the Measure of the New Economy, by D. Coyle and D. Quah)
Chapter 2 – Behind, In/Through, For and In Front Of: Research Starting Points

What? Behind, In/Through, For and In Front Of?

What does that mean? Sounds a bit complicated.

PROVERB

The questions you ask yourself will determine the answers you get.

At first glance, this might seem counter-intuitive, but it suggests something fairly straightforward. The direction you choose to travel in will determine where you end up.

For instance:

What is White?

Pankaj Mishra tells the story of two blind guys sitting together one day discussing the colour white.

‘I’ve heard that white is the colour of snow’ said the first guy.

‘I asked my friend to take me up to the mountain so that I could feel it. He put me into the snow, and I now realise that white is cold’.

‘I’ve heard that white is the colour of swans’ said the second guy.

‘I asked my friend to take me down to the river. He took me near to the water, and I now realise that white goes ‘swish-swash’.

White is cold and goes swish-swish?

In their attempts to research the colour white, the first guy used his sense of touch and the second guy used his sense of hearing. Because they used a particular sense (as a starting-point), their research of white was limited and they both came up with a less than complete answer. Actually, whilst not wanting to be unkind to them and their heartfelt attempts to understand white, what they came up with was so limited you could say it was ‘wrong’. It is the same for all of us. The basic research starting-point you adopt, and so ask your question from, can all too often lead you to a less than fully developed answer. You too could be ‘blind’ to other ways of seeing.

We want you to say it out loud just one more time and then we’ll drop it, the questions you ask yourself will determine the answers you get!
Paul Ricoeur’s and hermeneutic starting-points upon which research can be based. This then almost always, because there are alternative directions that could be better.

A good way to start all this thinking about research and innovation is to consider the idea that the questions you ask yourself determine your answers. This helps to ensure that the questions you are asking within your creative practice take account of these other perspectives and what they can add to ‘your thing’ itself.

In the diagram, the relationships between the various research starting-points, their particular foci and different perspectives. The diagram may also help you to visualize your research as a whole, giving you an overview of the whole terrain and showing you where everything ‘fits together’, which can be really useful even though you don’t necessarily want to go there right now.

Research leading to innovation can come from this kind of research because you can learn from it as you work within it, and the other broad social, economic, political and cultural features that impact upon the possibilities for innovation.

Creative Practice

Research leading to innovation

Research in front of creative practice

Research in through creative practice

Research far creative practice

A RESEARCH MAP: BOXES AS STARTING-POINTS, BUT ALSO ARROWS AS NAVIGATION

Purifying these starting points into four boxes (your own creative practice being the fifth) on a map can consolidate the order in which everything ‘fits together’, which can be really useful even though you don’t necessarily want to go there right now.

Some arrows are about how these various starting points link together, because research inevitably flows from one concept to another, and insights found at one level will inevitably have consequences for all the other aspects.

This is why research can sometimes feel really uncomfortable, when everything feels like it’s connected to everything else and you don’t know where to start. It may feel uncomfortable, but that is a good thing. It is supposed to feel like that, at least at the start. If it feels too easy, it is probably because it is not as broad or deep as it needs to be.
from doing something over and over again. Innovations can come from the act of addressing your materials, techniques, processes and software which can then feedback into your broader thinking about how you can develop and improve on the way you do, how and why.

This can lead to creative innovation because it asks you to think of:

- Questions concerning how you apply the insights emerging out of practice to develop better and more effective methods next time – researching technique and process to innovate new techniques and processes.
- The relationship between developing your practice and broader ideas about new ways to plan – putting ideas into practice to innovate in new, market needs, new forms of dissemination, new collaborations with other industries.

And this can include a whole range of practical issues.

General

- What best gets you ‘into the mood’ for successful creative practice?
- How do you react when faced with using a new material?
- Is your relationship to the materials you most often used in your creative practice burdensome? make a list.
- Which stages of your individual practice do you enjoy and which do you find most challenging?
- How do you speak to the Arts Council etc.
- How do you write a good Press Release?
- How do you consider the arts Council etc. do you regularly follow the same processes within your creative practice?
- Processes

Research ‘For’ Leading to Innovation – many books concerning research for creative practice will start with the process itself, for example, the design process. The talk will usually be about the ‘search for ideas’, ‘searching for solutions’, ‘searching for understanding’, etc. It will then go on to suggest various techniques to achieve these ends – ‘brainstorming’, ‘objectives trees’, ‘counter-planning’, ‘interaction models’ and the like. These techniques for developing innovations can be useful. But before that stage there are other issues to address. Research ‘For’ creative innovation can simply be about putting to one side what people identify as a necessary part of their creativity; it can lead to innovation simply by freeing you to think of what you want, or remembering that good idea you had, the things you always meant to chase up, or time to work on how to bring to fruition the thing that has been on ‘the drawing board’ for a while.

It can be about innovation through enabling you to think about these general skills which are necessary for innovation but are not necessary ‘inside’ your creativity; it can be about providing new perspectives or equipment you that you enjoy. But research can also be about changing whole processes of working with materials, techniques, processes and software which can then feed back into your broader thinking about how you can develop and improve on the way you do, how and why.

Which stages of your individual practice do you enjoy and which do you find most challenging?

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Person 1 – Oh, I see, and then thinking that ‘something else’ would have made you right all along and everyone else wrong all along, wouldn’t it? I’m going over here now to talk to Jeff!

Unfortunately, having a view is not the same as having a fully worked out, well researched and well rounded view. Solipsism is the worst kind of ignorance, because it is ignorance that stems from believing that one already knows everything one needs to know. It is ignorance that stems from self-congratulation and it is therefore very bad.

White is not cold, nor does it go swish-swish. The world is much more complicated than that, and sorry, but it will never conform to your view of it just because you have that view.

Say it one more time, the question you ask yourself will determine the answers you get! We will really drop that one now!

Having made these initial introductory points, the next chapter gets into more philosophical detail. With the question of how to study white, the quotation from Mozart and the dangers of solipsism still in mind, let’s turn to thinking about the way to do thinking. This entails entering the big, mysterious world of epistemology (it’s not really that mysterious).

Warning
What a lovely view: the danger of Solipsism

Solipsism (Latin: solus, alone + ipse, self) is the philosophical idea that ‘My mind is the only thing that I know exists’. Solipsism is an epistemological or metaphysical position that knowledge of anything outside the mind (one’s own mind) is unjustified… (It involves the presumption that) my most certain knowledge is the contents of my own mind — my thoughts, experiences, affects, etc.

Any of us can get so involved with our own creativity, and generally with our own view of the world that we can end up mistaking our own personal view of reality for the real thing. Everybody has the tendency to find evidence for their own personal view of the world simply from the fact that they have the view they have.

For instance:

A Short Play about Solipsism

Person 1 – How can you be so sure?

Person 2 – Well, I know I’ve been right all along and everybody else wrong all along, because otherwise I wouldn’t have thought what I think. I would have thought something else, wouldn’t I?

Exercise
The Model in Action: Deciding Upon Behind, In/Through, For and In Front Of

So, with the previous exercise in mind, place yourself at the centre of the research map.

Now ask yourself the following questions:

- What has my creativity been for in the past few years?
- Who has it been for?
- Why have I done it this way? Has this been my decision or someone else’s?
- What do I want the future of my creativity to be?
- So then…
- In what specific way(s) can research help me to get to these new places?
- Which research starting-points do I feel most drawn to?
- Which research starting-points do I feel wary of?
- Which research starting-points do I feel irrelevant to my concerns and plans?
- With these questions and responses in mind, which one of the boxes on the research map are you now in? – Behind, In/Through, For, In Front Of?

As The Isley Brothers once said:

It’s your thing, do what you wanna do. I can’t tell you who to sock it to

Exercise
It’s your thing, do what you wanna do

So, at the very beginning of any thinking you might do about research for creativity, and whatever starting-point(s) you think best, it is good to ask yourself these very basic and simple questions:

- What is my research for?
- Who is my research for?
- Why is my research?
- Is it about knowing more about the world out there? Or is it about the interior dynamics of me and my work?
- Do I need research to be able to convince someone else about my particular project or proposal? Or is it about researching bigger questions than that?
- Is it descriptive, explanatory or exploratory? Or a bit of each?

Once you have asked these kinds of questions, you can then start to think about:

- What different research tools are out there?
- Which research tools are the most appropriate for the kind(s) of research I want to do?
- How do I design my research to get me to where I want to be?

Whilst these questions might be useful, you will ultimately have to answer them yourself, because this depends upon the specific research agenda you need/want.

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Exercise
Longitudinal Research – research that carries on over a long period of time, over and above the first look at something. This means repeating the same research agenda after a period of time to see how things are changing. Looking at things during extra time or having a replay.

Exercise
It’s Your Thing, Do What You Wanna Do

So, at the very beginning of any thinking you might do about research for creativity, and whatever starting-point(s) you think best, it is good to ask yourself these very basic and simple questions:

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As The Isley Brothers once said…

It’s your thing, do what you wanna do. I can’t tell you who to sock it to
Menander – None of these things are the chariot.

Nagasena – Then all these separate parts taken together are the chariot?

Menander – No.

Nagasena – Then is the chariot something other than the separate parts?

Menander – No, your reverence.

Nagasena – Then for all my asking, your Majesty, I can find no chariot. The chariot is a mere sound! Surely what your Majesty has said is false! There is no chariot.

Menander – There is a chariot. It is on account of all these various components, the pole, axle, wheels and so on, that the vehicle is called a chariot. It’s just a generally understood term, a practical designation.

Nagasena – Well said your Majesty! You know what the word chariot means. And it is the same with me. It’s on account of the various components of my being that I am known by the generally understood term, the practical designation, Nagasena. And anyway the cells that form the lining of my stomach will reproduce themselves within 13 weeks, so Nagasena will be made up of completely different stuff 13 weeks from now! (We made the last bit up. He didn’t actually say this, because they didn’t know this in the second century BC, but he would have).

(A version of this story is found in An End to Suffering by P. Mishra)

You and your creativity are also just generally understood terms, practical designations. It is on account of the various components of your being that I am known by the generally understood term, the practical designation, Nagasena. And anyway the cells that form the lining of your stomach will reproduce themselves within 13 weeks, so you will be made up of completely different stuff 13 weeks from now! (We made the last bit up. We didn’t actually say this, because they didn’t know this in the second century BC, but he would have).

So choose wisely young Jedi.

Chapter 3 – Thinking about the Way to do Thinking: Epistemology

Who is Nagasena?

King Menander was a Greek King who reigned in the North-East of India around the first or second centuries BC. He became interested in Buddhism, and so sought the teachings of a monk called Nagasena.

Menander – What is your name monk?

Nagasena – My name is of no importance. It is only a word, only a practical designation. There is no question of a permanent individual implied in the use of the word that is my name.

Menander – If there is no permanent individual, who gives you monks your robes and food, lodging and medicines? And who makes them? Who lives a life of righteousness, meditation and teaches Nirvana? Who destroys living beings, steals, fornicates, tells lies, or drinks spirits?… If your fellow monks call you Nagasena, what then is Nagasena? Would you say that your hair is Nagasena? Or your nails, teeth, skin, or other parts of your body, or the outwards form, or sensation, or perception, or the psychic constructions, or consciousness? Are any of these Nagasena? Are all these things together Nagasena? Or anything other than they?

Nagasena – No.

Menander – Then for all my asking I find no Nagasena. Nagasena is a mere sound! Surely what your reverence has said is false!

Nagasena – Your Majesty, how did you come here… on foot, or in a vehicle?

Menander – In a chariot.

Nagasena – Then tell me, what is the chariot? Is the pole the chariot?

Menander – No, your reverence.

Nagasena – Or the axles, wheels, frame, reins, yoke, spokes or goad?

Menander – All these are the chariot.

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In the previous chapter we began to consider the basic distinction between Behind, In/Through, for and In front of research starting-points, and the Research Map as an initial practical consideration. But all this is underpinning by philosophical premises. In/Through research starting-point and underpinning conceptual universes you choose, being conscious that it is a choice of research
outlook, in and of itself, already suggests that other conceptual universes could be chosen.

Two fundamental points about creativity flow from this:

- These other possible choices could contribute to illuminating research and innovative breakthroughs. All conceptual universes and research starting-points
- The very act of thinking about, and thus thinking about differently is creativity and innovation. It is possibly where one of the

- Modern science growing out of the idea that there is one way to do proper research, through proper unfaxed scientific method based upon certain
- Some aspects of the epistemological presumptions have been abandoned, but others have not and are still debating epistemology. This has routinely involved
- Creative disciplines have not been too involved in this debate. Or if they have, they have tended to use another language. For instance, students of Art and Design courses often get told to ‘go and do some research’. This can mean virtually anything, from going to a gallery to talking to your Mum. It is not always something useful, nor is it something that always routinely involves self-reflexive debate about epistemological underpinnings and consolidated research methods.

Despite this, creative people often have a more immediate and visceral reason to be doing their own practical research, to inform their work and explore their creativity. So this chapter is conceived as a space where these different concepts and languages of research, creativity and innovation can be explored in a way that overcomes these ‘ifs (or more ‘cultures). When it comes to research, creativity and innovation, there is no reason why science and technology, business, the arts and the social sciences cannot learn from each other much more effectively. The examples and case-studies we include below are designed to show this potential for cross-fertilisation leading to creativity and innovation.

Some people think that epistemology is such a good place to start all this because it involves

- Without going into massive detail, some useful epistemological terms to think
- Jargon and official terminology is always a problem, but you are likely to come across it when dealing with epistemology. Some of it is not actually that complicated.

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Methods – The way one constructs the basic game plan with which to go out there and collect information. (The term ‘methodology’ is sometimes used, but this term is more accurately used to describe the story of different methods.)

Truth – Science is built upon the idea that we can universally true facts that are...

Objectivity – They are not a matter of your opinion and how you would like things to be, objective facts exist out there and are independent of what anyone thinks. They are the opposite of opinions. But in the arts and humanities we cannot always be dealing with such hard facts. Truth with a capital T is sometimes not really that important, because we are often dealing with...

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Interpretations – Despite what ‘hard science’ wants to say, truth with a capital T does not really exist in the social or cultural world. Obviously there is a ‘real’ world out there, but the thing we call ‘reality’ in social and cultural life is largely constructed out of a whole web of beliefs, values, symbols, and personal processes. This is the social construction of reality position, which suggests that most views of the world have at least some component of the subjective. Subjective – It is about what is going on inside your head rather than what exists out there independently of you. So for your own research, you need to be clear about the degree to which you are interested in... Quantitative or Qualitative Research – Quantitative research is about ‘hard objective facts’, often about putting a number to something. For instance, 48% of people think this, or 76% of people rated the event as ‘excellent’. Some research questions however are about trying to find out the subjective – what people dream about or the history of their relationship with that and how they feel about that. This entails qualitative research. This is more about ways of studying the interior perceptions, meanings, motivations and desires of real people, as they exist for them. It is about a different kind of studying the interior perceptions, meanings, motivations and desires of real people, as they exist for them. It is about a different way of making claims about what is going on inside people’s heads, so for your own research, you need to be clear about the degree to which you are interested in... Commensurability – The degree to which the research tools you use are appropriate for the type of research you have in mind. Once our carpenter has been given his/her toolbox, there is no way they would try to hammer in a nail with a screwdriver – they are not good to try to research people’s innermost thinking with a questionnaire. There are more jargons, but we will come to that later. Whenever research starting-point you might choose, and whatever motivates your engagement, there will always be ‘more than one way to skin a cat’. That is, choosing between qualitative and quantitative research starting points will still require you to be clear about the underlying type knowledge you are after. Back to the need to make the epistemological choices that hinge upon the type of research you have in mind. Do you want a more ‘fact-based’ (scientific) research, or a research that is driven by the interpretation of a research question? In either case, the choice is between inductive and deductive approaches. Both of these involve the use of the empirical facts to arrive at conclusions. This is all very interesting, and involves thinking that might help you design some of your research. Especially if your research is motivated by the need to confirm someone else’s, you might want to construct some objective knowledge so that you can iron something in a way that does not rely solely upon your own opinions. Sometimes it is good to let the ‘facts speak for themselves’ because it can put you in a much stronger position to make both-chains-about your research when trying to speak to a potential investor, funder or decision-maker. Theories – Theories of Creative innovation No 4 – A Scientist’s View. It seems clear that the creative development of science depends quite generally on the perception of the irremovable of an already known set of fundamental differences and similarities. Psychologically speaking, this is the hardest step of all. But once it is done, and a scientist has established an object of attention, alert, aware, and sensitive it can discover a new order and can create new structures of ideas and concepts. From On Creativity, By D. Bohm. As a scientist, Bohm sees creativity as coming from certain inner drives and impulses... On Creativity. We told you epistemology can sometimes get a bit complicated. The downside of Positivism is its tendency to hold itself back as the only way to know the world. Positivism is often used to position people, rather than to judge position, using discoveries and objective knowledge in a new way. These positions will help us judge what creative people are often most interested in... So science and art do have some similarities, if we go back far enough. For Bohm, creativity within science and art is about, on the one hand, the experiment and the feeling of success with the world, such that we can feel to line it up to relate to, it is the heart of the ‘two cultures’ thing touched upon above. The Interpretative Tradition There has been, maybe always, but certainly for a few hundred years now, another basic epistemological tradition made up of various threads. It has developed sometimes outside of, and sometimes through a direct challenge to Positivism’s own standards of scientific rigour.
epistemism is a kind of the public face of the Positivist Tradition. It is an epistemological position based upon the idea that research can simply be about using sensory experiences to observe things happening. At its heart this is concerned with testing hypotheses by using deductive logic. If you can actually provide logical proof that an event will happen each and every time, or that it will happen some other way, then you have tested the hypothesis.

It is a really elegant solution to the problem of induction. How many swans do you need to see to convince yourself that all swans are white? You can never prove that all swans are white simply by observing swans, but you can disprove the theory ‘all swans are white’ by just observing one black swan. You have falsified the theory, you have conclusively proved something, but you can only conclusively disprove something with only one observation that is contrary to your original idea. You can never conclusively verify something but you can conclusively falsify it.

And this is where falsificationism comes from. It is a really elegant solution to the problem of induction, denied by the famous philosopher Karl Popper. Karl Popper was the leading modern proponent of the falsificationist view. He pointed out that in order to make scientific hypotheses come from. Their value is assessed according to the extent of testing the criticism of scientific hypotheses come from. Their value is assessed according to the extent of testing the critical examination of their assumptions and predictions. The idea that research can simply be about using sensory experiences to observe things happening. At its heart this is concerned with testing hypotheses by using deductive logic. If you can actually provide logical proof that an event will happen each and every time, or that it will happen some other way, then you have tested the hypothesis.

