

Funded Research Relevant to the Creativity Support Tools Workshop

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The notes that follow cannot represent a comprehensive international survey. Rather, they draw on a limited number of examples in order to illuminate the current situation in initiatives to promote and support advances relating to creative capability.

Perhaps the most influential recent move that has moved the interest in funding research in creativity forward has been a concern, in certain governments for “the Creative Industries”.

“Those industries that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property”

Was the definition used by a UK government initiative, the Creative Industries Task Force which was established by the Prime Minister in 1997. It concluded its work in 2000 and is succeeded by the inter-departmental Ministerial Creative Industries Strategy Group. The Task Group’s main conclusions were included in the Creative Industries Mapping Document 2001, published in 2001. In the first version of the document, published in 1998, the Secretary of State, Chris Smith, said

“Culture and Creativity are vital to our national life...But there is another justification for creativity...the creative industries generate revenues approaching £60bn a year. They contribute over 4% to the national economy and employ around one and a half million people. The sector is growing faster than, almost twice as fast as, the economy as a whole.” (Creative Industries Mapping Document 1998).

These concerns have been echoed in other countries, such as Hong Kong, with its Baseline Study on Hong Kong's Creative Industries of 2003 (Central Policy Unit) or the Japanese NLI Research Institute report, SOCIOECONOMICS 2003/12/02 [The Status of Creative Industries in Japan and Policy Recommendations for Their Promotion]. In all cases, the economic importance of creativity is seen to be important and, hence, an argument for improving capability made. Recently Brazil has become committed to serve as the headquarters for an International Centre for the Creative Industries (ICCI), planned to be established by the United Nations in 2006.

In the UK, one very notable initiative was the formation of a funding body specifically charged with the task of promoting creativity, NESTA - the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, which was founded in 1998. To quote from their publicity:

“We are funded by an endowment from the National Lottery and use the interest to back people of exceptional talent and imagination. We do our best to offer the support they need to explore new ideas, develop new products and services, or experiment with new ways of nurturing creativity in science, technology and the arts.”

A number of research bodies have been working in this direction within existing remits, however. For example, again in the UK, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council modified its Human Factors in Information Technology programme to include “support for creativity” as one example of what could be funded: only a small word change, but quite a significant one. This change was made following the Creativity and Cognition 2 1996 conference, which the responsible Council officer attended. The Loughborough research on the topic, COSTART, was largely funded as a result of this initiative. Of all the work mentioned in this note, this is the only research which can be said to both arise from a specific funding initiative and focus on creativity support tools and methods.

Promoting creativity, however might often be best served simply by putting creative people from different fields together.

Perhaps the most interesting specific funding opportunities have been those that brought artists and scientists, for example, together. These have included the Synapse initiative in Australia, run by the Australia Council, which is particularly interesting in how it used existing mechanisms. Synapse is funded partly by the Australian Research Council as an academic/industrial partnership. The specific arrangement made was to allow the arts funding body, the Australian Council, to count as an industrial partner. In the UK, the Arts and Humanities Research Council is funding arts science collaborations. As are A C E the Arts Council of England. The Wellcome Trust is also funding art/science projects, sciart, that bring leading scientists and artists together.

There are a number of important institutions that support collaborative research through various funding arrangements. For example, in Canada, the Banff Centre, in Austria, ARS Electronica FUTURELAB, in Germany, ZKM, the Center for Art and Media and in Hungary C3, the Center for Culture & Communication. Some of these have access to government money, others have industrial funding and many are primarily self funding. Some new media educational institutions have interesting programmes within their repertoire, for example IAMAS in Japan and UTS in Australia. From time-to-time companies have operated programmes of collaboration, such as the artist in residence scheme PAIR at Xerox PARC.

Many of the specific examples mentioned above arose from the strategic directions set as a result of realising that creativity is of economic as well as social importance. Following that understanding, much of the rest can follow.

Links:

Creative Industries Mapping Document 2001 :

http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.htm?properties=archive%5F2001%2C%2Fcreative%5Findustries%2FQuickLinks%2Fpublications%2Fdefault%2C&month=

Creative Industries Mapping Document 1998 :

http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_1998/Creative_Industries_Mapping_Document_1998.htm?properties=archive%5F1998%2C%2Fcreative%5Findustries%2FQuickLinks%2Fpublications%2Fdefault%2C&month=

Baseline Study on Hong Kong's Creative Industries :

<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200309/16/0916249.htm>

Central Policy Unit: http://www.info.gov.hk/cpu/english/new.htm

SOCIOECONOMICS 2003/12/02 [The Status of Creative Industries in Japan and Policy

Recommendations for Their Promotion] : <http://www.nli-research.co.jp/eng/resea/life/li031202.html>

(ICCI) : <http://www.brazzilmag.com/content/view/2111/49/>

NESTA - the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts : <http://www.nesta.org.uk/>

Creativity and Cognition 2 : <http://research.it.uts.edu.au/creative/lutchi/ccog2.html>

COSTART : <http://research.it.uts.edu.au/creative/COSTART/>

Australia Council : http://www.ozco.gov.au/grants/other_support_new_media_arts/synapse/

Arts and Humanities Research Council :

http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/news/news_pr/2004/combining_creativity.asp

A C E : <http://213.130.131.21/ace/html/frames.html>

sciart : <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/node2530.html>

the Banff Centre : <http://www.banffcentre.ca/programs/>

ARS Electronica FUTURELAB : <http://www.aec.at/de/futurelab/index.asp>

ZKM, the Center for Art and Media : <http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/e/>

C3, the Center for Culture & Communication : <http://www.c3.hu/c3/txt-index.html>

IAMAS : <http://www.iamas.ac.jp/>

UTS : <http://www.creativityandcognition.com/>

PAIR : <http://www.pair.xerox.com/>