



Cole, E. K. (2021). Knowledge Exchange and the Creative Industries: A Reflective Commentary on Current Practice. *Research for All*, 5(2), 194–204. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.14324/RFA.05.2.02>

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**RESEARCH FOR ALL**

The open-access journal for public engagement with research

ISSN 2399-8121 (Online)

Journal homepage:

<https://www.uclpress.co.uk/pages/research-for-all>

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How to cite this article

Cole, E. (2021) 'Knowledge exchange and the creative industries: A reflective commentary on current practice'. *Research for All*, 5 (2), 194–204. <https://doi.org/10.14324/RFA.05.2.02>

Submission date: 2 October 2020

Acceptance date: 4 May 2021

Publication date: 21 September 2021

Peer review

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-blind peer review, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymized during review.

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Knowledge exchange and the creative industries: A reflective commentary on current practice

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Abstract

This reflective commentary summarizes the key learnings that arose from the 2019/20 Knowledge Exchange and the Creative Industries seminar series. These seminars at the University of Bristol, UK, looked at engagement with research within the creative industries. Each seminar showcased an academic and artistic partnership from across South West England and Wales which resulted in an artistic output that could be classified as 'immersive', including, but not limited to, audio storytelling applications, augmented reality games, virtual reality projects, films and theatre productions. Each seminar involved collaborators sharing their experiences and thoughts on best practice, possible styles and potential pitfalls in knowledge exchange projects. My commentary provides an overview of the partnerships, which represent a snapshot of current knowledge exchange practices in the region. I summarize the common trends that emerged throughout the seminars, including methods of initiating a collaboration, the scalability of partnerships between industry and academia, the challenges surrounding process when working on multi-partner collaborations, and questions of ethics and intellectual property. I also reflect upon the processes and learnings that arose from hosting the series, to guide others who are thinking about strategies to encourage collaboration. Overall, the commentary offers a blueprint of considerations for those in both academia and the creative industries who are considering embarking upon knowledge exchange projects. By drawing attention to the lessons learned from a series of successful partnerships, the discussion paves the way for future projects of engaged research within the creative industries.

Keywords: knowledge exchange, engaged research, arts and humanities, artistic collaborations, immersive experiences

Key messages

- Academic and creative collaborations often begin with minimal financial and in-kind institutional support, yet lead to dynamic pilot studies. The fast-paced and agile nature of research and development in the creative sector helps get early-stage ideas into a scratch or prototype form that is eligible for competitive funding.
- In creative partnerships, the boundaries between co-developed projects involving practice-as-research and knowledge exchange are often fluid.
- Both academia and the creative industries are largely vocational sectors, where there can be a tendency to 'dive in' to collaborations before formalizing intellectual property and ethical considerations. Steps need to be taken to safeguard both parties, while balancing the tension between formalizing a relationship and nurturing it during early-stage, passion-driven exploratory work.

During the 2019/20 academic year, I convened the Knowledge Exchange and the Creative Industries seminar series at the University of Bristol, UK (see University of Bristol, 2021). The series looked at engagement with research within the creative industries, and showcased academic and artistic partnerships which resulted in outputs that can be classified as 'immersive', including, but not limited to, audio storytelling applications, augmented reality games, virtual reality projects, films and theatre productions. The series focused upon partnerships that engaged with the national creative economy, but which primarily involved academics from higher education institutions (HEIs) in South West England and Wales. Here, I introduce the projects and reflect upon their key areas of overlap, before proposing a blueprint of considerations specific to academic and creative partnerships. My recommendations are targeted towards individual academics and creative practitioners wishing to embark upon knowledge exchange projects, although consideration is given to how institutions might convene similar events to my own to encourage collaboration. As such, my reflective commentary is distinct from other work on knowledge exchange and the creative industries, the majority of which exists within the grey literature and targets its recommendations towards HEIs, alongside independent hubs and networks (for example, Dovey et al., 2016; Lewis, 2016; Moreton et al., 2019).