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Yvon Chouinard once wrote: 

Do your testing – testing your own ideas, no matter where they came from, is often the best way to conduct research for business…

Chouinard is the guy who set up Patagonia, the outdoor clothing firm. A very successful business as well as a very eco-credible label that seems to stand for something beyond its own profit motive. So maybe we should listen to him some more:

Testing is an integral part of the Patagonia industrial design process, and it needs to be included in every part of the process. It involves testing competitors’ products, ‘quick and dirty’ testing of new ideas to see if they are worth pursuing, fabric testing, ‘living’ with the new product to judge how ‘hot’ the sales may be, testing production samples for function and durability, etc.

and test marketing a product to see if people will buy it

(From Let My People Go Surfing, by Y. Chouinard)

We will hear more from Chouinard later.

He has chosen these numbers because they confirm to a particular rule that he has in mind. And you have to work out what this rule is by asking if another three number sequences also conform to the rule.

So what three number sequence would you come up with to research what this rule is?

Did you say – 8, 10, 12? The next three even numbers ascending in order of size?

8, 10, 12 does adhere to the rule, but what is the rule?

How about 20, 30, 40? Yep, still conforms to the rule, but the rule is not ‘even numbers ascending in order’.

What about 3, 5, 7? Maybe it is just numbers ascending by a factor of two? Yep 3, 5, 7 conforms, but what is the rule?

Are you trying to choose three numbers that conform to the rule, or three numbers that test the rule to find out what it is? That is, are you trying to get the particular answer to this specific question right, when getting it ‘wrong’ so that you could get better insight into what the rule is, the bigger question, what you are actually researching would be a better strategy? What the rule is!

If you are just trying to get the numbers right instead of trying to find out what the rule is, it is probably because of the Confirmation Bias: You are experiencing the need to get things ‘right’.

(The rule is the simplest one available, three ascending numbers. No evens or odds or factors of 2. But that doesn’t really matter. The point is the need to try to disprove yourself so that you can get the answer right).

EXERCISE

Call in the Awkward Squad

It is an old proverb, but still a good one…

You can learn more from failure than you can from success

This proverb implies a falsificationist position, in that learning from failure is akin to testing to destruction the things (concepts, theories, practices and techniques) you thought were your way forward.

And you can easily get help with this kind of research. A research technique that chimes with falsificationism is to deliberately seek out people you know are going to be difficult to convince, The Awkward Squad. And there is never a shortage of awkward people!

These are the people who just love asking those really difficult, Exocet questions. ‘Why are you doing it like that?’, ‘Why is it blue, and not green?’ ‘What is that character for?’ You know the ones.

If you have answers that convince both you and them, then you are probably onto something. Whilst it doesn’t really have to be as pompous as the Dragon’s Den thing, it won’t be comfortable, and it might get really irritating. But it will probably be really useful.

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STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU: PARADIGMS CAN BE GOOD AND BAD

Karl Popper’s work on falsificationism was the beginning of what some people now refer to as post-Positivism, where epistemological debate started to move away from the naive Positivism described above. Another key milestone within this development is the work of Thomas Kuhn, whose discussion of paradigms became central to current epistemological debate.

A paradigm is made up of the shared assumptions that a particular research community gathers around. It tends to include a definition (tight or loose) of what count as good questions to be asking right now, and therefore what counts as good answers. It is the shared assumptions that are current within a particular discipline, the research agenda of the day. Paradigms can be a good thing, but they can also be a bad thing. They can lead to you getting stuck within one particular position that then precludes you thinking in other ways.

**Paradigms can be good things**

- Encourage the sharing of the knowledge generated within a particular field of research. This sharing is ‘steepen’ of the paradigm. This also includes creating the social spaces for practitioners within a particular field to congregate in a broader sense, for example when you attend a conference, trade show private view or festival.

- Provide the shared rituals of initiation into a particular creative discipline – the qualifications, memberships, accreditations etc.

Paradigms also tend to encourage ‘revolutions’ whereby people carve out a creative space on the edge of the accepted way of doing things by opening up new possibilities. This seems to be especially the case within creative disciplines. This can be good fun, and lead to fruitful forms of creativity and innovation that develop out of a critique of what went before. For instance, a history of Avant Garde art movements throughout the 20th Century could be couched in a history of paradigmatic reactions – as Foucault and Cubism reacted to the ‘paradigm’ of The Salon, how Dada and Surrealism reacted to Naturalism, how Expressionism reacted to all this by rejecting everything that went before, etc. etc. etc. It is very useful for creativity to know what you are not, so that you can know what you are.

However, paradigms can be bad because they:

- Impose ‘rules’ on research and creativity that can easily lead to an agenda that is too ‘closed off’. They can encourage the researcher (creative practitioner) to believe there really is ‘one best way’ to do research (creative practice), leading to a rather arrogant belief that other research can be dismissed as already wrong simply because of its paradigmatic starting point.

- Can discourage cross-disciplinary research and foreclose on such potential dialogue with someone else from a different paradigm. If you are both too wedded to your paradigmatic position you will just end up speaking different languages, at cross purposes and maybe not at all. This entails too high an ‘opportunity cost’ (discussed above), which is the cost incurred by pursuing one research direction and therefore having to dismiss others that could be equally fruitful.

- Require ‘revolutions’ to carve out a creative place that doesn’t conform to the accepted way of doing things. This can be wasteful and time consuming in terms of constantly debunking everything that went before. It can also be wasteful and time consuming to be arguing about basic concepts and tools. Carteens tend not to have debates about harmonics and screwdrivers when they are making tables.

- Can encourage a ‘group mindedness’ whereby people get together and mutually reinforce each other’s partial view of the world, leading to a kind of irrationality and/or creative short sightedness. As In,

**WARNING**

**You Should Worry About Groupthink**

Ivan Ijams coined the term Groupthink and Wikipedia defines it as follows:

Groupthink is a type of thought exhibited by group members who try to minimize conflict and reach consensus without critically testing, analyzing, and evaluating ideas. During groupthink, members of the group avoid promoting viewpoints outside the comfort zone of consensus thinking. A variety of motives for this may exist such as a desire to avoid being seen as foolish, or a desire to avoid embarrassing or angering other members of the group. Groupthink may cause group members to make hasty, irrational decisions, where individual doubts are set aside, for fear of upsetting the group’s balance. The term is frequently used pejoratively, with hindsight.

It suggests that we do things when we are in groups that we would not do as individuals, which can be highly irrational.

Sigmund Freud looked at the interior psycho-dynamics of the group mind why people often operate in it for its potential for irrationality. He highlighted the following processes, which can be taken as a check-list for resisting groupthink.

- **Mutualism** – A social-psychological dynamic gets set up which says ‘I will agree with you if you will agree with me’ – be careful of other people and this kind of ‘getting into bed with someone’. Read Knots by R. D. Laing to see how this works in minute detail.

- **Groupthink** – People tend to have all sorts of non-rational reasons for qualifying groups to suggest silly things to them, because they want to belong, they fancy each other, they always assume the other person knows more etc. – be careful of yourself if you are becoming too suggestible, pliable etc.

- **The Feeling of Invincible Power** – People like being in groups because it gives them the sense of power that comes from having reinforcements (in both senses of the word). This can lead to shouting, bombast and bullying your point through – be careful of being in a group if it is getting to be ‘too correct’ all the time.

**QUOTATION**

A paradigm is defined by Thomas Kuhn as follows:

Close historical investigation of a given specialty at a given time discloses a set of recurrent and quasi-standard illustrations of various theories in their conceptual, observational and instrumental applications. These are the community’s ‘paradigms’, revealed in its textbooks, lectures and laboratory exercises. By studying them and by practicing with them, the members of the corresponding community learn their trade... Discover what isolatable elements, explicit or implicit, the members of that community may have abstracted from their global paradigm and described as rules in their research. Anyone who has attempted to describe or analyse the evolution of a particular scientific (research) tradition will necessarily have sought accepted principles and rules of this sort.

**From The Structure of Scientific Revolutions** by T. Kuhn
Economists use the concept of ‘opportunity cost’ to highlight that there is an extra cost of investing in one thing that stems from not being able to invest in something else, and so have to forego that opportunity. In a similar way, there is a creative opportunity cost associated with choosing to do something in a particular way because you cannot therefore do it another way. You have inevitably closed off another opportunity. Being too wedged to a paradigm, whether you are aware of it or not can encourage a high opportunity cost. In Steps in the Ecology of Mind, Gregory Bateson, who might possibly have been the most intelligent man to ever live, has articulated this kind of thinking in the following way: Because of the basic rules of grammar and syntax (a very broad and powerful paradigm), if I choose to now write down the letter ‘y’, I already have, by that very act closed down my options for the next letter, because only certain letters can follow a ‘y’ and if I choose to write the letter ‘y’ next, then my choice for the next letter is even more limited, it is going to have to be a vowel, and there are only five of them to choose from! Avoiding too strong a link to any one paradigm and always having an awareness you need to be sure your basic starting-point and general direction are right. If so, two things: and then closing down even further the next set of options, and so on…

So be self-aware of the existence of the paradigm you are currently in, and of its impact upon the way you do things. Paradigms can help, but at best probably only for a while as we will see in various places below, there is a complex and intimate relationship between problems and solutions. All too easily the (creative) thing that you think is part of the solution can flip over to become part of the problem. If your paradigm encourages too strong a conformity to some spurious notion of the standard way of doing things, it is unlikely to be good for fruitful research and creative innovation for very long. It will certainly work against innovation eventually.

Mr. Blue Sky: Epistemological Anarchism

Whist you might be able to falsify a school, and there is more than one way to skin a cat, it is also sometimes good to pull a rabbit out of the hat. It is good to have a clear and precise idea about what and why you are researching and for whom. But it is also good to be able to what the wild and unusual can bring, and to be open and eclectic within your research and creativity. And one of the private first coined by the photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. This refers to the precise moment when the image was right and the photograph was captured. Listening to the Walker and taking advantage of the opportunities it can give you entails being skilful in recognising the useful bits within it, as distinct from the background noise. When the decisive moment arrives, you need to be ready and do something to make the connection to your more structured research and do something useful. This may mean allowing research to happen to you as much as you try to make it happen. It is easy to ‘plan out’ innovation if you stick too rigidly to original plans and fail to spot new opportunities. This refers to the precise moment when the image was right and the photograph was captured. Listening to the Walker and taking advantage of the opportunities it can give you entails being skilful in recognising the useful bits within it, as distinct from the background noise. When the decisive moment arrives, you need to be ready and do something to make the connection to your more structured research and do something useful. This may mean allowing research to happen to you as much as you try to make it happen. It is easy to ‘plan out’ innovation if you stick too rigidly to original plans and fail to spot new opportunities.
The essential character of the shirt was its stripeyness and this was a result of the interpenetration of opposites, the blue and the white. Its basic characteristic was a result of the relationship between its non-blueness and its non-whiteness as much as the blue and white. The movement from blue to non-blue, from white to non-white is what made it what it fundamentally was, whether it was fundamentally blue or fundamentally white could never have been answered.

Sometimes you can understand things better by understanding what they are not. We told you dialectics is a bit weird.

THINKPIECE

Two Rivers and One Body: Researching Movement

Rivers are often used as metaphors in dialectical philosophy. One proverb about rivers and dialectics, from Herodotus reminds us that:

Thy body is a river. You are born into it, you live in it, you die in it, it carries you along....

But this is the wrong question. And finding the right question is key to good research as often as finding the right answer. If I had carried on researching whether my shirt was fundamentally blue with white adornment, or fundamentally white with blue adornment, I would have got precisely nowhere.

Because

The law of non-contradiction – a thing (a thought, argument or proposition) has a fixed identity and it equals its own thing-ness.

The Law of Identity – a thing’s identity cannot be something else.

The Law of Non-Contradiction – a thing’s identity cannot be something else.

The Law of Contradictions – things are best understood in and through their interpenetration of opposites.

Because things are always changing, they are always more than one thing at any one time, they are in flux.

So what?

It is all very well going on about shirts and rivers, but how can this dialectical stuff help in doing research? What good is all this dialectical philosophy?

Creative practice is best if it is aware of its own evolution, of its own movement and change. And this is the key point about dialectics. Recognising the interpenetration of opposites and things as being in constant flux can help you to grasp how new things emerge out of older versions of themselves as a result of internal processes. Things might change a little, then a little more in terms of the internal quantities, but not really change their basic nature.

Eventually this series of small incremental changes culminate in a fundamental change in quality. It becomes something completely different.

Applying this kind of dialectical thinking to the creative process raises the following kinds of questions:

1. Does the inspiration behind your work come from inside you as a specific person, or does it come from your experiences of the world outside and beyond you?
2. In your creativity ‘hardwired’ into your personality, or does it come from the conversations you have had with other people?
3. Does it come from shared ideas of how things should look, be put together and do it come from your experiences of the world outside and beyond you?
4. Is your creative business about what you do, or what your customers want you to do? One or the other?
5. Are you successful now? If so, is this a result of where you are now? Or perhaps it is a result of all the experiences you had when you were not so successful? Is your success due to your non-success?
...is about to happen. The holism of social and cultural interdependence is now at hand.

What is your creative network? Is it something that has come about because you have done things for someone else? Or because they have done things for you? Perhaps it is somewhere in between, because they have done things for you because you have done things for them? And anyway lots of other people have been involved and no one can remember any more, you just all live like that now?

And the best dialectical question of all for a creative person:

What do you do? Is it this, or is it that?

According to Formal Logic the answer to each of these questions has to be one or the other, it cannot be both at the same time otherwise you are just confused, and not logical.

So answer now. Quickly! You don’t have to really, but Mr Spock would want you to.

THINKPIECE

How Things Have Changed

Most proper Shakespearean tragedies have a man character who already has within him, usually, the seeds of his own downfall. King Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet, Iago, Hamlet, etc. It is not so much that some external event comes along to mess things up, rather that the behaviour that they have always exhibited eventually leads to the trouble when it really gets going. As we already know...

Love will tear us apart again

eventually leads to the trouble when it really gets going.

to mess things up, rather that the behaviour that they have always exhibited

But it doesn’t always have to be this upsetting. Understanding change is done before we used to think about it. Good things, helping you to understand and get a grip on yourself and your creativity as a constant process of change. It is a good way to grasp how things evolve out of themselves, how things emerge, develop and grow.

This dimension of change is another important facet of having a proper epistemology. The thing that drives the change from A over to B is already within A all the time. In more technical language, the initial thing (A) is the thesis. The thing that drives the change from A over to B is already within A all the time. In more technical language, the initial thing (A) is the thesis. The initial thing (A) is the thesis. In more technical language, the initial thing (A) is the thesis. In more technical language, the initial thing (A) is the thesis.

The Uncanny Valley, discussed in Chapter 6 is also a bit like this.

Maybe go back to them again and look at how things have changed for you from one thing into the other?

QUANTUM PHYSICS

There is an intimate relationship between dialectics and the thinking behind physics. There is also a strong relationship between this and the politics of knowledge that we keep putting off for another time.

In their book The Quantum Society, Zohar and Marshall discuss a newly developing epistemology related to quantum physics. They contrast the contours of this holistic epistemology with the more mainstream, mechanistic epistemology prevalent within Western society. They argue that our Western philosophical perceptions of social and cultural reality are mechanistic, a situation whereby ‘mechanism stresses a single point of view’. a mechanistic

It shows in a deep sense that holistic relationships are important, and breaking things into isolated bits is often destructive. When it comes to discussing how multitudes of creative spaces can be better for innovation as compared to mechanistically oriented and rigidly managed systems in Chapter 6, this type of thinking will re-appear.

Zohar and Marshall argue that the mechanistic epistemology is problematic because it gives us no account of where life and consciousness belong in the universe.... (and so) leaves human beings with no sense of our place in the scheme of things. It denies the reality and importance of relationships, establishes a precendent for conflict and confrontation and the pursuit of limited self-interest, undermines the model, a mechanism cannot account for why people ever act on behalf of others, nor for any sort of social cohesion!

(From The Quantum Society, by D. Zohar and I. Marshall)

In contrast to this mechanistic epistemology, Zohar and Marshall highlight the contours of a newly emerging pattern of cultural relationships which is characterised by the possibility of a ‘new emphasis on unity and integration... a phenomenological framework for understanding and fulfilling our potential as social (cultural) beings’.

The creativity, innovation and viable business strategies that come from Peer-to-Peer production, the open source movement and We-think, which we discuss in Chapter 6, are a case in point and contrast starkly with the mechanistic assumptions that competition between isolated parts is ‘the real truth’ of our business world.

The contours of the quantum epistemology are generally trying to forge a way out of competition by breaking down social, economic and cultural life into its constituent parts understanding change. The Quantum Society, by D. Zohar and I. Marshall)

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world in their own terms. When we try to understand other peoples’ perceptions, we soon realise that we can never be sure about them, will probably never really be able to share and mutually understand them in a complete way. We can only approximate them within our discussions and attempts to articulate them. Max Weber, who is big in the historical development of the Interpretative Tradition of phenomenology, although not an out-and-out phenomenologist, called this ‘understanding’. We soon realise that we can never be sure about them, will probably never really be able to share and mutually understand them in a complete way. We can only approximate them within our discussions and attempts to articulate them. Max Weber, who is big in the historical development of the Interpretative Tradition of phenomenology, although not an out-and-out phenomenologist, called this ‘understanding’.

However, if we apply this epistemology to our own reflective creative practice and become the object of our own research, which research for creative innovation often is, we can see that there are some important resonances between phenomenology and the individual creative act. Both are very much about understanding the subjective aspects of life. Phenomenology, along with the related world of Existentialism also focuses our attention upon the choices that we can make as to what our perceptions about understanding the subjective aspects of life.

Phenomenology, along with the related world of Existentialism also focuses our attention upon the choices that we can make as to what our perceptions about understanding the subjective aspects of life.

We think something similar happens, or at least should do, within good research. It is all well and good deciding upon a clear research starting-point, finding a good epistemological position, constructing tight research methods and pursuing them professionally. But don’t run away with the idea that this will get you to some kind of universal truth that will:

• Last for ever and be the only time you will need to look at this research question
• Be accepted by everyone else just because you have done the research really well

Cognitive nervousness, when you don’t really know what things mean is not good, and is ‘dissonant’. But when it comes to epistemology, it can be healthy to be a little nervous, to have an open curiosity about any research. It is healthy to have the kind of nervousness that comes from knowing the epistemological limitations of any research position. Epistemological nervousness is good for the creative soul and helps you to avoid making over-reaching statements and over ambitious creative business decisions based upon it.

What this means in more normal language is that good research is connected to creativity because both are ultimately about the free and open flow of ideas. And this is connected to innovation because that is also about the free and open flow of ideas.

We will come back to this in the Chapters 5, 6 and 7. But before we do that, creative.

