

Institution: University of the West of England (UWE Bristol)		
Unit of Assessment: 34		
Title of case study: Stimulating the creative economy through innovative knowledge exchange frameworks based on ecosystemic models of cultural value production		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2009-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Jonathan Dovey	Professor of Screen Media	2008 – present
Dr Simon Moreton	Senior Research Fellow	May 2012 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Professor Jon Dovey led four major collaborative knowledge exchange projects worth GBP15,500,000 in total. These projects enhanced sector growth, leading to the creation of 73 jobs, 40 companies, and over GBP9,200,000 in further investments. This was achieved through research into how universities and cultural organisations can facilitate connectivity in the creative economy, and demonstrated the importance of supporting cultural, social and economic outcomes. This approach enhanced the capacity of creatives and 224 creative companies to become more confident, resilient and sustainable. The model of knowledge exchange developed and refined by these projects has influenced the design of international development schemes and national funding programmes.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Dovey and Moreton's work has critically re-examined how value is produced in creative networks and ecosystems through formal and informal interactions, and how the consequences of these interactions produce different intensities and scales of impact.</p>		
Redefining value in creative exchanges		
<p>Dovey's (2009) practice-based arts and media research (R1) argued:</p> <p><i>'judgements about knowledge exchange value could be made in terms of the health of any given system rather than the immediate use value of any single component with it'</i> (p62).</p>		
<p>This re-conceptualised the role of practice-based research within emergent knowledge exchange contexts, recognising the multiple forms of social, cultural and economic value, and impacts in collaborative research. This work was consolidated in the evidence gathered for the Cultural Value Networks report (R2), which used the UWE-sponsored Pervasive Media Studio (a creative technology lab for creatives and academics run by Watershed in Bristol) as a case study to identify how supporting cultural and social as well as economic value leads to enhanced creative outputs. These findings underpinned the delivery</p>		

mechanism for the Research and Enterprise in Arts and Creative Technology (REACT) project (G1).

Rethinking creative economies as ecologies

This understanding was developed in an article for *Cultural Trends* (R3), which analysed how value is produced and mobilised. R3 underpinned the design principles of the Network for Creative Enterprise (NfCE) project (G2) – a Watershed/UWE-led project to enable creatives across the West of England to make a sustainable living from their ideas, by directly embedding a focus on the importance of the value exchanges that underpin creative ecosystems. R3 further underpinned G3 and G4, programmes that fund R&D in the creative economy by focusing on the importance of network building and supporting cohort learning. Two papers by Moreton, R4 and R5, and one report by Dovey (G5), argued that to occupy the role of facilitating anchor institution in a creative economy ecosystem successfully, universities needed to recognise the full range of multiple values and interactions involved and to resist applying conventional econometric measures. These insights underpinned Creative Producers International (G6), an international creative leadership scheme run by Watershed.

Creative hubs: co-developing practical and conceptual methods with creative organisations to support the creative ecology

This rethinking of the politics of value in creative innovation networks, led to a research commission (G7). The output (R6) argued for the importance of creative hubs, defined as organisations that offer creative businesses the

‘chance to aggregate with others in order to access crucial resources such as tools, specialist services, or inspiration to help develop projects and businesses’ (R6 p4).

The research demonstrated how hubs offered

‘a collective approach to coping with uncertain social, cultural and economic environments and processes of creativity and innovation’ (ibid),

which helps strengthen and sustain creative ecologies. Those mobilised collective resources gave rise to a range of impacts from ‘jobs, new products and services, to talent development, regional talent retention, informal education and engagement, training, urban regeneration, research and development, new networks, innovative models of organisation, quality of life enhancements and resilience’ (ibid). R6 also underpinned the NfCE project (G2), where creative microbusinesses were attached to cultural hubs that most reflected their values, which enabled exchanges of expertise, assets and effective business development support.