THEORY

Theories of Creative Innovation

• modern psychology and phenomenology use the term ‘perceptual ambiguity’ which indicates the availability of new cognitive positions (creative perceptions) that fall short of conventional phenomenological stances and that allow the observer to conceive the world in a fresh dynamic of potentiality before the fossilise process of habit and familiarity comes into play.

(from 'The Open Word, by U. Eco)

Another useful aspect of Phenomenological or Existential ways of thinking lies in appreciating the value of a greater degree of epistemological openness when doing research. And being epistemologically open, in the way we are using it here, can be seen to be a sense of epistemological ‘nervousness’. Which is a good thing.

We have based this notion of ‘nervousness’ from Peter Berger and his book The Social Construction of Reality. In this book he talks about ‘cognitive nervousness’, by which he means the disjuncture between the experience of something and its deeper meaning of that thing, which often parallels contemporary culture.

We think something similar happens, or at least should do, within good research. It is all well and good deciding upon a clear research starting-point, finding a good epistemological position, constructing tight research methods and pursuing them professionally. But don’t run away with the idea that this will get you to some kind of universal truth that will:

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It involves being open to:

• The constant movement of things
• The difference between how things seem on the basis of your research and their real nature
• The temporary nature of any plans you might make based upon that research
• The inevitable incompleteness of any knowledge and, most fundamentally
• The fact that you yourself as a creative person engaged in research are an on-going project.

These can all be a very useful for sustaining the act of being creative and innovative.

Even though it doesn’t always feel like that.

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THEORY

Theories of Creative Innovation

• creative thinking is the infinite movement of thought, emotion and action. That is, when thought… is unimpeded in its movement, is not compelled or influenced or bounded by an idea (e.g. positivism’s unity of method) and does not proceed from the background of tradition or habit (e.g. a paradigm), then that movement is creative… to long as thought is circumscribed, held by fixed idea, or merely adjusts itself to a background or condition and, therefore, becomes limited, such thought is not creative… creative movement of thought never seeks a result or comes to a tidy despair, because result or clarification is always the outcome of alternate cessation and movement, whereas if there is no search for a result, but only continual movement of thought, then there is creative thinking.

(from ‘To Be a True Human Being, in: Total Freedom by Krishnamurti)

This means that new methodological frameworks are needed to support the creative innovation process. What do these look like and how can they be used?
Chapter 4 – Different Methods: Which Tools to Use, Why, When and How

STORY

Having to Tell Off Carol

Kurt Lewin once wrote, There is nothing so practical as a good theory.

I used to have to tell off my friend Carol. She was always saying that she was interested in practice, in doing stuff, in working with other people, so she didn’t have much time for research, for theory. She did do good work. But I had to tell her off, because there is a better relationship between theory and practice than that. I didn’t tell her off in a really angry way, we were only joking. But nevertheless researching Behind, In/Though, For or In Front Of your creative practice allows you to develop good theory, which allows you to develop better practice. And developing better practice will allow you to stand back from the details and see things from the outside: that is better theory. Sometimes Carol, there can be very useful dialectical dynamic between theory and practice.

One of the keys to sustaining this inter-relationship between what you are doing in practice and what you need to know more about in theory is knowing how to skilfully use the various tools out there for your own active research. The different methods that Mozart talked about (defining, crystallizing and enlarging creative practice) for researching creativity are the vital link between theory and practice.
After all the philosophical debate in the last chapter, we want this chapter to be more practical. Let us talk about choosing research methods at the centre of your creativity so that you can contribute to your creative journey. Finding out about concrete research methods can help you on this path. We do this by:

• Part of the way you can read your creative map and make decisions about where you want to go next.
• Part of your creative fuel to enable you to travel around this map. The research map explored in Chapter 4 is the manifesto of your method.

Specific research methods can form the vehicles allowing such movement.

In your creative passport to enable you to enter new and undiscovered stop-offs and destinations as you make your journey.

The nature of the global cultural economy and the ever-present change and competition it brings suggests that building regular research into your creativity and innovation plan is not an optional extra. It is not a chore that has to be done in addition to the everyday business of getting the creative work done. It is not an extra activity that you do between your main jobs of making your work. The practical benefits of research methods mean they can help:

1. From Visualizing Research, by J. Gray and J. Malin. New contribution to knowledge is likely if new and alternative research methods are proposed and validated.

Reflective practice-based research methods for art and design

Although science and social sciences have had established research methods for the past 150 years or so, Arts and Design disciplines have not consolidated their core research methods within their disciplines to the same degree. So when it comes to art and design, there is still an emerging debate about which research methods can be developed or made appropriate for art and design.

Bringing together elements of research and practice in a more consolidated way is what Gray and Malin, in their book Visualizing Research mean by the term ‘reflective practitioners’. It is part of their concern that all of the key different research methods can be used within the arts and humanities fields. The horizon of their research is the social sciences and the sciences have done the most to devise tight methods with which to research and make decisions about the activities of the arts within the social sciences. And make decisions about the emergent research methods for the arts and design.

This practice-based approach to research naturally prompts us critically to consider and evaluate methods used in practice as to their appropriateness for our continued emerging debate. This is the point of view that creative practitioners draw from.

There is a key distinction between the Positivist and Interpretative literatures. While these literatures have always been at the heart of the creative arts, they have different ways of thinking about how you research.

In the first place, for me as a scientist, there must be something observable, something that can be measured and coded you will be able to generate statistical data, percentages etc. Using these data, you can infer whether a new product is in demand or not.

However, if you want to know what these people really think and why they think as they do because you want this to inform a documentary film, or you are involved in a community art project, or some good marketing, it will be pretty pointless asking them ‘yes’ and ‘no’ questions. So you will need to interview some of them to focus upon what they really believe, in the terms that they themselves think about it. This will entail getting into different kinds of qualitative research methods.

For instance:

- If you want to ask a large number of people some fairly simple questions to do with your proposed project, then get into quantitative research methods. This will entail devising completions of an appropriate questionnaire and coding and you will be able to generate statistical data, percentages etc. Using these data, you can infer whether a new product is in demand or not.

Theories of Creative Innovation: No. 8 – Humanist Psychology

There are various ways of defining creativity... let me present the elements which, for me, are part of the creative process, and then attempt a definition.

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Creativity is not, in my judgement, restricted to some particular content. I am presenting an abstract definition of the creative process, as it is evidenced in painting a picture, composing a symphony, designing new instruments for scientific discovery. Acquiring new procedures in human relationships or creating new forms of one’s self is personally as in psychotherapy.

Creativity is the process that is the essence of the creative work, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other.

When trying to decide upon a specific research method, this is the start. You have to think about what you want to know in this research. This is a key way of thinking about the research methods for the research you have the least control over the research: the other, the “structured” or “hard” research. The way you think about what you want to know is there how you do your research.

This key distinction when it comes to research methods is the one between qualitative and quantitative methods.

For instance:

- If you want to ask a large number of people some fairly simple questions to do with your proposed project, then get into quantitative research methods. This will entail devising completions of an appropriate questionnaire and coding and you will be able to generate statistical data, percentages etc. Using these data, you can infer whether a new product is in demand or not.
is it Big Enough? - make sure it is designed from the beginning to collect all the information you need. it will be very difficult to go back again afterwards. think about what, in an ideal world the findings of the questionnaire would enable you to ‘prove’ so that you can make the argument you want to make, and then ask those questions.

is it Small Enough? - keep it as short as possible. Most people will not actually do your questionnaire.

What’s My Motivation? - sometimes it can be a good idea to give people small rewards for filling in your questionnaire, in technical terms this is called incentivising.

Keep it Simple - stick to simple straightforward language, no jargon, no fuzzy concepts, no big, long questions.

Got Any Filters? - think about filtering. For instance, where you have asked a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question and the reply has been ‘yes’, design things to get them to carry on because you want more information on that. But if they have replied ‘no’, direct them to a question further down the questionnaire after the ‘yes’ answer has been given. Otherwise they are being asked to answer questions that they have already told you are not relevant to them, and this gets irritating and looks unprofessional.

Rating and Scaling - think about ratings and scaling. This is the way to get a number to put ‘important’ or ‘not important’ or ‘not very important’ or ‘very important’ or ‘fairly important’ or ‘not very important’ or ‘irrelevant’. Scaling asks people to put things on a scale. That is, you ask them to rank things in various chapters and get them to put ‘1’ next to the most important, ‘2’ next to the next most important and so on.

By allowing a number to be attached to an opinion, you avoid getting lists of answers that are a few sentences of dialogue. And this is good because such information is all and summates to deal with when it comes to showing aggregated finding (averages, general spread of opinion, percentages etc) rating and scaling allows for better coding.

Coding - when questionnaires are analysed, some version of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) will probably be used. This is the industry standard software for survey analysis. To do this kind of ‘data management’ file is created, which is the file that tells the software what a particular number means. This file is filled from convenience to each question. For instance the data management file will tell the software that for Answer 1, the presence of a ‘1’ means ‘female’, and ‘0’ means ‘male’. Then there is some kind of ‘data file’, which contains all the actual answers for each completed questionnaire. This is then read by the data management file. The more times you can get a clearly coded answer the better as far as data management design goes. Questions that involve rating and scaling allow the data to be read more effectively and statistical findings generated. This is better than dealing with 500 opinions that kind-of say the same thing but in slightly different ways.

Who Do You Get In Touch With? - making sure that you have a representative sample for your questionnaire is important. If you are researching the population as a whole, then you will need 50% males and 50% females, and a good spread of ages, ethnicities etc. But sometimes you will be researching a particular section of society, so you don’t need to have a general sampling, but a more precise one. Just so long as you are comfortable that your sample is representative.

Call Me, Write to Me, or Just talk to Me - once you have designed your questionnaire you need to decide how you are going to get it to the people whose answers you want. This can be face to face, by phone or by phone.

This largely depends upon how big a survey you want it to be. If you want it to be a really big survey, (say above 500), which is small for professional market research but big for most purposes) then a postal (mail) campaign is probably best. The problem with this strategy is that the average return rate for postal surveys is around 20%. So you can spend a lot of time and energy organising a campaign against this basic back. But the advantage of doing a telephone strategy. This is obviously cost consuming, and depends upon getting people’s phone numbers, but it has the advantage of letting you know where you are up to in terms of numbers of responses all the time. So you can just stop when you have enough. Or sometimes, if your questionnaire is fairly short and sweet you can just use the users of your service, venues etc and ask to go through it with them there and then. This starts to become a structure interviews, which we will talk about more below.

Keep an Eye on Things - it is a good to keep an eye on the findings as you go along. If everyone is giving you very similar responses after you have completed a reasonable amount of questionnaires, you can see that there is little point carrying on just to re-prove the obvious again and again. This is another reason why telephone surveys can be good because you can keep an eye on things all the time.

Stages - you can think about stages within a survey. This can involve a pilot phase where you test your questionnaire a few times to check it. This has the advantage of allowing you to tweak things before you have gone too far. You might also think about the possibility of an interim analysis, where you look at the first 100 responses to see if you can make any meaningful themes, especially if you want to report back to someone else.

Users and Non-Users - an important issue to be aware of when using questionnaire-based research methods within the cultural and creative sector is the distinction between users and non-users.

Some people are just interested in the arts and culture, they are users. And some are just not, they are non-users. What this can mean is that surveys on the arts and culture can very easily become unimportantly biased towards the opinions of users. Because users are already interested, they will already be interested in replying to your questionnaire. And because non-users are not, they will not, if you see what we mean. This does not always matter. You might just want to evaluate your project by getting the opinions of those who came to it. But it might do, if your research wants to measure a broader spectrum of opinion. So you might need to deliberately seek out the opinion of non-users. This however is notoriously difficult because they tend to be difficult to identify, reach and then get interested enough to sit still long enough.

New Software and On-Line Quantitative Research - Developed in recent years, there are now a whole host of new data analysis software packages and on-line survey services out there which can take a lot of the hassle out of doing questionnaires and other kinds of quantitative research. This starts to get rather specialised now, so we will leave you to explore that world for yourself.

NUTS AND BOLTS, AND ALSO BRASS TACKS

With the above discussion in mind, let’s now turn to some of the discrete tools with which to put research into practice, the nuts and bolts of actual research methods. This also really takes us away from the philosophical debates of the previous chapters and gets us down to – the why and how involved in doing research for creative innovation. The previous chapters and gets us down to – the why and how involved in doing research for creative innovation.
Qualitative research methods can take many different forms. But the thing that has proven to be really True-with-a-Capital-T. It is good to be nervous sometimes. Business ‘eggs’ in one ‘basket’ that has not, and probably cannot ever be, opened. People want to know what you think, so it must be right. Right?

After all, this is not your opinion. You have gone out there and really asked lots of other people what they think, so it must be right. Right?

When it comes to the practical activities of doing quantitative research, given that the core of ‘real science’ involves looking for generalisable laws, the need for breadth is key. Qualitative research does not have breadth but it has depth, it tends to lack depth.

Qualitative research for creative people can mean covering as much ground as possible. There is just too much consuming data to be interrogating people in such large numbers. Qualitative research does not have breadth but it makes up for that by having depth. Qualitative research lets you see the people really think about it, and this can bring the really useful information you need to develop new and innovative creative ideas.

But it doesn’t have to be an either-or choice. Often professional researchers will start with quantitative methods to get a spread of opinion and draw out some interesting themes, and then switch to qualitative to go into them in more detail.

Interviewing

A basic tool that is somewhere between quantitative and qualitative research is interviewing. Sometimes this can be as simple as talking to someone, and faithfully recording what they say to you. There are more and more developed professional techniques for this kind of research.

Doing professional interviews can involve different structures

Structured – sticking to a pre-arranged script that you use for each and every interview. This is only a little different from the face to face way of carrying out a question and answer session.

Open-ended – completely open, with no script to structure the agenda of the interviews. That comes solely from the person being interviewed.

Semi-structured – a mix of both, with you keeping returning to so as to maintain some semblance of repeatability across all the interviews you do with various people, but also allowing space for the interviewee to go off on tangents or wandering away from your point. You need to be really good at getting them to tell you what they really think in the terms that make sense to them.

You still need to think about getting a representative sample if you are intending to use your methods to make those sort of claims for it afterwards.

Writing up findings straight away whilst it is fresh in your mind is a really effective and faithful as possible to what they said, not how you wanted it to be

Accept negative, difficult or contrary ideas and opinions

Interviewing for you. Someone who can more easily connect with the people being interviewed.

People of whatever racial, ethnic, cultural or religious background (usually white, Western men) study people from a completely different cultural and scientific background (native cultures in ‘primitive’ societies) has it however become much more sophisticated since then. It is fundamentally based upon the idea that people from one social and cultural background are in an advantageous position to study other societies and cultures precisely because they are not immersed within the thing they are studying. Remember, the last animals to discover water will be fish, precisely because they are in it all the time. Being able to stand back from the details of living that cultural life and see things that those who are immersed within it find difficult to see, can be a very useful research method.

A particular technique for this kind of research is participant observation. As we saw above, there are problems associated with trying to do strict functionalist research by just going to talk to strangers whatever they might be. Remember The Hawthorne Effect, The Social ‘Uncertainty Principle’ and epistemological nervousness in general? It is not always easy to know what the best questions are, and people will not always tell you what they really think anyway.

Participant observation researchers try to get around this by immersing themselves into the group they are researching, to become a part of the group before they research it. This enables them to research the group from the inside more effectively. They are able to understand the cultural universe of the people they are interested in more effectively by observing people’s actual lives as they are. This is something is not always easy to do by asking direct questions. By becoming one of the group, anthropologically oriented researchers are less visibly ‘parochial’

EThnOgroPhy

• Ethno… – the native, the ethnic, the things that make people as they are – the native, the ethnic, the things that make people as they are –参加了 – seeing and understanding the culture of the people you are interested in, not just the people you are interviewing. This can be a real problem when researching minority groups, and this can bring the really useful information you need to develop new and innovative creative ideas.

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• From the outside and their relative invisibility enables more authentic research.

This research technique is not just about Westerners studying ‘primitive tribes’ anymore. More accurate anthropological research has been done by Japanese people studying aspects of Western societies. Many creative professions routinely use this kind of research, although they often don’t call it participant observation.

The artist in residence goes to live within a community to understand it before beginning to work with it.

The documentary film-makers tries to understand the group (she) wants to work with by getting them to be part of the production.

Method actors ‘get’ the role by becoming it, by living in the context of the character they are to play.

However…

**WARNING**

Who Do You Think You Are?

There are two problems associated with participant observation.

**Problem 1** It is very easy to not really, fully engage with the cultural reality of the group you are researching. There are natural tendencies to resist becoming part of the group’s culture by keep hold of your own mental and cultural universe. This can lead to making judgements about what is going on which can get in the way. You have to know who you are and who you are not, and if you have not been accepted by the group as part of the group, then any such research can be flawed. In this case you have become a non-participating observer. It is very easy to become engrossed in the novelty and beauty of the documentary of the group you are researching. This can mean you are unable to make any useful statements or conclusions once had that could have helped you to see what is going on within the group. There are natural tendencies to resist becoming part of the group’s culture by keep hold of your own mental and cultural universe. This can lead to making judgements about what is going on which can get in the way. You have to know who you are and who you are not, and if you have not been accepted by the group as part of the group, then any such research can be flawed. In this case you have become a non-participating observer.

**Problem 2** It is very easy to begin to work with by getting them to be part of the production.

It needs to be commensurate, credible, representative, and defensible as rigorous and planned research.

It is not easy to get right, and personally we would only use it as a complimentary addition to the words within a piece of research. Remember, if it is research, not a photographic exhibition we are talking about. If you want to be on an exhibition, then call it that and don’t confuse people by making research claims that your use of audio-visual material cannot be got through on.

But sometimes, using audio-visual material can lead to absolutely fantastic research.

We want you all to put this book down now, and go out to get a copy of A Seventh Man, by John Berger and Jean Mohr to see this.

**SEMIOtICS**

Now you are back, and continuing the theme of linking research methods to audio-visual material, all products of culture convey meanings through their shape, size, colour, form, materials and so on, and over and above the context of what they are designed to say. Semiotics was all aspects of a society’s material and visual culture as therefore being open to ‘reading’, in the same way that more orthodox texts can be read. This is because all such cultural artefacts are part of a broad process of cultural communication. This suggests that everything carries meaning and there can be no ‘ground zero’ of cultural meaningfulness. In common with some aspects of the use of Audio-Visual materials as the object of research, semiotics is concerned with questions such as:

• What do the objects of culture mean and say?
• What message do they carry beyond themselves as objects?
• Is there a connected visual language at all?
• What do these meanings tell us about the people who produced them?

They might not call it this, but actually many archaeologists adopt a research position very similar to this. It is also very similar to the branch of archaeological called visual anthropology. Alfred Gell’s book Art and Agency is a good introduction to this.

Semiotics and the use of audio-visual material in general is connected to the general thrust of [visual] anthropology because they share common concerns with:

• How bits of material culture (objects, fashion) are produced by different groups for different reasons to articulate deeper meanings.
• How they are exchanged and used in different groups, again for lots of different reasons that can uncover deeper meanings.

The BIOGRAPHICAL METHOD

In recent years the biographical method has perhaps been less used in social science research. Within creative practice it is probably used all the time, but not necessarily recognised as a discrete and credible research method in and of itself. So it is useful to say a few words about the biographical method as a particular way of doing research and collecting ‘data’.

Reflecting back upon your own history after you have gone so far down the present, we see another example of how history is about the future, we, you, they, are all going. Because of this, it might be about the future of your creativity and lead you to innovation, which you need to know about. Knowing history in general terms helps in understanding things in general terms. Knowing specifics of your own creative field helps you to know the details, and then maybe you might think about the future of your art – mostly Research In/Th e w EB

Therefore we can imagine…the Research Act

The biographical method can be defined as one which…

The creative writer does the same as the child at play. (s)he creates a world of phantasy which (s)he takes very seriously – that is, which (s)he invests with a tangibility and a visibility that is sharpened from reality. The credibility of the writer’s imaginative world, however, has very important consequences for the technique of his/her art; for many things which, if they were real, could give no enjoyment, can do so if they immediately take the place of reality, and in themselves, are actually distressing, can become a source of pleasure for the heavy burdens imposed on him/her by life and the high yield of pleasure afforded by humour.

As people grow up, then, they cease to play and they seem to give up the yield of pleasure which they gained from playing. But wherever the human mind knows that hardly anything is harder for a (young) than to give up a pleasure which (s)he has once experienced. Actually, we never give up anything, we only exchange one thing for another. As people grow up, then, they cease to play and they seem to give up the yield of pleasure which they gained from playing. But wherever the human mind knows that hardly anything is harder for a (young) than to give up a pleasure which (s)he has once experienced. Actually, we never give up anything, we only exchange one thing for another. (From Creative Writers and Day-dreaming, by S. Freud)
space whereby people share time and effort to ensure a quality and synthesis of information that can create knowledge. This mutually created and tested knowledge can be more useful for getting you to innovation than pieces of free-floating information which can often have a very high flaky quotient. The Open Source Movement is an example of this, and something we will come back to in Chapter 6.

This tends to suggest that researching the web is best when it is researching what other professional researchers and potential collaborators out there are doing. Theodore Roszak has talked about the cult of information and has showed us how an obsession with collecting free-floating bits of it is not the same as research for the development of innovative knowledge. Information unsupported by background ideas of what to do with it is not always a good thing, because it can lead you down blind alleys and dead ends.

Which is partly why...

THREE IS THE MAGIC NUMBER: TRIANGULATION

Three is the magic number for several reasons. One of them is because of triangulation. Triangulation is a map-making and surveying technique that enables a particular point in space to be accurately fixed. It entails measuring the same things from three different angles. In its surveying context, it involves choosing three different angles from which to survey.

The line from the first angle measures the general direction towards the point we are interested in; the second line is drawn and where it crosses the first it pins points where the point is; the third line confirms the accuracy of lines 1 and 2. The place where these three lines of direction cross each other shows the point for sure.

The idea of triangulation is useful for other kinds of research too. The idea of researching a particular topic from one angle by using one set of techniques can give us a certain insight; looking at things from a second angle by using a different method can help to pin down any findings; the third angle by using yet another method can really pin down the point. Triangulation gives you more assurance about your research findings. If your research has been triangulated and the three different methods are confirming each other, then you can probably rely upon it.

So, in terms of researching from different angles, a fairly standard way would be to:

- Look at the secondary literature and previous research
- Carry out broad-brush survey research
- Conduct more in-depth interviews with another set of people.

But you could perhaps imagine other, more imaginative ways to triangulate your research for creativity. It would depend very much on what the actual content of your research is.

QUOTATION

Triangulation

Unfortunately, no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival interpretations. . . Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of observation must be employed. This is termed triangulation. . . multiple methods should be used in every investigation.

(from The Research Act by N. Denzin)

And Wikipedia says:

In the social sciences triangulation is often used to indicate that more than one method is used in a study with a view to double (or triple) checking results. This is also called “cross examination”. The idea is that one can be more confident with a result if different methods lead to the same result. If an investigator uses only one method, the temptation is strong to believe in the findings. If an investigator uses two methods, the results may well clash. By using three methods to get at the answer to one question, the hope is that a) two of the three will produce similar answers, or b) if three clashing answers are produced, the investigator knows that the question needs to be rephrased, methods reconsidered, or both.

This has been a short and quite brief introduction to the underlying logic of some concrete methods that might help you to carry out your research. If you look hard enough, you will come across lots of variations on these methods, with lots of fancy terminology. But the choice between quantitative and qualitative research methods in the context of commensurability, set against epidemiological choices and the basic motivations within your research is the key thing here.

Having explored both the philosophy and methods for research that might help you with your creativity, let’s now turn to how new ideas, techniques and processes might flow from research towards practical application.
After all, everything was geared towards the dynamics of a relatively secure and predictable hypertension drug market. Would the other application for this new drug find a suitable therapeutic category? And what was the size of the market for something that could do this? Was there even a market out there? Notwithstanding these imponderables, the work was re-directed and eventually Viagra was successfully launched.

There are many failed attempts at drug discovery, it is just that this one had a happy ending (in both senses). In this case research into a product designed for one known application found another in an entirely new area because of entirely peripheral and wholly unexpected observations. Being prepared to re-adjust to unexpected observations and re-order applications was the thing that brought these happy endings to fruition. No-one had set out to develop a drug to help men keep it up all night, but it works anyway! A great innovation.

Chapter 5 – The Flow of Ideas: Creative Business Innovation

STORY

‘Oh, By the Way…’: A Story About Sex and Drugs – by Paul Coe

Dr. Paul Coe is an organic chemist who worked in Pharmaceutical Research and Development for the Nottingham-based Boots Company.

In 1985, at their R&D lab in Kent, Pfizer were thinking about developing a drug to treat hypertension (high blood pressure). The size of the market associated with this life-threatening condition was (and is) vast. There were already products on the market, but a new one with improved activity would enhance treatment and be highly valuable to the company. In particular, the scientists had become aware of recent biochemical research into hypertension and thought it might fit in with some of their own chemical research. They set to work on it and in time a promising drug candidate emerged. A preliminary clinical trial was arranged but the results were rather disappointing in respect to lowering blood pressure. So another trial using higher dosages was carried out in an attempt to improve the activity of the drug, whilst keeping an eye on any emerging side-effects as the dosages were increased. When the physician rang the development office with the progress report on the progress, he uttered the immortal words: ‘Oh, and by the way.’

For some unexpected reason the men taking part in the trials had experienced a much more pleasurable sensation than those predicted. Given this, the trial indicated an unexpected potential application, useful not just for the men on the trial. These results were interesting, but how should the project proceed?

After all, everything was geared towards the dynamics of a relatively secure and predictable hypertension drug market. Would the other application for this new drug find a suitable therapeutic category? And what was the size of the market for something that could do this? Was there even a market out there? Notwithstanding these imponderables, the work was re-directed and eventually Viagra was successfully launched.

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Science is very big stuff today because a whole business economy has grown up around science and technology. Fact is, business applications and thus the innovations that actually get developed has the main driver behind the last 300 years of Western societies, that is the Industrial Revolution and thus to a large extent the whole world. So it is big stuff.

However, parallels with the big science approach to research and innovation only takes us so far when our concern is with the creative industries, because:

• The structure of the creative industries sector is different from most other industries and this is the high percentage of micro-businesses (i.e. the 5 people) and individual sole-traders in the creative industries. It is unlikely that many creative industry companies would have the large dedicated R&D unit in the way big science has. The creative industries do not have new ideas and thus the innovations that actually get developed has the main driver behind the last 300 years of Western societies, that is the Industrial Revolution and thus to a large extent the whole world. So it is big stuff.

• The potential relationships between research, business applications, and thus the innovations that actually get developed has the main driver behind the last 300 years of Western societies, that is the Industrial Revolution and thus to a large extent the whole world. So it is big stuff.

Theories of Creativity: No 10 – A More Social View

In reality, creativity has always been a highly collaborative, cumulative and social activity in which different people with different skills, points of view and insights, share and develop ideas together. Almost most creative industry companies would have the large potential creative collaborators doing, or planning to do, what can your suppliers do for your innovation? What potentially fruitful areas of business collaboration can you identify that will help with your innovation plan over the next few years?

Research In Front Of Your Business Plan – who are your customers today? Who are they going to be tomorrow? Have you tried to falsify your business plan? What was it that you expected in your business reality that was tested by the awkward squad? What are they telling you about your innovation needs?

Planning the way of your business so as to build innovation into the what and how can enable you to have…

AN INNOVATION PLAN

Innovation Nation, John Kao lays out some reasons why keeping a constant innovation mindset to ideas about innovation for creative business. As creative people, we bring these ideas to fruition needs to similarly include researching applications as much as researching the new ideas themselves.

What is your Business Plan?

Looking briefly at the nature of innovation for creativity brings us to the question of why is your Business Plan? We have not spelt this question wrong. We have made some broad comments about the potential relationships between different types of research and different routes to innovation in previous chapters. But, within the creative economy, the space for ‘pure research’, which big business and universities used to allow for pure research not necessarily tied to immediate business application, seems to have been eroded. This institutional context means that an innovative mindset can get left behind as an ‘accountancy’ or ‘target-hitting’ onus is placed on business within? Are you sufficiently aware of it? Is it the right one? Is it about management. When it comes to research and innovation, you can have advantages over the top line if you position yourself in a position to grasp the potential advantages of economies of speed.

so how do you put yourself in a position to grasp economies of speed? Borrowing some ideas from Kao, it is useful to:

• Balance pure research (exploratory, Research Behind and For) with the applied (more instrumental and descriptive aspects of Research In/through and In front of)

Do you need a Discovery, an Invention or an Innovation?

In the context of research for creative business, Chonard makes a useful distinction between:

Discovery – finding something entirely new about the world that leads to new ideas and sets up the possibility of an invention.

Innovation – making something work from scratch through finding these new discoveries and following through this making ways of doing things, new processes, new mechanical/technological stuff.

Invention – re-conceptualising the links between the way you currently do things, how they can be done differently and what is already out there.

Within big business, lots of debate is about where innovation comes from, how it can be brought about, or how its created. But, whatever the “hardware” of a particular industry – the technology, the machinery, the processes and the design of making something in a particular way – or planning to do? What are your potential creative collaborators doing, or planning to do? What can your suppliers do for your innovation? What potentially fruitful areas of business collaboration can you identify that will help with your innovation plan over the next few years?

Keep an openness to your research and innovation plan. think seriously about what paradigm is your creative business within? Are you sufficiently aware of it? Is it the right one? Is it about management. When it comes to research and innovation, you can have advantages over the top line if you position yourself in a position to grasp the potential advantages of economies of speed.

So how do you put yourself in a position to grasp economies of speed? Borrowing some ideas from Kao, it is useful to:

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as we have already mentioned, the creative industry sector tends to be made up of small firms, individuals and networks-based projects. You are not big, so it is probably better for your research for innovation it is not big better, because it is
It requires a lot of time, energy and investment to make an invention. Big corporations can benefit from inventions because of high barriers to entry. Often because the investment and set-up costs of moving into innovative markets are so high, it puts people off. So they have time to make money on the basis of their invention. Without these barriers to entry, however, it is easy to find that after years of work and investment into innovation, a lot of people will be doing the same thing as you within a few months. Even with Intellectual Property protection, they will move into this market if the barriers to entry are low and it is lucrative enough.

So rather than being based upon invention, it is sometimes better for creative business to look for innovations, by finding ways to solve a problem with the tools that are already around. This means that being good at researching what is going on around you can be as important as being good at working everything out for yourself. If you are seeking to invent entirely new tools, maybe you are making things a little too complicated for yourself, especially if they already exist in a slightly different form out there.

Innovation can come from:

- A new application for established knowledge — much quicker
- The use of ‘intermediate technology’, which can be the use of tools, software, equipment etc in a new way — much cheaper than trying newly invented tools, software, equipment
- Finding collaborative spaces with various people who already have the complementary knowledge and skills that can lead you to innovation — you don’t need to learn every new skill, process or technique out there, and you can get a very clear idea of the practical benefits of these new skills, knowledge and techniques right from the outset.

**CASE STUDY**

**Use a Pencil Comrade**

There is a story (which is not actually true but it makes a good point) from the Cold War and the Space Race between USA and USSR: NASA spent lots and lots of time and energy, involving lots and lots of scientific research and technological invention developing a pen that would write in zero-gravity, for astronauts to use whilst in outer space. And the Russians used a pencil!

The common pencil becomes an innovation because it has a new ‘killer application’. Heavy duty invention of something new was not needed.
A truly great innovation stemming from a killer application. A Healing Application! Planting flowers to prevent kids from getting blown up! It doesn’t get any more beautiful than that.

But the initial science (solution) was from one world, the detecting of landmines (problem) was from a completely unconnected world. The innovation came from putting the two things together. Sometimes when you put 2 and 2 together you get much more than 4!

So are there innovations from killer applications out there for you? Do you have a problem in search of a solution? Or maybe you have a solution in search of a problem? Maybe you should be researching people who know how to put these together? Maybe you should be researching other killer applications within your field to see what lessons they hold.

Market Research
Most of what we have said in this chapter so far has been about the relationship between research and the innovative use of new ideas for developing aspects to your creativity. But clearly, once you have done this and are ready, you will need to tell everyone else what you have and what you can do for them. Your ideas need to flow out, as well as flow within if your research is to take you to sustainable innovation.

So, in its broadest sense market research is a key component of any innovation plan. It will be really useful to research what other people are thinking and doing. It will also be useful to know how other people such as customers, collaborators and audiences are receiving your ideas. So this implies a whole new area of potential research which fits squarely within the research starting-point.

It is sometimes useful to think about the various stages of business. This reminds you that you will potentially be working with lots of other people. And each one of these people, including suppliers and customers can be a source of research and innovation.

The stages involved in business can be laid out as follows:

1. Origination – the ‘light bulb’ moment, the original creative idea which will form the basis of the creative business. This can involve working with collaborators and other like-minded people or companies.
2. Research and Development – project planning, proto-typing or piloting something through a development stage. This can involve working with all sorts of experts who can advise on feasibility, technical know-how etc.
3. Market Research – where is the love? When micro-biologists were first researching genetic modification techniques, it is unlikely that they had the problem of unexploded landmines at the forefront of their thinking. But nevertheless:

Flower Power Takes on Land Mines

A Danish biotech company has developed a genetically modified flower that could help detect land mines and it hopes to have a prototype ready for use within a few years. “We are really excited about this, even though it’s early days. It has considerable potential,” Simon Oestergaard, chief executive of developing company Aresa Biodetection, told Reuters in an interview on Tuesday. The genetically modified weed has been coded to change color when its roots come in contact with nitrogen dioxide evaporating from explosives buried in soil. Within three to six weeks from being sowed over landmine-infested areas, the small plant, a Thale Cress, will turn a warming red when close to a land mine.

(from Wired Magazine at www.wired.com)
production – making it ‘work’ and producing it so that you can take it to market. This could be a product that you then get manufactured, a service that you get working with all sorts of service providers and suppliers of all sorts of things that support your work.

marketing and distribution – telling everyone else what you have and what you can do for them. Again this involves working with service providers and suppliers.

Customers and consumption – getting to the customer and taking care of them. Working with your customers.

So, even this very brief sketch of the value production chain and the stages within business shows that lots of other people are probably going to be involved. Listening to them can be a good source of research and innovation for your company.

market research can be broken down into several elements:

• what your suppliers can do for you
• what your competitors are doing
• what your collaborators are doing
• what your customers, or potential customers are doing, or thinking, or thinking of doing
• what your company personality is and how it is presenting itself to the world

researching your suppliers

It can be good to see your suppliers and service providers as people to be influenced. Listening to them can be a good source of research and innovation for your company.

The genius Harold Leffler

When I had my blacksmith shop, I contracted out the tooling of our climbing equipment. Harold Leffler’s machine shop in Burbank, Leffler was a draftsman and tool and die maker with fifty-year’s experience. We called him the genius as often as we called him Harold. He was so good at his craft that he received requests from aircraft companies around the country to bid on their projects, even though he ran a small shop.

Harold used to joke about blueprints he received from engineers; they were so overdesigned that the cost to produce them would be ten or twenty times higher than necessary, and in many cases they would be impossible to make at all. Because I had no training in engineering but did know what I wanted, I invented a carbide or ice screw to do, I would show up with a simple sketch or a carved wooden model, or just an idea in my head, and we would work together to come up with a design that I knew could be produced.

CASE STUDY
Supplier Led Innovation

What is Supplier Led Innovation?

Supplier-led innovation (also known as supplier innovation and supply chain innovation) is the sourcing of novel ideas from a company’s supply chain. For example, rather than buy components ‘off the shelf’, an automotive manufacturer may ask for innovation from suppliers in order to produce something more innovative or more advanced, or processes that are more efficient.

So what’s the problem?

Because suppliers are largely judged by how cheap they are for supplying existing products rather than what value they can deliver through innovation, they are too rarely empowered, measured for expected to innovate. This can also be true in the public sector as a result of procurement practice and the hurdles that suppliers encounter in marketing to this customer.

What’s the answer?

If the UK can show the way to a different dynamic where suppliers have more influence over the relationship with customers, this would liberate much innovative thinking in our economy.

Facts and Figures

Just about every business development book, course or advisor will tell you that, as a business, you need to do a competitor analysis – and they are right. For typical examples try:

• http://www.moneynavigator.co.uk/art/marketingplan-competition.asp
• http://www.robert-mckinsey.com/CompetitiveAnalysis facile.xls

A good competitor analysis identifies who your competitors are and makes a companion, broken down by:

• how much they charge
• what services or products they offer
• how they market themselves
• how customers access their service or product
• how they are perceived externally by their customers and within the sector by their industry peers

Put simplistically, this process allows a business to examine the competition and use the results to distinguish what the competition does well, improve on what the competition does badly and, importantly, differentiate their business from the other players in the market.

Your competitor analysis can go into as much detail as you need, looking at everything from other businesses mission and vision and their development strategies, down to when they buy their supplies from. But the key to a successful competitor analysis is to look dispassionately at your own business measured by the same criteria.