3. References to the research

R1 Dovey, J. (2009) ‘Making A Difference: Media Practice Research, Creative Economies And Cultural Ecologies.’ In: Ludivine, A., Jones, S., Kershaw, B. and Piccini, A., eds. (2009) *Practice-as-Research: In Performance and Screen*, London: Palgrave Macmillan
<https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/993717/>

R2 Bachmann, G., Dovey, J., Monaco, J. and Sharpe, B. (2012) *Cultural Value Networks* report for AHRC Connected Communities programme https://culturalvalue.dcrc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2015/10/AHRCConCom_CulturalValueNetworks.pdf

R3 Dovey, J., Moreton, S., Sparke, S. and Sharpe, B. (2016), The practice of cultural ecology: Network connectivity in the creative economy. *Cultural Trends*. 25 (2), pp. 87-103. ISSN 0954-8963 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2016.1170922>

R4 Moreton, S. (2016) Rethinking 'knowledge exchange': New approaches to collaborative work in the arts and humanities. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*. 22 (1), pp. 100–115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2015.1101081>

R5 Moreton, S. (2018) Contributing to the creative economy imaginary: universities and the creative sector. *Cultural Trends*. 27 (5), pp. 327–328. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2018.1534575>

R6 Dovey, J. and Pratt, A.C. with Moreton, S., Virani, T., Merkel, J. and Lansdowne, J. (2016) *Creative Hubs: Understanding the New Economy* British Council <https://creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org/media/resources/HubsReport.pdf>*

*commissioned work on behalf of British Council

Evidence of the quality of the supporting research

G1 Dovey, J. *KE Hubs for Creative Economy, REACT*, AHRC, 2012-16, £4,900,000 (£1,200,000 to UWE as lead)

G2 Dovey, J. and Moreton, S. *Network for Creative Enterprise (NfCE)*, ACE/ERDF, 2016-19, £1,000,000 (£500k to UWE)

G3 Dovey, J. *Bristol+Bath Creative R+D*, AHRC, 2018-23, £6.5m (£1.4m to UWE, with £45k of subsequent investment in fellowships and consultancy)

G4 Dovey, J. *South West Creative Technologies Network (SWCTN)*, Research England, 2018-21, £6m (£1.4m to UWE, plus an additional £90k in fellowship awards to UWE staff)

G5 Dovey, J. *The Hidden Story*, 2016-17, £226,720 (£14,394 to UWE)

G6 Dovey, J./Watershed. *Creative Producers International*, ACE, 2017-19, £36,000

G7 Dovey, J. *Creative Hubs and the Practice of Cultural Ecology*, British Council, 2016, £39,000 (£13,491 to UWE)

4. Details of the impact

Enhancing creative sector growth

REACT and NfCE led to the creation of 40 companies and 73 jobs, contributing to sustained growth and employment in the sector (**S1** p2; **S2** pp8-9). REACT specifically stimulated GBP5,353,569 in external investment in projects – from private investment, new research funds, to product sales and commissions (**S1** p2). REACT's support led to one participant securing further investment of GBP3,800,000 to found a new company, Sensible Object, which launched an international product in 2017, leading to its acquisition by a US tech firm in 2019 (**S3**). REACT also enabled participating companies to create 76 pieces of software, 86 prototypes and products and 262 distinctive assets (knowledge, skills, IP, business models, services), thereby improving their reputation, income, and market share. For example, REACT funding enabled the product design agency Kinneir Duffort to develop a new prototyping process:

'The result, a wearable camera for mums and babies, designed and prototyped within 4 months, [which] was viewed by 2.5million people in a campaign with Huggies consumers in Korea at the end of 2014' (S1 p7).

S4 demonstrates that UWE's co-development with Watershed of the 'creative hub' model of development enabled Watershed to expand its creative delivery team from two to eight, thereby increasing the capacity of a regional organisation to support national and international ecosystems such as in Australia, Ireland, Japan, Khazakistan, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa and USA through **G6**. It also enhanced Watershed's ability to articulate and evidence its approach to supporting the creative ecology, which underpinned its role in securing GBP13,000,000 of funded projects (**S4**).