Ultimately a really good competitor analysis should tell you more about your own business than it does about anyone else’s. It can yield unexpected results, including:

• identifying products, services or organisations that complement what you do
• opportunities for collaboration, growth or divestiture

researching your competitors

Expert contribution

Researching your competitors – by Carla Martinho

Carla Martinho is the Programme Manager for The Creative Launchpad Business Support Programme, a Tribal Group Project.

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No other sector works as collaboratively as the creative industries and identifying your competition is not just about competing with other businesses with extra capacity, a wider pool of skills and resources and that competitive edge over other businesses.

Hearts and Minds

The bit that most business books and courses forget to address when looking at competition is the idea that businesses don’t operate in an industry-specific vacuum. As issues of globalisation, developments in technology, increased consumer choice and increased consumer apathy impact on the environment in which businesses operate, a competitor analysis needs to reflect this complexity. No business is competing only with their direct competitors. The real competition is anything else that might claim the pound in your client or customers pocket.

If you are a portrait photographer, your main source of competition is not other photographers but the rise of the affordable digital camera. If you are a web designer, your main competition is the growing number of Dreamweaver courses available. If you are a designer-maker of women’s jewellery, your competition is anything which makes your client look good, feel better or just feel more creative and special than she did before she parted with her money.

So, even this very brief sketch of the value production chain and the stages within business shows that lots of other people are probably going to be involved. Listening to them can be a good source of research and innovation for your company.
There are different types of resource one can draw upon for creative business. These potential resources and ways to access them can be broken down as follows:

**Human Capital** – the resources you as an individual have access to simply on the basis of your own knowledge, training, education, experiences.

**Physical Capital** – the resources you have access to on the basis of owning equipment, hardware, buildings etc.

**Financial Capital** – money in the bank and other financial assets for investment.

Over and above these resources, there is:

**Social Capital** – access to a resource that comes from having contacts, knowing people, developing working relationships and collaborations.

The amount of human, physical and financial capital you have is usually pretty obvious, and doesn’t really need much research. But finding out and developing your stock of social capital is much more of an unknown quantity, requiring much more research. Researching what other people around you are doing and what they and you can offer each other can be very important.

According to Emergence by Steve Johnson, the hallmarks of emergent behaviour are:

More is Different – the more micro-difference involved in a creative network, the livelier they will be.

Ignorance is Useful – you never know what you need to know, because de facto, you do not know about it yet.

Encourage Random Encounters – without random encounters you will not find out about more then just getting to understand them until they have bought your product or service.

Researching your Neighbours – Paying attention to your neighbours is the general social context within which all emergent behaviour occurs. But don’t just research them, let them research you too. Like a lot of really good things, it needs to be mutual if it is really going to work.

**WARNING**

Seeing Pretty Patterns

*It is human nature to look for patterns and to assign them meaning when we find them...* [Kahneman and Tversky] dubbed these shortcuts heuristics. In general, heuristics are useful, but just as our manner of processing optical information sometimes leads to illusions, so heuristics sometimes lead to systematic error.

(From The Drunkards Walk by L. Mlodinow)

As we see when considering emergent behaviour, it is good to look for patterns in the signs because it can shine similar themes and trajectories that we share with other areas of research. But there can be dangers in over doing this.

A heuristic is a kind of conceptual or mental template that we can apply to things – a kind of pattern we can use to make sense of the messy world out there. The danger comes in using the template too strongly to ‘chop up’ the world so that it fits the artificial heuristic more neatly. Think about the best relationship between cars and horses here.

The real world is usually much more random than that, but we seem to be hardwired to seek patterns rather than see randomness.

For instance, I used to sometimes think that when I thought about an old film that I had not seen in ages, that it would appear on TV sometime over the next few days. This has happened to me several times. The first time I didn’t take any notice – it was just a coincidence. But then it happened again and again over the next few years. Maybe there is some spooky thing going on where I could predict the future TV schedule!

Of course, there is a fundamental problem with this – I did not remember the hundreds and hundreds of times over this period when I had thought of an old film and it **had NOT** appear on TV over the next few days.

I had only remembered the bit of pattern that I had remembered, not the whole thing. And it is all too easy to do this in situations where it really matters. To think we have spotted a pattern in our research, when it is really just what we would expect from a normal random distribution of events. In some very similar to the more background idea of paradigms, heuristics can be good because they can help order our thinking. But they can be bad if we over-do them and start to mistake them for the real thing.

**RESEARCHING YOUR CUSTOMERS**

Obviously another key part of market research for creative business is research into what the customers really think of you, your company and your products. This is why market research is much more than simple marketing, as in trying to sell something.

Good market research, like good social and anthropological research comes from getting to know your customers properly, understanding things in the way that they understand it themselves. At best, it entails asking them to be a genuine and on-going part of your creative project/business and using their input to continue developing your creativity. That is, good customer research is about more than just getting to understand them until they have bought your product or service.

Recent research (Chouard 2005) suggests that only 14% of Americans get in touch with a company if they are not happy with it. The number is as little as 16% in Europe. And in Japan it is only 4%. However, other research suggests that if customers have a problem with a company, 66% never buy from them again. They just don’t tell you about it or about why.

So you need to research them in some way.

Uncomfortable though it might be, it is useful to research what is wrong about you and what you are doing, rather than just focus upon what is right about you. Remember, you can learn more from failure than success if you have good falsificationist research methods and strategies to cope with the findings.
RESEARCHING YOUR COMPANY PERSONALITY

A big part of the way the market perceives you and your company is your organizational/ individual company personality. This is the image the market perceives of your company. It is connected to, but broader than any specific logos, advertising or other public communications it might make. Because the creative industries are made up of very small companies and/or sole traders, other public communications is often pretty much you yourself, your 'performance' (in both senses of the word) in talking to clients, customers or collaborators, and how you appear to them. But it can come from other things. We don’t want to imply that there is any one secret formula to creating your company personality, just that the following factors are really important:

1. Your established personality
2. Your product
3. Your values
4. Your image
5. Your image and your personality
6. Your company
7. Your market
8. Your competition
9. Your industry
10. Your culture

Your company personality is the way the market perceives you. You can’t control it, but you can influence it. By choosing your company personality you can make sure that the market perceives you in the way that you want them to. The more you know about your market and your competitors the easier it will be to identify the gaps in the market and create a unique identity. This identity will be your competitive advantage and build a successful creative business.

EXERCISE

Who Do You Think You Are Again?

Imagine your company is a person:
• Is it male or female?
• How old is it?
• Where does it buy its clothes from?
• What newspaper does it read?
• Does it drive a car?
• Is it a fish or a sheep or a monkey?
• How much does it drink in the average week?
• Where did it go on its last holiday?

Then of course there is your brand. This is one way of summing up all of what we have said. The problem with the idea of 'the Brand' is that the term has been so over-used, and in some uses contaminated with bullshit, that it has become a problematic term for a lot of people. That gets us into the politics (economics) of naming and branding, and there will be more of this later. But it can come from other things. We don’t want to imply that there is any one secret formula to creating your company personality, just that the following factors are really important:

1. Your established personality
2. Your product
3. Your values
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5. Your image and your personality
6. Your company
7. Your market
8. Your competition
9. Your industry
10. Your culture

A two-pronged approach to market research for innovation can prove significant from a competitive standpoint, especially if the innovation is not one that can be patented in law. An innovation based purely in technology could be protected through patents, a clear advantage. But innovation comes in many forms, in processes and seeds, or in taking ideas from one area of life and applying them to another, even in purging down technology to a simpler format. Here it’s easy to gain legal protection for an innovation. Guarding against copies requires the innovation be difficult to replicate through other means. And an emotional resonance between the values of the market and the values of a brand is hard to break. A product or service that customers love will attract a loyalty that differentiates it from the competition. Even when technically an innovation is easy to copy, the emotional ownership of your customers is very difficult to take.

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There is a relationship between the Brand and the Uncanny Valley. Up to this point we have looked at what the different grounds for doing research can be, how to pin down research activity within specific methods and ways in which research can lead to creative innovations. But these new and innovative ideas and ways of working will probably entail all sorts of other changes as a consequence. They might require you to think, work, manage and get organised differently. This is especially the case if the innovative ideas are really to be fully developed and grown into something that you can protect, not get sued for, sustain and grow. So in the next chapter we turn to some of the associated skills involved in research and innovation for creative business.

Creativity, Innovation and Research for the Market: It’s an Emotional Experience

Francine Pickering is a Chartered Marketer working as a marketing consultant with small and growing businesses in the East Midlands.

What are their frustrations?
What are the desires they want to achieve or the problems they need to solve?

Experience – by Francine Pickering

EXPERT CONTRIBUTION

CREATIVE PROGRESSION

Talking to other creative people who are already selling in your market can give you confidence when making decisions about how to sell your work. But nothing beats talking to customers themselves. A conversation with buyers, even at the simplest level, will give you a sense of the market’s values of loyalty and importance, and will also help you to discover potential ways in which research can lead to creative innovations. But these new and innovative ideas and ways of working will probably entail all sorts of other changes as a consequence. They might require you to think, work, manage and get organised differently. This is especially the case if the innovative ideas are really to be fully developed and grown into something that you can protect, not get sued for, sustain and grow. So in the next chapter we turn to some of the associated skills involved in research and innovation for creative business.

QUOTATION

Market Research as Talking: Talking as Market Research – by Debbie Bryan

Debbie Bryan is an applied artist who designs and makes lamps, etc. based on personal experience and emotion. This two-pronged approach to market research for innovation can prove significant from a competitive standpoint, especially if the innovation is not one that can be patented in law. An innovation based purely in technology could be protected through patents, a clear advantage. But innovation comes in many forms, in processes and seeds, or in taking ideas from one area of life and applying them to another, even in purging down technology to a simpler format. Here it’s easy to gain legal protection for an innovation. Guarding against copies requires the innovation be difficult to replicate through other means. And an emotional resonance between the values of the market and the values of a brand is hard to break. A product or service that customers love will attract a loyalty that differentiates it from the competition. Even when technically an innovation is easy to copy, the emotional ownership of your customers is very difficult to take.

It’s an Emotional Experience

Francine Pickering is a Chartered Marketer working as a marketing consultant with small and growing businesses in the East Midlands.

Innovation? It’s about bright ideas, new to the world, something exciting that people have never seen before. Everyone wants something innovative – right? But is a bright idea enough to make an innovation successful? Not if it bombs when you take it to the market. (As I was thinking just the other day, did I know where my tissue-development ideas got me?) Either, successful innovation comes from a sound understanding of a market – and a creative response to that market, in processes and seeds, or in taking ideas from one area of life and applying them to another, even in purging down technology to a simpler format. Here it’s easy to gain legal protection for an innovation. Guarding against copies requires the innovation be difficult to replicate through other means. And an emotional resonance between the values of the market and the values of a brand is hard to break. A product or service that customers love will attract a loyalty that differentiates it from the competition. Even when technically an innovation is easy to copy, the emotional ownership of your customers is very difficult to take.

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What is your company personality?

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What is your company personality?
Chapter 6 – The Rules and Peculiarities of Various Instruments: Professional Skills for Creative Research and Innovation

PROVERB

We can’t go on together with suspicious minds
(Elvis Presley)
They do say that you should be careful what you wish for, because it might just happen. And if it does happen, it is good to be ready.

So, having looked at some of the philosophy and methods for research, and begun to relate these ideas to creative business innovation, we now come to some of the associated skills that run alongside research and innovation. The common thread across all these skills is the way they can help in dealing with the consequences of your research, your innovations and changes to the context of your creativity. Indeed, it is important to note that some of the organisational skills discussed below can actually be the linchpin in innovation itself, if they contribute to finding different and better ways of doing what you do and how.

So there are ethical, legal, managerial and organisational questions to consider when taking research into innovation, into a creative business, or just yourself. And as Elvis teaches us, it will be difficult to go on if it happens. But these types of research activity are not confined to animal experiments, because constantly thinking about these things and yourself is possibly the best basis for any ethics.

The distress caused to the participants or ‘inmates’ and sometimes takes corrective action when appropriate. It also investigates complaints concerning unethical research, and attitudes. It also investigates complaints concerning unethical research, and judgements on the part of psychologists by being mindful of the need to professionalism within research. It aims to promote ethical behaviour, attitudes and responsibilities. It recognises obligations to set and uphold the highest standards of professionalism within research. It aims to promote ethical behaviour, attitudes and values and standards. This is all very well for psychologists but what does it mean in practice for research Ethics Behind – ethics are socially agreed sets of rules about what we think of as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They change over time and can form the basis for sets of guidelines to regulate professional activities or bodies. Research Ethics normally involve the protection of the participants of the research or offer a framework for its general conduct. For example, research in the National Health Service is governed by Laws and Ethics Committees. The requires the submission of a 128 Document to go with research proposals. Creative practitioners will not usually fall foul of these committees, but being reasonable and sensible is a useful outlook to adopt, set against these general ideas of shared ethical behaviour.

Research Ethics in/Through – there are a range of ethical guidelines that govern the detailed practice of research, such as:

- The Social Research Association’s Ethical Guidelines
- The British Psychological Society’s Code of Conduct
- The British Sociological Association’s Statement of Ethical Practice
- The British Society of Criminology’s Ethical Policy
- The Political Studies Association’s Guidelines for Good Professional Conduct

The British Psychological Society has a code of ethics based on four principles: Respect, Competence, Responsibility and Integrity.

Research Ethics – ethics are socially agreed sets of rules about what we think of as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They change over time and can form the basis for sets of guidelines to regulate professional activities or bodies. Research Ethics normally involve the protection of the participants of the research or offer a framework for its general conduct. For example, research in the National Health Service is governed by Laws and Ethics Committees.

What should I be doing and why?

Don’t kill anyone, do useful stuff.

EXPERT CONTRIBUTION

Pigeons, Dogs, Torture and Prison: Research Ethics for Creative Practice and Business Innovation

Adam Bernard

Adam Bernard teaches ethics, values and philosophy at Nottingham Trent University. He wants ideas to become dangerous again.

What should I be doing and why?

Don’t kill anyone, do useful stuff.

Killer Pigeons and Electric Dogs.

B.F. Skinner a behavioural psychologist describes how, in Project Pigeon he developed a programme to train pigeons to guide Pelican Missiles during the Second World War. The flight of the killer pigeons suggests the downsides people can have for animals. Most people would be distressed at the thought of programmes designed to create self-exploding pigeons, torpedo dolphins or monkey astronauts that gives no consideration for rights of the animal. Alex Seligman gave dogs electric shocks. He then let some escape and some not. He found the dogs couldn’t escape because they had learned ‘helplessness’ and become passive victims such that they made no effort to avoid their torture. These pieces of well known and well regarded research suggest some of the difficulties in using animals as the subject of research.

They can protest, withdraw from the experiment or necessarily understand what’s going on. But these types of research activity are not confined to animal experiments.

Stanley Milgram’s (1963) conformity experiments required human participants to think they had killed other human beings by administering electric shocks. Separated from the victim and obeying orders from an experimenter, Milgram found participants would administer ‘lethal’ levels to the victim on the orders of a ‘superior’. The study had to be abandoned after six days because the ‘guards’ were so distressed and felt separated from the effects of these orders. Zimbardo set up a ‘mock prison’ at Stanford University where ‘arrested’ inmates were governed by ‘guards’. The study had to be abandoned after six days because the ‘guards’ became passive victims, such that they made no effort to avoid their torture.

In the narrow confines of research ethics, one view suggests such studies are ethically justified by the outcome. It is an interesting question as to how individuals would react to the self-knowledge that you can so easily become a psycho killer.

But whatever, all these studies do raise questions about the ethics of research. Another view suggests that the results are so illuminating that the distress caused to the participants is justified by the outcome. It is an interesting question as to how individuals would react to the self-knowledge that you can so easily become a psycho killer.

What should be done now?

• In terms of general concepts of ethics, there are many different ethical theories and viewpoints out there – Utilitarianism, Negative Utilitarianism, Kantian Ethics, Aristotelian Virtue Ethics, Existentialist Ethics, various religion-based ethical principles and so on. A surprising number have been discussed in relation to creative practice and they share common concerns, such as:

  • What is it to be ethical in relation to your creative practice?
  • Are some forms of creative practice unethical, and if so why?
  • Does being ethical flow from the nature of the person or the nature of the practice, or what gets produced?
  • Are your own individual ethical, social or religious beliefs enough of a basis for you to be ethical, or does it need to be more of a shared agreement than that?

• We do not have any off-the-peg answers. You will need to think about that for yourself, because constantly thinking about these things and yourself is possibly the best basis for any ethics.

What do we have, from Adam Bernard is an introduction to some of the more specific and detailed issues concerning the relationship between ethics and doing research made relevant for creative practice.
Research Ethics For... what type of research is it? Doing desk-based research, using other secondary, already published sources or other material in the public domain means you’re largely clear of ethical considerations. Things get trickier still if the research brings a significant risk of causing harm to children, disclosures of criminal activity, or disclosures of other forms of potential problems, then you should be OK. But you do need to be careful and these questions associated with it. If there are, what are you going to do about them?

Are you sure that the participants know that they can withdraw at any time or are you going to do anything about it? If there are any specific problems associated with this? If there are, what are you going to do about them?

Will you let the participants have a copy of the research?

Are you sure you have a 'de-brief' have you planned? Do you think there are these kinds of ethical issues with the research? If not, are there probably some. Finally, if you choose to have him or her answering the research questions before conducting the research:

Did you get consent from participants? For example, a signed consent form.

It gets even trickier still if the research brings a significant risk of causing harm to children, disclosures of criminal activity, or disclosures of other forms of potential problems associated with this? If there are, what are you going to do about them?

Will all the information be kept confidential or left on a laptop on a train?

Did you get consent from participants? for example, a signed consent form.

How will you ensure confidentiality, security and retention of research data?

Will all the information be kept confidential or left on a laptop on a train?

Are they going to remain anonymous?

- Are you going to explain the research and, if so, are there any specific issues if you are reasonable about who and what you are asking, observing or photographing, adults who are resident in social care or medical establishments, adults in the custody of the criminal justice system or people who may not be able to give valid consent to take part in the research because they suffer from cognitive impairment of either a temporary or permanent nature.

It gets even trickier still if the research brings a significant risk of causing physical harm or emotional distress to children. Research that may lead to abuses about actual or potential abuse or harm to children, disclosure of criminal activity, or disclosure of other forms of harm is a no-go. In short, if you are asking about people who are resident in social care or medical establishments, adults in the custody of the criminal justice system or people who may not be able to give valid consent to take part in the research because they suffer from cognitive impairment of either a temporary or permanent nature.

We must ensure that we can protect the individual’s right to privacy. To the extent that the individual’s identity is being protected, then there probably are some. Finally, if you are asking about people who are resident in social care or medical establishments, adults in the custody of the criminal justice system or people who may not be able to give valid consent to take part in the research because they suffer from cognitive impairment of either a temporary or permanent nature.

Let us now attempt to deal directly with this puzzling issue of the social value of creativity. Presumably few of us are interested in facilitating creativity which is pathological, or socially evil, or both. To the degree to which the individual is open to all aspects of his/her experience, then his/her creative formings may be pathological or socially evil. Then, it is up to society, for example, through education or governmental support, to constrain aspects of his/her experience and has available to him/her all the available safeguards and safeguards which are going on within his/her organism, then the most the individual can do is to make himself/herself into an instrument of society and his/her environment will tend to be constructive both for him/herself and others.

[From Towards a Theory of Creativity, by C. Rogers]

CASE STUDY

Ethical Research for Creative Business: Encouraging the Local Economy

Yvon Chouinard declares his intent to support the local. Their research into Intellectual Property and Innovation

No Thanks! Legal Advice for Research and Innovation

An interview with John Buckby

John Buckby is a musician and intellectual property lawyer at Berryman, who works with the creative industries to help them protect and develop their ideas.

Authors (A) – One cannot copyright an idea. So when one is researching a new idea before it gets applied, is there anything one should bear in mind if one is working in the creative arts?

John Buckby (JB) – An idea can be protected by copyright, but only in very rare circumstances (which can be comfortably ignored for our purposes here). Generally, copyright only protects the expressions of ideas. As soon as an idea is expressed in some tangible form, such as by writing down in original words, or recording notes of an original melody, copyright comes into being. Automatic protection comes into being automatically. No further steps or formal registration are needed.

Until you have created a tangible expression of your idea, you don’t have any protection. So be careful about humming that killer new melody to a rival producer before you record it… and think twice before telling another writer about your brilliant plot for a book or film which you haven’t yet started. If you’re nervous about people copying your idea – don’t tell them about it. At least, not until you’ve turned it into a work which you can wave around and say ‘this is mine’!

If you’re working out that if another person creates a work that is identical to or substantially similar to yours, but they did so independently, without having seen your work, you cannot claim any copyright protection. You’ll just have to console yourself with the cold comfort that your work can’t have been that bad! If you see your work, you cannot claim any copyright protection. You’ll just have to console yourself with the cold comfort that your work can’t have been that bad!

A creative industry needs to be aware of the potential problems, then you should be OK. But you do need to be careful and these questions associated with it. If there are, what are you going to do about them?

Are you going to explain the research and, if so, are there any specific issues if you are reasonable about who and what you are asking, observing or photographing, adults who are resident in social care or medical establishments, adults in the custody of the criminal justice system or people who may not be able to give valid consent to take part in the research because they suffer from cognitive impairment of either a temporary or permanent nature.

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[From Towards a Theory of Creativity, by C. Rogers]...
what advice would you give them as a lawyer in terms of being clear about automatically in these instances, and do not require any further action to achieve copyrighted works or original designs, because ownership and protection arise patented. Inventors should therefore have a signed confidentiality agreement in mentioned above, once an idea is in the public domain, it can no longer be confidentiality. They are also extremely useful documents for inventors. As venture), and to explore the potential for cooperation and collaboration to each other (such as prices, customer details, or an idea for a new business process can be costly and time-consuming. To be successful, your invention must a monopoly on an invention for up to 20 years. However, the patent application or under general law.

JB – The ‘point’ of intellectual property law is to promote innovation in society, around collaboration and innovating new ideas? JB – Confidentiality agreements can create an obligation of confidentiality where none would otherwise exist under law. They can also reinforce and expand upon an existing legal obligation of confidentiality. A confidentiality agreement (or ‘non-disclosure agreement’) is a contract which identifies certain information as confidential, and which obliges the parties who sign it to take certain precautions, or to follow a certain procedure, in relation to that information. If a party uses the information in a way that breaches this contract, or otherwise allows the information to leak out without authorisation, they can be sued for any financial loss caused by that failure. Confidentiality agreements enable businesses to disclose sensitive information to each other (such as prices, customer details, or an idea for a new business venture), and to explore the potential for co-operation and collaboration in progressing the commercial potential of such ideas within a ‘safe net’ of confidentiality. They are also extremely useful documents for inventors. As mentioned above, once an idea is in the public domain, it can no longer be patented. Inventions should therefore have a signed confidentiality agreement in place before disclosing details of an unpatented invention to other parties. There is usually no need to use a confidentiality agreement in respect of copyrighted works or original designs, because ownership and protection arise automatically in these instances, and do not require any further action to achieve protection.

A – What do you think of the Copyleft movement? Some people see this as a form of legal protection that is more amenable to these ways of working around collaboration and innovating new ideas? JB – The ‘point’ of intellectual property law is to promote innovation in society by giving those who create new works a period of exclusivity over the use of their creations. This principle of ‘work it out in advance’ applies to all creative endeavours, whether joint inventors, business partners, joint authors or bands (where they can be four or more people saying the contribution to be represented). A lawyer will encourage the parties to discuss their expectations at the start of the relationship, in order to come to an arrangement with which all are content… If you can’t afford to see a lawyer, try to agree in advance a mechanism which can decide how ownership of any resulting works will be allocated, and have the parties work together in relation to the research and the practical aspects of shared ownership. Once you have come to an agreement on the processes involved, set it all down in writing and distribute it to each other, by email or in a letter. If there is likely to be any money involved, use the solicitor and see a lawyer.

A – Who else would you recommend that a lawyer…

A kind of informed liberalism, which says: ‘if you choose to adapt or improve this work, you have the usual rights of ownership at the front door. This creation stays free’. This approach prevents the dissemination of the work being obstructed by the greedy mitts of individual gain. The focus is on the development of the work itself, rather than the benefits of the personalities involved in making it... A copyleft licence creates a ‘free workshop’ in which the work can evolve and improve through the efforts of the owners of contributions, without getting closed up or tagged back by self-motivated concepts of ownership. This kind of arrangement works best suited to non-artistic, functional works, where the contributions of numerous parties can make a positive long-term impact on that functionality, rather than working against each other stylistically. It would therefore work in relation to ‘remixing’ and evolving medicine, engineering, software and the like. As far as art music, I’m sure – do I really should be talking to you about this? We are on the right track of keeping the copyright of your way over the top of my track? I’m not, thanx Baz.

This is an edited version of the interview with John Bukby. The long version can be downloaded from www.thebroadsheet.org)

KNOWLEDGE CANNOT BE UN-INVENTED

Because knowledge cannot be un-invented we all have responsibilities to each other to be careful. It is not true when people say ‘All is fair in love and war’, if you hurt people you hurt them. Nor is it good enough when people say ‘business is business’ as some sort of excuse. Business is not exempt from wider social and ethical responsibilities, even though sometimes people try to claim it. Nor does art or any other kind of creativity come with some kind of ‘artistic licence’ that exempts it from wider social responsibilities. For example:

• Alfred Nobel’s research led to the invention of dynamite, which made him very rich but did not make him happy. It improved the efficiency of killing. Does the Nobel Peace Prize make up for it?
• Robert Oppenheimer’s research led to the invention of the Atomic Bomb. Whatever your position on the (de)merits of this as a piece of technology, be careful what you develop as you might need to take responsibility for it. And by then it might be too late.

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More currently...

• Naomi Klein has shown how ‘disaster capitalism’ works to make money from creating and maintaining a (false/imagined) sense of risk, vulnerability and fear, and/or cash in when something bad does happen.
• Most TV ads are designed to create unease, insecurity, and a sense of failure (desire for something that we do not have).
• Every fashion style is geared towards innovation. But if we over-reach the claims we make, if it gets negatively. It is good to make ‘progress towards something’ within research because that is so ‘purple’ that the death scene becomes funny. Nervousness of the uncanny can be a useful self-corrective in lots of ways.

THE UNCANNY VALLEY

Another reason for being careful about what you research and develop is the dangers of the uncanny valley. Sigmund Freud referred to the uncanny as the ‘un-homely’, as something out of place.

Psychology of the Uncanny: the uncanny valley is a hypothesis that when robots and other facsimiles of human interaction are not quite right, even if they are not lifelike, it causes a degree of reaction among human observers. The ‘valley’ in question is a dip in a proposed graph of the positivity of human reaction as a function of robot’s lifeliness. It was introduced by Japanese robotics pioneer Masahiro Mori in 1970 and has been linked to Ernst Jentsch’s concept of the ‘uncanny’ identified in a 1906 essay, ‘On the Psychology of the Uncanny’. Jentsch’s concept is famously elaborated upon by Sigmund Freud in a 1919 essay, simply entitled ‘The Uncanny’ (Das Unheimliche).

A similar problem exists in realistic 3D computer animation such as with the films The Polar Express and Beowulf.

We can draw a graph of the Uncanny Valley.

Managing The Flow of Ideas

We now come to those professional skills associated with finding the right organisational structure for the flow of ideas leading to innovation, and the corresponding ‘management’ of that flow.

A lot of what we have said so far, in this and previous chapters implies research and innovation comes from two inter-related things...

- Developing new ideas
- Talking to each other

As we discussed in Chapter 4 getting new ideas to flow is often central to innovation. And you are going to need new IDEAS! (idea)

Professor Oliver Gassmann of St. Gallen University reckons there are 2,000 ideas behind every 10 business innovations. So presumably that means you are going to need ideas for each of your own business innovations. We can perhaps be a bit too loyal to the ‘innovation is personal’ line of research that seems to take no account of the quality of the ideas. However, this research does throw up some interesting points.

Professor Gassmann thinks he can ‘tell’ an innovative company, because:

- When you walk through the door and the first thing you see is a decorative chart detailing responsibilities, roles and status stuff to present a ‘self’ to the world so that others will see us as OK kind of people who get things going for business. so research for business is not always just research and/or cash in when something bad does happen.
- They have a different view of the ‘innovative culture’ where ideas flow easily across a very flat hierarchy. so 2-way communication between management and staff is all the more important, and people start to see us as a bit of a wanker. as with a lot of these things, the behaviour strategy that was initially part of the solution becomes part of the problem.

So we can see a sense of innovative ‘progress towards something’ can easily reach the ‘too much stage’ and become some-where there is some-thing. It is good to make ‘progress towards something’ within research geared towards innovation. But if we over-reach the claims we make, if it gets too pat, too ordered a representation of the messy world out there, it can easily be rejected by those around us as too clean, too ‘perfect’. Again, too much of what used to be the solution becomes part of the problem. This can happen in lots of places, when pitching an idea and making too many claims, when designing an innovation so that it is not possible to see in the future, when writing prose that is so ‘perfect’ that the death scene becomes funny. Nervousness of the uncanny can be a useful self-corrective in lots of ways.

Managing the Flow of Ideas

In the wider cultural world, think about status symbols for a moment. None of us want to be perceived as too geeky for very long and use fashion stuff to present a ‘self’ to the world so that others will see us as OK kind of people who get things going for business. so research for business is not always just research and/or cash in when something bad does happen.

• A better sense of two-way communication between management and staff so that ideas can flow ‘up’ as well as ‘down’
• Internal systems and processes that help the work to proceed rather than

Of course, this kind of management is found in some industries and workplaces far more often than in others. Lots of people, indeed the majority still suffer from management rather than benefit from it, and experience work as something negative. However, those who get out into another dimension of the politics of knowledge that we keep putting off until another time.

In terms of managing the way a team works towards organizing the flow of ideas for innovation, Tom Kelley, in his book The Art of Innovation describes the five steps he uses.

Understand – understanding the market, the client, the technology and the perceived constraints on the problem at hand. Later in a project, they often challenge those constraints, but it’s important to understand perceptions.

Observe – observing real people in real-life situations to find out what makes them tick. What confuses them, what they like, what they hate, where their constraints are, how they work, where their latent needs are addressed by current products and services.

Visualize – visualizing new-to-the-world concepts and the customers who will observe them. What makes them tick. What confuses them, what they like, what they hate, where their perceived constraints on the problem at hand. Later in a project, they often challenge those constraints, but it’s important to understand perceptions.

Evaluate and refine – evaluating prototypes and early-stage iterations. They try not to get too attached to the first few prototypes, because they are still unfolding. And brainstorming is not just a valuable creative tool at the fuzzy front end of products. It’s also a pervasive cultural influence for making sure that individuals don’t waste too much energy spinning their wheels on a long shot they know the collective wisdom of the company can get them ‘stuck’ in less than an hour. Success depends on what you do and how you do it.

(From The Art of Innovation, by T. Kelley)

THINKPIECE

Innovate to Regenerate: Some Lessons on Innovation from Big Corporations — by Annie Dickinson

Annie Dickinson makes up one half of Evolver Talent. For the past 11 years Annie has delivered targeted consultancy support to international businesses as a strategist and business coach.

Innovation has nothing to do with how many R&D dollars you have. When Apple came up with the iMac, IBM was spending at least 100 times more R&D. It’s not about money: it’s about the people you have, how you’ve led, and how much you get it.

(Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Inc.)

How long can you depend on your market evolving in ways you can predict? What will you do when your customers suddenly begin to make new choices? How long can you depend on your market evolving in ways you can predict?

(Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Inc.)

If you don’t know exactly how we will achieve this, but what I do know is that together, we (I and the client) have everything we will need.

Build the Culture – What is the status quo? Do you know your organisation’s ‘corporate religion’, its guiding values, priorities, strategies, and rules? Do you know what drives its underlying values, purposes, and priorities? Do you know what steps you need to take to make your organization more efficient and effective?

‘The CEO of a client company launched an innovation norms aimed at ‘inspiring every employee to...’ According to a corporate culture expert, what would dominate computing for at least two decades, and IBM’s near-death experience of the early 90’s. When innovation thrives it often reflects a culture that is confident about its ability to manage uncertainty and change, and enables people to make their own choices about how they do their business. When innovation is absent it invariably centres on a failure to challenge our assumptions about money. It’s about the people you have, how you’re led, and how much you get it.

(Sir Ken Robinson)

Success – What makes real high fliers stand out from the rest? A recent study of exceptional leaders at IBM provides clues. There is one leader’s response to the challenge of achieving billion dollar projects in times of market change and unpredictability.

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When you innovate, you’ve got to be prepared for everything you’re not nuts.

(Larry Ellison, CEO – Oracle Corporation)

Work With Resistance – It’s nothing to do with lack of commitment, loyalty or vision. Resistance is a natural, human trait we all share to some degree, a defence mechanism that helps us to maintain our personal status quo. By definition, innovation upsets the status quo! So accept resistance, expect it and become curious about it. Being curious about resistance will harvest diamonds in the dust.

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TRY TO BE RATIONAL

Beyond the specifics of management, there are broader issues concerning the way organizations are run. If the flow of ideas is to be stimulated and sustained: in the sections to come we will explore some alternative organizational structures which may offer alternatives to traditional, and sometimes rather unrealistic, hierarchical organizational forms.

But first, try to be rational.

The famous sociologist Max Weber makes a distinction between different ways of being ‘rational’ both in the way you think and in the way you act. On the one hand he talks about formal rationality. On the other, he talks about substantive rationality.

Formal rationality is all about universal means, about trying to devise such universal means to meet all ends. And this kind of thinking is found in most traditional public and private sector organizations. Setting up an organizational system that is applied universally to whatever it is the organisation is trying to do is often the reason why they are very far from innovative. They tend to become incapable of referring to anything other than themselves and their already established systems.

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WARNING

Don’t be Such a Tautology

A tautology can be defined as follows:

In colloquial terms a logical tautology can be defined as a series of statements that comprise an argument, whereby the statements are constructed in such a way that the truth of the proposition is guaranteed. Consequently the statement conveys no useful information regardless of its length or complexity. Thus, for a simple example, the statement ‘If you can’t find something (that you lost), you are not looking in the right place’ is tautological. It is true, but conveys no useful information. Any argument containing a tautological statement is thus flawed logically and must be considered erroneous.

For instance...

A SHORT PLAY

Just Fill in the Forms

Newly appointed member of staff – Hello, I am trying about all the forms you keep sending me to fill in. There seems to be an awful lot of them. Apparently I cannot start the work until you have them all.

Personnel Office – Yes sir, we need you to fill them in so that we can have our records up to date before you start work.

Newly appointed member of staff – But I have to start some work tomorrow and get something ready for the Copenhagen thing. People are expecting it. And I can’t get all the information to you by then, I don’t have enough time.

Personnel Office – We need the information from you so that we can keep our records up to date, so that you can start work.

Newly appointed member of staff (getting a little irritated) – Yes, I know. You have told me that. But filling in all these forms you keep sending me is getting a little bit of a job. And now you are complaining about it.

Personnel Office – Yes sir, we need you to fill them in so that we can have our records up to date. And get something ready for the Copenhagen thing. People are expecting it.

Newly appointed member of staff – But I have to start some work tomorrow because other people are expecting it. And it seems to me, now, that keeping the records up to date has become more important than actually doing the job, which by the way I need to start tomorrow because other people are expecting it.

Personnel Office – Well, you see, the way the system works means that we need to get this information from you, which we then need to pass on to payroll and the pensions department before you start work. So we need to have all this information on file.

Newly appointed member of staff (now a little angry) – And now you are talking about the system as if it is a part of the explanation, when actually it is the original problem. You are talking about the system as if it has been handed down by God or something, and cannot be made just a little bit flexible. You are talking about the system as if it is a ready-made and universal justification of itself. Your logic is completely circular. Don’t you realise how tautological you are being! You’re driving me mad!

Personnel Office – I am sorry sir, but we need...

Newly appointed member of staff – I (just) fill in the forms.

(The newly appointed member of staff coughs down the corridor with a slightly dazed look on his face. The Copenhagen thing, which up until then had had an air of excitement to it, now seemed like a scary thing which he will have to write on the plane going over there. He just hopes he can do it OK. He has started to be a...
Closed and Open Innovation Paradigms

In his book Open Innovation, Henry Chesbrough makes a distinction between the ‘closed innovation paradigm’ and the ‘open innovation paradigm’ [paradigms can be good and bad].

The closed innovation paradigm is a way of thinking about business and innovation that is inextricably linked to the ends justify the means idea. It is characteristic of substantive rationality.

The open innovation paradigm is characterized by the following corporate assumptions [or presuppositions]:

- The smartest people in our field already work for us.
- In order to profit from R&D, we must discover it, develop it and ship it ourselves.
- As we discover it, we will get it to market first.
- A company that gets an innovation to market first will win.
- If you create the most and best ideas in the industry, you will win.
- We should control our Intellectual Property, so that our competitors don’t profit from these ideas.