Supporting creatives

REACT and NfCE aggregated creative talent through cohort learning, which encouraged the cross-pollinations of ideas, approaches and skills, leading to more connected, resilient ecosystems. In particular, the programmes offered bespoke support to 175 creative participants through over 600 hours of training and coaching (**S2**). This increased confidence and sector knowledge, providing new skills and developing expertise that enhanced companies' market offer:

'The tailored business support has helped the transition from ... being a sole founder of a company, to taking on another person and working together to change from design consultancy to now publishing our first augmented book.' (NfCE Resident, **S2** p27).

This change is also reflected in the testimony given by NfCE Residents in the video (**S5**).

REACT and NfCE connected 224 businesses, affording peer-led opportunities for individuals and companies to secure paid work, through freelance commissions and PAYE employment (**S1** p2; **S2** pp8-9). This enabled creatives to take risks and experiment and help develop sustainable livelihoods that would otherwise have been beyond their capacity:

'without REACT, I wouldn't have made some of the most daring projects I've ever made or have the opportunities regionally, and nationally, that I have today' (**S1** p26).

REACT's pastoral support for individuals growing businesses, combined with peer support from the networks, gave participants the confidence to find new stakeholders that increased stability:

'[the support of NfCE has] allowed me to grow as a designer and become confident and more independent allowing me to build my client base and network' (NfCE funding recipient, **S2** p29).

Influencing funding infrastructures

G7 had international impact by improving the British Council's understanding of UK creative hubs, enabling them to codify and export their approaches internationally:

'the emphasis on values within each hub's unique fingerprint was a really fruitful way of [addressing] very different kinds of hubs within a common framework' (**S6**).

This allowed British Council to develop connections, policy and funding work in Ghana, Turkey, Uganda, and Ukraine.

The Dowling Review (2015) singled out REACT as an example of how creative hubs operate as an effective means to support collaboration between businesses and university researchers in the UK (**S7**, p38). This model of knowledge exchange led to the University Alliance commissioning *The Hidden Story* (**S8**), which emphasised the volume of creative/HEI interactions in the UK, and made recommendations to policymakers to use

diverse mechanisms to support and capture the multiple values in play in creative work and ecosystems.

The development of the AHRC's Creative Economy strategy (2016) was informed by our work, demonstrated in the programme design for its GBP80,000,000 ISCF-funded Creative Industries Cluster Programme. This impact is corroborated by the former Executive Chair of AHRC (S9) and reflected in the AHRC's report *Creative Exchanges* which explicitly repeats our core findings that

'Creative clusters and networks are particularly important for a sector largely made up of agile freelancers and small and micro businesses ... which, leads to increased business activity as well as the development of new businesses' (S10, p.7).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1 REACT: Final report to the AHRC (2016)

S2 Moreton, S., Dovey, J., Johnson, M. P. and Bellaar Spruijt, V. S. *NfCE Final Report Bristol* (2019), Watershed/UWE Bristol

S3 Testimonial from Head of Studio, Niantic London, contact details provided with source submitted to the REF Team

S4 Testimonial from CEO and Executive Producer, Watershed, contact details provided with source submitted to the REF Team

S5 Network For Creative Enterprise Video <https://www.watershed.co.uk/audio-video/network-for-creative-enterprise>

S6 Testimonial from the former Director of Creative Economy, British Council, contact details provided with source submitted to the REF Team

S7 Dowling, A. (2015) *The Dowling Review of Business-University Research Collaborations*, London: Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) <https://tinyurl.com/uu7f24m>

S8 *The Hidden Story: Understanding Knowledge Exchange Partnerships with the Creative Economy* (2017), AHRC: https://www.unialliance.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/THE-HIDDEN-STORY-REPORT_final_web.pdf

S9 Testimonial from the former Executive Chair, Arts and Humanities Research Council, contact details provided with source submitted to the REF Team

S10 *Creative Exchanges*: (2017) The AHRC Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy Report, AHRC: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/creative-exchanges-ke-hubs/>