In contrast to this, the open innovation paradigm sees working with others outside of the tightly defined boundaries of the firm as much more of the norm, and therefore creative industry companies and therefore a mindset that misses innovative opportunities that can come from collaboration. In a very strong parallel to the downside of formal rationality of working towards mutually beneficial innovation. All this time, creative industry companies have tended to just live and work like this without any management recognition of working towards mutually beneficial innovation. All this time, creative industry companies have tended to just live and work like this without any management recognition of the open innovation paradigm. This is the open innovation paradigm characterized by the following assumptions:

- Not all the smart people work for us. We need to work with smart people from outside of our company as well as inside.
- Whilst internal R&D is needed to claim some portion of the potential market value, external R&D can create significant additional value to that.

There is a lot of ink being spent on the potential problems associated with applying a closed innovation paradigm can be that much more acute for pursuing innovation within a creative business.

The open innovation paradigm is characterized by the following assumptions:

- Epistemological nervousness and creative humility can be a useful component of your research and creativity. And anyway, it will probably help in being more ethical and graceful. And also anyway, remembering that you are not as ‘good’ as you think, but should reflect and meditate on this. Otherwise you will start to think you are being too good – creative, intelligent, skilled. Obviously these things will be a factor, but it might also be that lack and chance and error are equally important. We are never as good, nor as bad as we think we are. Statistically, if you took all the thousands of people you have known since you started school, there would be at least one who has enjoyed great success due pretty much to luck, and someone else who has had no success whatever, even though they are really talented and hardworking.

Academics mistake the impression that a random streak [of success] is due to extraordinary performance the hot-hand fallacy… In all aspects of our lives we encounter streaks and other peculiar patterns of success and failure. Sometimes success predominates, sometimes failure. Either way it is important in our lives to understand and accept them, and that patterns and other patterns that don’t appear random can be tried happen by pure chance.

From (The Standard Walk, by J. Modnor)
The extreme guys who are the leaders of the climbing, with the research and innovation plan involves testing out product supply to. They are good at what they do because they use the products they have never really done ice climbing before, and they gave me a 30-second lesson in crampons and ice-axe use. At one point, we were going across a very steep incline of black ice, and I thought, you would have given out 1,000 feet... it’s been helpful to me to be (Yvon’s) friend…. He makes me think about things in a new way.

Let My People Go Surfing

There is a different value system and a substantive rationality at work. This looks something like open innovation because:

- It is not way to tells where the formal organisation starts and ends, what is informal or external R&D or who is at work at all or play at all.
- It is about the climbing first, then the market for climbing gear, then the business itself – in that order.
- There is a more organic relationship between the creators and the product, because the product is more of an expression of what the creators really are, rather than being what they do for a job.
- The relationships between ‘management’ and ‘workers’ is very different from the norm – there is no separation of conception from execution.
- There is a different value system and a substantive rationality at work.

MORE OPEN OPENNESS

The problems with the open innovation paradigm as it is described by Chesbrough are associated with two key factors:

- Its logic is still very much located within the confines of the traditional, firm-driven approach to competition. But creativity and innovation often lays within a network of people who have a much broader list of motivations that ‘winning’. As a result, the open innovation paradigm described by Chesbrough and others is not actually all that open in comparison.
- It tends to hold onto the idea that everything can still be rationally planned and managed. It therefore does not allow for the random, unexpected, spontaneous and emergent.

Question 1 – is it easier to roll a 9 or a 10 with three dice? Leonard Mlodinow tells the tale of The Grand Duke of Tuscany and Galileo. In 1610, The Grand Duke asked Galileo why, when playing a game that involved rolling three dice, the number 10 came up more often than the number 9. The ‘common sense’ view would be that with three dice the odds of a 9 or a 10 would be the same. But Galileo worked out that there are 27 ways in which you can roll a 10, but only 25 ways you can roll a 9.

Regressions Towards The Mean is an idea that statisticians use to describe how all trends will tend to move towards the average over a period of time. Christiano Ronaldo might think he is totally brilliant, but statistics show that success over a longer period is more evenly distributed. You cannot win all the time! Over his career, he will have good seasons, really bad ones, and some that are OK. The odds of him rolling a 10 every season over a long period are similar to everyone else playing at his level.

So Regression Towards The Mean shows that it is useful to increase the number of markets you can take a diversification of creative entry points if you want to be successful over a long period. The more variety of ways you can roll the better, because it is inevitable that some will work sometimes and others will work other times. The more you have, the more you can avoid this Regression Towards The Mean at any particular time.

Recognising a sharkcard’s walk can help open up your thinking about open innovation.

So Regression Towards The Mean suggests that we can never immediately recall words ending in ‘ing’. We tend to choose that option. However, a moment’s thought shows that all words ending in ‘ing’ are also in the list of words that people tend to immediately recall. So, if you are a small firm looking to get something new going through research and innovation?

GAME

What Are The Odds?

The concept of the open innovation paradigm is not actually all that open in comparison. It tends to hold onto the idea that everything can still be rationally planned and managed. It therefore does not allow for the random, unexpected, spontaneous and emergent.

Question 2 – in the whole of the English language, are there more six letter words that have ‘n’ as their fifth letter, or more six letter words ending in ‘ing’?

The Drunkard’s Walk by Leonard Mlodinow shows how randomness plays a much more significant role in our lives than we like to think. Almost everything in our lives depends to some extent upon those unconscious gambles, unexpected tumbles, and lucky ‘breaks’ that make up our love. But this can change when it comes to creativity and innovation, if we know how to take advantage of it.

Economists talk about the potential benefits of diversification. By this means the benefits of being involved in lots of different markets. This way, if any one market dries up, they can look to another one. Diversification is a fancy way of pointing out the benefits of ‘hedging your bets’, ‘keeping your options open’ and ‘not putting all your eggs in one basket’. This makes sense if you are a big firm with the capacity for doing lots of different things at the same time, but what if you are a small firm looking to get something new going through research and innovation?

Getting Organised: How T-Shaped do YOU Need to BE?

Orthodox business organisations tend to be large, or at least work towards becoming large. This tends to mean that they quickly develop a very clear and defined notion that they are an Organisation with a capital O. These kind of organisations tend to have very definite structures, hard and fast boundaries between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ and lots of set rules about the relationships between employees and management. The creative industries on the other hand tend to be very small micro-industries (less than 5 people). This has quite profound implications,

- Creative practitioners often need to work within networks rather than one Organisations. These creative spaces tend to be more informal, have less rigid structures and boundaries, no hierarchies to speak of and definitely no management.
- Because such creative networks are self-organising, getting the flow of ideas for innovation going well tends to happen naturally, at least if the network is vibrant and healthy. However, if there is only one of you, there just aren’t that many ideas to flow around inside your company. So collaborations and co-operation with people outside the formal boundaries of the company becomes more important as a source of research and innovation.
- Organising this necessary collaboration within non-hierarchical and non-
managed creative networks becomes an important issue, but it is not something that can always be done well, they refer to orthodoxy business management and organisational ideas.

Having lots of interesting conversations, making initial plans on the basis of excitement and inspiration, but then seeing the project fail out because nobody gets there, organised and there is no ‘structure’ or ‘routine’ in a very common failing of informal creative networks. They can be great for the organisation and initial flow of new ideas, but absolutely frustrating for getting things done in a regular and sustained way. So, without going back into formal rationality and the problems that brings for creative innovation, some degree of organization is needed if the ideas are to flow into actual innovative work through these creative collaborations.

One way of getting hold of different organisational structures for creative collaboration and the flow of ideas is the idea of T-shaped Teams articulated by the David Garcia and the (Un)Common Ground people. A T-shaped team is something with broad knowledge at one level. Its people can see how different things can fit together from different angles, from different creative disciplines. They understand several languages (creativity, business, technology, money, public sector priorities, legal stuff).

They do have breadth across them. But they also have their own creative specialisms that go deep down.

A broad line going across the top, a deep line going down, hence their t-shape-ness.

But they also have their own creative specialisms that go deep down.

Clearly definable aims, objectives and ways of evaluating success

Separation of conception from execution

A division of labour and clearly defined areas of individual responsibility

A team adherence to an over-arching plan and the acceptance of some separation of conception from execution

A clear understanding of objectives and ways of evaluating the success down to the bottom.

Such organisational structures within specific creative projects are often time limited and their T-shaped-ness lies in the variety of specific skills that individuals bring to the project to perform specific tasks. These organisational structures are pragmatic because they are more about people coming into an already organised creative structure and purging themselves by getting on it, rather than being asked to engage in lots of talking about what it all is about. The assumption is that this has already been done.

Collaborative Experiments – to structure this kind of creative space you need

• more horizontal collaborations rather than relying upon already established pragmatic plans and hierarchies

• members of the public and architects re-designing the area

• project designers and potential consumers within design surgeries

• performing artists and members of a participating audience.

This organisational structure encompasses a high degree of T-shaped-ness because it is a very open system. Creative innovation can come from the multi-faceted social, political, economic and cultural facets the end users bring with them. This openness will attract different people and these will be probably be quickly as the specific creative act itself. Quite often it means resistance, the need for mutual listening rather than talking and diplomatic respect. But that is why they can be good. They are typically T-shaped organisational structures because they open up the creative process to such a wide community of voices.

Lab Culture – this organisational structure for creative innovation is a very open and flexible structure designed to bring people together to ‘jump start’ unbroken creative connections. Lab Culture is very T-shaped because it encompasses lots of deep expertise which people bring together around broad themes of collaboration. It can be a good way of organizing a group of people to foster the emergence of new ideas.

It is the ‘bottom up’ approach that is radically open to new and innovative dialogues forming out of the creative thinking of people with very different backgrounds

It encourages randomness and the usefulness of recognizing ignorance for spotting opportunities

It offers a high level of multi- or cross-disciplinary, the ‘thinking outside the box’ which is different from the more traditional specialist, whereby experts share their ideas but still from a position of ‘thinking inside their box’ which leads to characteristic Pragmatism and Creative experiments.

This organisation of creative space needs to be less hierarchical than Pragmatism, where you can always be doing things in a different way. It organisation thrives when there is a focus upon inter-disciplinary creative processors as much as upon creative outcomes and it is time limited and goes on for much longer than any previous innovation dialogues.

However, there still needs to be a clear demarcation between areas of expertise and responsibilities within a fairly high division of labour. So although Creative experiments are more T-shaped than Pragmatism there is still a relatively low degree of T-Shaped-ness overall.

Inclusive Design: Innovation between creators and users – this is about organizing innovation through forging new relationships between creators and end users, for instance, it can be about organizing openly democratic creative relationships such that innovation emerges between:

• members of the public and architects re-designing the area

• product designers and potential consumers within design surgeries

• performing artists and members of a participating audience.

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Partnerships and Placements – this organisational structure for creative innovation is about encouraging and managing the placement of creative practitioners within new business organisations or institutions as a kind of knowledge transfer or exchange space. This can work in Pragmatic, Creative Experimental or Lab Culture ways.

This is perhaps more relevant for formal organisations with formal employees than for the temporary creative spaces that emerge out of informal creative networks. For instance, it can involve letting someone from your creative team or business work with another creative team or business for a while. New partnerships, innovative ideas, killer applications and business processes might flow in both directions as a result.

Cultural Brokers Facilitating Creative Encounters – this is about creating an organisational structure to encourage emergent behaviour as a driver behind creative innovation. Emergent creativity and creative networks in general can be very spontaneous and haphazard. This is what usually gives them their creativity and innovative energy. But this does also mean they can suffer from a lack of sustained organisation. Cultural brokers facilitate creative encounters by becoming embassides for emergency and the diplomats of creative networking. Cultural brokers tend to run creative dating agencies and organize creativity events.

Lawrence Liang is one of the main men when it comes to discussing the impact of the Web and the impact it has had upon these kinds of structures and processes of creative innovation. One of his key ideas is the Innovation Commons. He discusses how new digital networks have created new structures for collaborative work. In this sense, the structures are the innovations as much as the specific creative acts are. For Liang, these new networks are intimately connected to a whole new creative space that has only just begun to enable people to co-create in a non-hierarchical and non-proprietary way across the planet. This is why they are akin to The Commons, in the same way common land used to be an open, non-hierarchical space before they took it away from us with the Enclosures movement. The corporate use of copyright to hoover up large chunks of what is common culture might be another version of this, a Cultural Endorses Movement. This is why the copyleft and Open Source movements are so potentially interesting. But that gets us into more of the politics of knowledge, this time connected to common access and cultural democracy, which is still a debate for another time.

In terms of organisational structure, the Web helps to create an Innovation Commons because it can only ever be non-managed. The normal organisational space is controlled from the centre, which tends to be where they keep all the power, money and information. In contrast, the Web enables people to co-create their own creative workspace away from the centre, because all the ideas and creativity on the Web is kept at the end of the wire. The structure of the innovation commons is where all these ideas are. No-one is in control and the centre is relatively simple, containing not much more than the pipe that allows connectivity. This e2e architecture has the fundamental impact of increasing the freedoms that the people who use whichever network have over it and the way it can be used.

So, in a similar way to Vén Hôpôl sees e2e as encouraging innovation because it encourages plasticity, a very, very open openness that allows the system and what it produces to emerge through the very processes of doing the production. e2e is dialectical, self-organising and auto-poietic (see Fish, Horster and Oreani).

THEORY

Theories of Creative Innovation No. 14 – The Open Source Tradition

We can see how the end-to-end principle renders the Internet an innovation commons, where new innovations can develop and deploy new applications or content without the permission of anyone else. Because of e2e, no one need register an application with ‘the Internet’ before it will run; no permission to use the bandwidth is required. Instead, e2e means the network is designed to assure that the network cannot decide which innovations will run… Because of e2e, innovators know that they need not get the permission of anyone – neither AT&T nor the Internet itself – before they build a new application for the Internet. If an innovator has what he or she believes is a great idea for an application, he or she can build it without authorization from the network itself and with the assurance that the network itself cannot discriminate against it.

[From Commons on the Wires, by L. Liang]
Chapter 7 – Making a Good Dish of It: Listening to the Experts Talk about Research and Innovation in Practice

Proverbs

The oven has to get hot before you can bake any bread, because you can’t make an omelette without breaking some eggs.

It is supposed to be difficult and complicated. That is why it is interesting and useful.
Having started this book with a quotation from Moorst, and the idea that
speculation and innovation involves thinking about the way you do thinking,
using different methods, getting ideas to flow and dealing with the pecularities
of your various professional works on the way to the chapter that relates
to its final point. Following Moorst, this chapter explores how the various factors
we have discussed so far come together – how creative innovation is about
making something happen as a result of initial inspiration: about embracing its
unforeseen nature and looking for ways to methodize, define it and
incorporate it so that the need to constantly feed the synthetic material
enlarges itself. By contuing upon interviews with experts in their field, this chapter explores how
all these various aspects of creativity and innovation can be brought together to
make a good dish.

**QUOTATION**

Theorists of Creativity: No. 15 – The Reflective Practitioner

Reflective practice – attempts to write research and practice, thought and action
into a framework for inquiry which involves practice, and which acknowledges
the particular and special framework of the practitioners. It is a framework that
is essential for development. The reflective practitioner – ‘Reflection-on-
action’ – is a critical research skill and part of the generic research process
method. Evaluation, in particular, is the methodology of professional practitioners and involves thinking about how we are doing
and rethinking action while we are doing it. In this sense it is improvisational
in feeling, response, and adjustment.

(From Haugeland, Research. By C. Gray and J. Malm)

**THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT**

The interviews that appear below are edited versions of longer interviews.
A lack of space precludes the inclusion of all the material and so, though
we have tried to give you a representative flavour of what was said. You can get
the longer version of all the information on www broadsheet, Bournemouth’s on-line
magazine, at the broadsheetweb.com

**AN ESSENTIAL DISORIENTATION – AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN NEWLING**

Newling is Professor of Installation Sculpture at Nottingham
Trent University and his national and international practice is
marked by his enduring interest in notions of ‘place’, both in terms of cartography
and context. John constantly revises the ‘tact agreements of place’
and the need for professional and personal research. As the potential
for project and practice: ‘It is possible that the acceptance of science
Vie’s are a broader version of a broad way of science that is
always underpinned by rigorous conceptual thinking.

Quotation and critiques of his work have been included in, amongst others,
Science in 2008 – Higher Education: An Introduction to Social
art in the new millennium. The empire of the senses (Thames and Hudson)
and incorporating sensibility. Much of his work and projects include
on the visual framework of the practitioners. It is a framework that
and practice starts to look across disciplines. In activity, rather than trying to
be an expert in art or human physiology or whatever, part of what I do is
look at a few things that happen in a place and understand how
just a team together which has experts in each area. One example would be
Westonbirt Arboretum, a project way for the Haberlandt
comprising many thousands of plants wish from the public on a steel installation
hotels; in that I had built. People were writing their wishes on ribbons
which became a bole of the tree. The Haberlandt put it together, and
the ribbons became the site of the activity as a hole in that wood
became a useful document for social science research because it
was a map a port of people’s desires at that point in time and place. Chael Newling is another place
who could have represented a new, mutated variation of a vine. Plant
biologists are looking further into this aspect… In this manner my practice is making
connections across disciplines, allowing experts in other disciplines to make
connections with art and to see the place of the project. For instance, if the
research and interaction can bring you to the idea that your project can expand
outwards exponentially...

A – The way you talk about your practice could be described as
a sociological, someone who is within the tribe that they are reflecting back on...

J – Yes. I think anthropology has connections to what I do.
There are two
anthropological methods that I have used often. Recent extension is on many
years of my work. Part of that difference is reading widely. I read
what is beginning to suggest to me the question of paradigms within which
I think there can be solutions out there that are looking for a problem. Innovation
– We have touched on the relationship between problems and solutions elsewhere;
we need to stress that the problem is the one that we discover, and
innovate the project’s possibilities. So yes, I often think post-project that the next
thing that arrives… does that chime with your creative practice?

J – My research is embedded in my practice… (it) begins to
innovate the project’s possibilities. So yes, I often think post-project that the next
thing that arrives… does that chime with your creative practice?

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many more questions that are addressed through all of us...

mP – That’s not just a question, it’s more like a question. ‘What are we going to try to do is make the world’s first hydroponic vineyard’ or ‘how can we best disseminate what we are learning’ and more like a question, ‘what we are going to try to do is make the world’s first hydroponic vineyard’ or ‘how can we best disseminate what we are learning’.

Your thought about doing this. This is where I see the team properly engaged with the audience. ‘You are in a theatre’ that describes your practice really well. But what would you say is the bigger context of research, the relationship between your practice and ideas about theory and the world?

‘I come from a theatre background, and the theory is often about the journey that you want the audience to go through, from knowing you are in a theatre to not knowing you are in a theatre. The audience want the acceptance to that they are not in a theatre and to pretend that they are in a theatre. There is a fourth wall dividing the audience that you want to overcome. But then you get into their skin, almost as a psychologist would try to do, researching the real people out there and getting inside their skin, almost as a psychologist would try to do?’. So these two roads are going to merge like a zip. For me that’s what research and practice do.

I think that coming from this kind of epistemological debate is the idea of falsification. It’s a product of its own natural process. Again it’s that journey. I feel, ‘You have to murder your darlings, run over them now’. For me, and it’s called The White Album, which is a film and there is a scene that survives numerous cuts until the very last minute. ‘You have to murder your darlings, run over them now’.

When you are on a slip-road approaching a main road it says ‘Merge Like a Zip’. and also cars have mirrors.

When I read your essay, you said, ‘We are not at the beginning, we are at the end of the process. It’s kind-of the same thing I think, theory can inform, but that’s not just a question, it’s more like a question. ‘What are we going to try to do is make the world’s first hydroponic vineyard’ or ‘how can we best disseminate what we are learning’. For me that really know how it works, or how it’s held together. But there is this sense that they inform each other without being a single thing. It comes back to your theory and practice means to you? Is it about researching your own motivations, or more about getting inside people’s skin, almost as a psychologist would try?’. I think the word ‘practice’ is an interesting term because on the one hand it can mean; ‘You have to murder your darlings, run over them now’. For me, and it’s called The White Album, which is a film and there is a scene that survives numerous cuts until the very last minute. ‘You have to murder your darlings, run over them now’. For me, and it’s called The White Album. I think this is a really interesting notion to have when writing, from inside one’s self, a biography or something that has happened to you. But also you often have to try things that you think won’t work in order to find what will. Revising is always good. Students say all the time ‘why?’ and I say ‘why not?’. You also have to try new things and find out how they interacted. It’s a different drama but it’s valid. It sets off a chain of thinking in the minds of the audience. To thinking ‘that’s awful’. So what I am saying is that comes from this kind of epistemological debate is the idea of falsification. Testing and trying to improve your theories. Do you call in the wizard squad? When writing The White Album I had to deal with thinking about what the horrible corporate phrase of ‘Thinking outside the box’. But it is actually a nice metaphor. Writing the White Album I had to think about thinking of what the aftermath of the Manson Murders might be like. I was really absorbed by the Manson Murders. When I was working on The White Album the Manson Murders was really potent in the way that it informs us about our journey. We carry it with us in our own ignorance is useful. I think it’s a really interesting notion to have when writing, from inside one’s self, a biography or something that has happened to you. But also you often have to try things that you think won’t work in order to find what will. Revising is always good. Students say all the time ‘why?’ and I say ‘why not?’. You also have to try new things and find out how they interacted. It’s a different drama but it’s valid. It sets off a chain of thinking in the minds of the audience. To thinking ‘that’s awful’. So what I am saying is that comes from this kind of epistemological debate is the idea of falsification. Testing and trying to improve your theories. Do you call in the wizard squad? When writing The White Album I had to deal with thinking about what the horrible corporate phrase of ‘Thinking outside the box’. But it is actually a nice metaphor. Writing the White Album I had to think about thinking of what the aftermath of the Manson Murders might be like. I was really absorbed by the Manson Murders. When I was working on The White Album the Manson Murders was really potent in the way that it informs us about our journey. We carry it with us in our own ignorance is useful. I think it’s a really interesting notion to have when writing, from inside one’s self, a biography or something that has happened to you. But also you often have to try things that you think won’t work in order to find what will. Revising is always good. Students say all the time ‘why?’ and I say ‘why not?’. You also have to try new things and find out how they interacted. It’s a different drama but it’s valid. It sets off a chain of thinking in the minds of the audience. To thinking ‘that’s awful’. So what I am saying is that comes from this kind of epistemological debate is the idea of falsification. Testing and trying to improve your theories. Do you call in the wizard squad? When writing The White Album I had to deal with thinking about what the horrible corporate phrase of ‘Thinking outside the box’. But it is actually a nice metaphor. Writing the White Album I had to think about thinking of what the aftermath of the Manson Murders might be like. I was really absorbed by the Manson Murders. When I was working on The White Album the Manson Murders was really potent in the way that it informs us about our journey. We carry it with us in...
Jennie Syson is an independent curator based in Nottingham. She is director of Nottingham Contemporary and an intErViEw with Jennie Syson

It’s in the past, the curating work I have done has been for specific exhibitions. With the Royal College Curating MA and that is very much based around the thematic model pioneered by The Tate. One way of doing that is it is looking for something current, the ‘why’ rather than ‘how’ sort of questions.

A – so do you see the research and the curating work that comes out of it as responding to a general cultural atmosphere and the ways you want to respond to that? Or do you see the research as leading to something that is trying to set a new agenda?

J – I don’t necessarily want to set agendas. You have heard me describe Hinterland in the context of a school geography project, where I take a geographical area and lay down an imagined species quadrant, like you would do any scientific research project. The idea was to set a boundary. I wanted that to be pretty loose, while identifying an area in Nottingham that was slightly underdeveloped and without a particular infrastructure for much of the time. It’s changing now, and that’s why it’s interesting. The idea was to provide a very open-ended area for people to research within, and it was absolutely up to the artist themselves to decide what that might become. But in some instances, some projects have needed more hands-on assistance than others. I don’t mind admitting some of the projects to date have failed. Samuel Beckett used to say ‘Fail once. Fail again. Fail better…’ I have the freedom and liberty to do that as Hinterland is still quite small at the moment.

A – so do you see the research and the curation work that comes out of it as responding to a general cultural atmosphere and the ways you want to respond to that? Or do you see the research leading to something that is trying to set a new agenda?

J – I think conduit is a nice word actually. One thing I’ve noticed when working with artists that live and practice in Nottingham is that there is a lot of passion and drive to do things, but everything is self-centred. I don’t mean that they are selfish, but some of the experiences are kind of blinkered. I think it is good to encourage people to look at artists who are from other references points, other than their own lives or things that are just directly relevant to their practice. I’m not explaining this very well!

A – I think you are rings true with some of the main narrative elsewhere in this book. On the one hand an artist might research the inside of their own head and on the other hand they might be researching something about the world. They could be working with internal, personal motivations or it could be more like the creative business thing, about external things in the economy.

J – It seems to me there is a whole spectrum of possibilities here. Maybe some artists tend to swing to the more internal, subjective end, looking at their own biography and therefore become very practice centred. So perhaps there needs to be more about getting that connected to theory, and vice versa.

A – I’m interested in this space you work in, and still in where the agenda that you either respond to, or add to, comes from. Does it come from aesthetic judgements and choices? Or is it more clearly institutionally driven, so that then you work to that?

J – It’s absolutely not institutionally driven. It’s really personal to me, to my interests, to my thoughts and feelings about what’s good in terms of what artist are able to do.

A – so that’s the agenda that brings the need for research with it, that says a lot about your work and why you are doing it. But could you say a little bit more about how the nuts and bolts of that actually fit together? In terms of the research for how you build things together?

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A – I think you’re right about research needing to be a broad thing, and I guess I am more drawn to people who are slightly better read than me. Therefore being more interesting and able to teach me something. But on the other hand there have been some very innocent artists in Hinterland, where perhaps the research has been a careful consideration for the local community. And socially engaging practice is something I very much want to continue within Hinterland, things that are interested in local history. So I don’t mind people interacting with a Hinterland piece, going away and not ever realising it was an art piece. That often happens…

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– Do you start with an idea that has come out of your own head and then research into that to find a way of articulating it? Or do you research the world out and respond to that in terms of your film(s)? Or is it somewhere in the middle?

– It’s somewhere in the middle, but a lot of the ideas I come up with for films are very spontaneous. I could be in a café somewhere and I see a little picture or something and that might spark an idea. Just recently I went to a jazz gig and that sparked an idea. It made me want to research more into how a jazz musician lives that lifestyle and how everything in their life reflects them and what influences are there below the surface.

– From what you are saying, you start with an initial inspiration and then research to test it out and see how it actually works? So it’s not that you do research behind the original inspirational moment. Just comes. Most of your research lies ‘in and out of the doing bit’ to make it actually work. That’s how I have seen it.

– Yes, I agree with that. It all depends on what that is. When they adapt a book for instance we put it in the making of the thing and articulate the thing. I think it’s not as straightforward as just putting the nuts and bolts of doing it, rather that some big far-flung idea or heavy duty market research. It’s very much in the middle of making it of it.

– That’s how I have seen it. For me, research is about finding things you want to talk about… your views are, or what they think is real. Things like that.

– RP – 

– Paul Mattosic, a sculptor who we have also interviewed, described things in a similar way to you: it’s the craft of putting something together for him. Research lies in the making of the thing and what it means to make that. So it comes to working with a bigger crew, it’s much more of a team-work thing. Most of my own process is collaborative. So roles aren’t totally strict and I try to make it more of a family thing.

– So in day to day operations there is room for everyone to be involved.

– RP –

– When one thinks about academic research for things like gun crime, one doesn’t research to the point where you can put it together and have that’s not to say I don’t do my theory, theory definitely does play a huge part in the way I work. But if it’s a personal project I wouldn’t particularly be worried about the repercussions as such, because it would be more of a film that I want to make and that I want to see...

– It sounds like you have found a formula that works for you. But what about the more gritty stuff, searching for locations, finding crew etc? Is that something that you do or do you bring someone in for that?

– RP –

– It’s like a working joke. I’ll hire a production assistant. I’ll say: ‘this is what I’m looking for’. I’ll draw out a list and say please find this location or whatever?

– RP –

– A – How do you manage your team?

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Terry Shave is Professor of Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University. His current practice and research stems from his interest in the way the activity of painting can be transformed by using other processes and methods such as new technology, photography, film and video. Rather than reinforcing a traditional position of painting, he is interested in exposing the problems of that tradition to pose questions about the physical and emotional activity of painting as well as what is painted.

Authors (A) – What does research mean to you given you have your own established arts practice?

Terry Shave (TS) – It means knowing where I fit in the food chain, or the creative chain. Knowing where you fit is very important and it’s an easy thing to find. It’s about mapping a terrain. For me that’s a big thing. Mapping where the arguments are, who else is in that territory; is it the same pole you are in, where the anthologies of the arguments are. At the end of the day research always, for me, has to end up with an artifact. Because making is always my question and my set of potential answers. And the making gives me another question. It is possible to see these things. There is certainly that response to what is going on out there, just coming into my interview with Terry Shave

So I decided to make something such that when you saw it, you felt it was a story about being a creative practitioner. It’s best to categorise things in two ways. On one hand, if I think there are solutions out there in search of problems. You can go past that. It’s not a very useful layer of information that I index, sift through mentally and also physically in terms of my books and things like that.

A – You talked about understanding your place in the food chain, others’ work, which is slightly different to the purely empirical kinds of research one finds in the sciences. How can I explain it? I guess if I had

Nick Wood (nW) – It’s about nurturing the argument, about playing the game, trying to locate something, knowing why what you have isn’t good enough anymore and why you want to be somewhere else.

A – It might be a problem with the word ‘theory’, maybe we should all start to call it background investigation. It doesn’t have to be heavy duty, it could be reading the paper every morning to find out what is going on in the world, which is the context in which you work.

TS – It’s a bit like the word ‘idea’. I always remember when I was young, my Dad was passionate about cowboys films on the telly. There they were on the wagon trains, and sometimes they thought all was going to be ideal, until one of them said, ‘I’ve got an idea’. And those little ideas are so big they can change the world. But at the same time, when I want to act school someone might think, ‘Ts this is true but I can’t do it with a 2B’. We often think of ideas, like theories, as being great big things, they are big they can change the world. But at the same time, when I went to art school

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nW – It’s about knowing the world around you is essentially baggage but it can also be a very useful layer of information that I index, sift through mentally and also physically in terms of my books and things like that.

A – Its about being a creative practitioner is you also have to be aware of your audience, the genre. I know this is a big loaded term but theory, could you tell us about what you make of that term theory?

TS – Theory for me is this sense of knowledge underpinning what you do to arrive at the chicken, and through to this chicken, you and the work are enriched. But there is certainly that response to what is going on out there in search of problems. I think there are solutions out there in search of problems.

A – It might be a problem with the word ‘theory’, maybe we should all start to call it background investigation. It doesn’t have to be heavy duty, it could be reading the paper every morning to find out what is going on in the world, which is the context in which you work.

TS – It’s a bit like the word ‘idea’. I always remember when I was young, my Dad was passionate about cowboys films on the telly. There they were on the wagon trains, and sometimes they thought all was going to be ideal, until one of them said, ‘I’ve got an idea’. And those little ideas are so big they can change the world. But at the same time, when I want to act school someone might think, ‘Ts this is true but I can’t do it with a 2B’. We often think of ideas, like theories, as being great big things, they are big they can change the world. But at the same time, when I went to art school

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I think that takes us onto the actual creative process. From the contextual or an atmosphere, I don't want it getting in the way… but at the same time I have to stop the research, otherwise what I write becomes lumpy and heavy. In that case I had to say 'you can't do this, this is too English. If I had been spending a lot more time working on the communication of my work. And part of the reason for doing that is very much connected to research in terms of trying to get public responses in a different way. At the moment I am exploring what the outside world and the work that the two things going. One is knowing the world, and then all those processes in my head, as it were. If someone said 'hang on' or 'twocking and flogging' of a horse, and then there is the man with the gun, when to turn things round. But you can't walk onto a football pitch never having seen a game of football and think you have already done it. You have to know the rules and the techniques. The idea that research has a circularity within it is interesting. Could you elaborate on that a little and give us some examples of where you see that circle? It involves looking at the places the people might be, sitting in places like young offenders' institutions, travelled in the back of the bus with them from the Court, and went through the whole experience but talk bars with a barman, and then into the music hall in particular situations, in relative isolation, where you can process and gradually the thoughts build up and you take them back to the studio. In the process it comes to the point in the creative process where the idea is just breaking through to be the thing you are thinking about. There is no idea that comes to you in a vacuum. It is interesting to see it come up, throw it away and try to forget it. When you write that down after I have had it in my head or I go and see a play or a movie, it always involves thinking about that question: ’How did you get to that point?’ There is no one thing you do that is absolutely clear. You have had a couple of sayings, different from writing about a couple of people in a bed-in. It involves the same thing.
You wouldn’t want to go to your doctor and say ‘I don’t want to take these pills,’ I want to take those…” – an interview with Wolfgang Buttress

Wolfgang Buttress asked us to describe him simply as ‘an artist’. But he is a very good one, and has recently been working on big public sculpture commissions. One of these is The Angel in l’Amour, a 15 metres tall sculpture which is what he is talking about as the interview starts...

Wolfgang Buttress (WB) – when I made the Angel for l’Amour I was trying to make it in the workshop in one piece, because of the scale of it. It was 15, 16 metres tall by 18 metres wide, but the workshop wasn’t big enough to build it at once, so we built it in sections. But really wanted it together so we could see what it looked like. To get it to London I actually looked at getting the KF involved. The idea of the angel flying in would have been really nice. I imagined putting the whole thing up and taking it down. They were up for it, but because of terrorism or whatever it could get shut down and the insurance would have been super-expensive. So we got the insurance and went ahead. We designed a six inch clearance from the top of the wings to the motorway bridge. We did it all with CAD models.

WB – Heath, the bridges, the irony, what’s the maximum height you can go up to? We had to have police escorts in the middle of the night, into the middle of London. There were road closures, all these things that I imagined would need to happen, but actually it worked so well you just got on. It’s not as intense as it seems, you can come and take it down to London. You are building all these little intricate bits but they are pretty small in the sky, so why do they feel that way at first? And I wanted it to be seamless, not bolted on, so it’s integrated into the design.

But it’s about control as well. When I used to make smaller things, it was me and my assistant and a dog. Or a welding machine, or some small stuff. If it has small dimensions you can do it. You’re on top of it, but as soon as you go to the next level of scale it has to be made in a factory.

A – So in developing your work, what are the compromises you have had to make as the pieces have got bigger? What have been the tensions between what you would really love to do and what you feasibly can do?

WB – Usually, right at the beginning, 90% of what I do happens through entering competitions to get the commission. So right at the beginning you know what the budget is right? This whole experience you know what you can do with the budget, what materials will work, what scale you can use in the space. One of the benefits of experience is knowing how to get the most out of that budget so you can make it as fantastic as it can be.

A – You mentioned working with fabricators and engineers. In this book we talk about where innovation comes from a lot of the time I think creative innovation comes from trying to invent something, but from looking around yourself and trying to work with people who already have the know-how. That might be where innovation comes from. What experience have you had with getting expertise from completely different realms to bring it to your work?

WB – Recently I’ve been doing loads ofetching with bronze and other materials, and that’s from the model maker who made moulds-up for us. He used an industrial process that had something fantastical about it for etching into metals. So I’ve started working with this to work on the surface of metals, instead of just polishing or sand blasting it. There is something about coming nearly full circle in this, it’s a very traditional process, but you’ve got an art background opposed to having an engineering or business background and it is responding to new possibilities in a particular way. Sometimes you have a more lateral way of looking at things or working on something you’ve never done before, even if you’ve been doing it for a long time. Sometimes it doesn’t work but it’s about not being scared about asking those questions, finding inspiration in quite small things and learning one thing off another.

A – Do you see yourself as working within a recognisable genre or history of work?

WB – I think so. As well as the modernist stuff, there is a craft, artisan thing in the way these things are actually made and built. That goes back to churches and cathedrals being built. And there is certainly a link in terms of understanding materials, so you can understand form. That then affects the visual aesthetic and also a political thing as well. It’s about control.

A – You go into the public realm, and so you are often working with local government or public agencies. They are paying the bill but maybe they don’t fully understand what you are trying to do. Or they do understand but pull the plug half-way through for whatever political reasons. To what extent have you found yourself researching that cultural policy stuff and finding ways to be able to translate what you want to say into their language?

WB – Yeah, that’s a tricky one. The best sculptures in the public realm usually have a good team commissioning it. Having a good team is essential to making art in the public realm happen. When things go tits-up it’s usually because the process aspiration is in the wrong place. Often you are working with local government or public agencies. They are paying the bill but maybe they don’t fully understand what you are trying to do. Or they do understand but pull the plug half-way through. To what extent have you found yourself researching cultural policy stuff and finding ways to be able to translate what you want to say into their language?

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…we cannot expect an accurate description of the creative act, for by its nature it is indescribable. This is the unknown which we must recognise as unknowable until it occurs. This is the improbable that becomes probable. Only in a very general way can we say that a creative act is the natural behaviour of an organism which has the tendency to arise when that organism is open to all of its inner and outer experiencing, and when it is free to try out in a flexible fashion all manner of relationships. Out of this multitude of half-formed possibilities the organism, like a great computing machine, selects this one which most effectively meets an inner need, or that one which forms a more effective relationship with the environment, or this other one which discovers a more simple and satisfying order in which life may be perceived…

(from Towards a Theory of Creativity, by C. Rogers)

The world needs your creativity and innovations as much as you need it for yourself.