The Knowledge Exchange and the Creative Industries series featured a programme of seven collaborations involving HEIs from South West England and Wales, one collaboration from Northern England, and two academic papers reflecting upon the social, cultural and political context of knowledge exchange in the South West region. Three of these collaborations are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this special feature for *Research for All*. COVID-19 impacted upon the delivery of the final two seminars, which included contributions from Sharon Clark (Bath Spa University/Raucous Theatre), Dr Nicole Foster (University of the West of England), Dr Simon Moreton (University of the West of England) and Ivan Phelan (Sheffield Hallam University). The findings in this paper are based upon six of the programmed talks, with all quotations taken from transcripts of the seminars. The six talks featured the following collaborations:

- Dr Lesel Dawson (University of Bristol), Dr Jimmy Hay (University of Bristol) and Natasha Rosling's (artist) collaboration on the lived experience of grief in fiction film
- Dr Jenny Kidd (Cardiff University) and Alison John's (Yello Brick) collaboration on *Traces/Olion*, a site-specific storytelling application
- Dr Hannah Wood's (University of Plymouth) augmented reality game *Glass Ceiling Games*, developed through her company Story Juice
- Dr Chris Bevan (University of Bristol), Dr Stuart Gray (University of Bristol) and Kilter Theatre Company's collaboration on the virtual reality project *VR100*
- Dr Paul Clarke (University of Bristol/Uninvited Guests) and Duncan Speakman's (South West Creative Technology Network Immersion Fellow/Pervasive Media Studio Resident) augmented reality performance *Billennium*
- My own work (University of Bristol) with Felix Barrett (Punchdrunk) on the immersive theatre production *Kabeiroi*.

These six partnerships represent a snapshot of current knowledge exchange projects from South West England and Wales. There were several variables across the collaborations, including the number of partners, the duration of the knowledge exchange process, the longevity of any outputs created, and the type of knowledge exchange undertaken (transactional, leading to co-produced creations, and/or involving practice-as-research). However, several commonalities exist: all partnerships

either received, or led to, external funding; all involved a small core team which was scaled up to include additional partners when needed for resourcing or delivery purposes; and all went through a self-directed process of engaging in knowledge exchange without necessarily knowing what each party was embarking upon or with a model to guide them. These commonalities, I suggest, arose due to the core skill sets of the creative practitioners; the likely formats of creative collaborations, including research and development periods and scratch or prototype stages as standard; and the attitudes towards collaboration from those invested in vocational industries. The following commentary summarizes the basis of these key learnings, in the hope of providing a model of considerations for those embarking upon future knowledge exchange projects.

Initiating and scaling a collaboration

Contributors to the seminar series met their collaborators in one of two ways. The first method of initiating a collaboration involved one party seeking the other out, with an academic pitching an idea to an artist or vice versa. My own collaboration with Punchdrunk theatre company, for example, began when the company contacted me directly due to my research expertise in the field of Greek tragedy and its reception. Other contributors, however, found their collaborators through networking events aimed at introducing members of academia and industry who might have shared interests. Dawson, Hay and Rosling, for example, met through the University of Bristol 'grief cluster', which brought people together around the topic of grief and led to Hay applying for 'seed corn' funding through Bristol's Brigstow Institute. Similarly, Kidd and John met through a Research and Enterprise in Arts and Creative Technology (REACT) networking event at the Pervasive Media Studio in 2012. Kidd and John successfully obtained funding from REACT for a feasibility study, which they undertook in partnership with National Museum Wales and which ran until 2014, before scaling up their collaboration for an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Acceleration award. The ESRC grant funded their work on *Traces/Olion*, which ran from 2016 to 2018.

Several other collaborations followed a similar trajectory to Kidd and John's, going from a pilot study to a scaled-up project. My own project with Punchdrunk, for example, took place over an intense few months in summer 2017, with the production then running from 26 September to 5 November 2017. I then obtained Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funding for a Leadership Fellowship (2019–21), on which Punchdrunk is a project partner. The fellowship allowed me to deepen my collaboration with Punchdrunk, and to further the knowledge exchange process. Similarly, Clarke and Speakman's collaboration began as a performance through Clarke's theatre company Uninvited Guests, which involved audiences imagining the architecture of a future city. Later, when Clarke was appointed as a Digital Placemaking Fellow through the Bristol and Bath Creative Research and Development Cluster (<https://bristolbathcreative.org/>), he connected *Billennium* to a series of central research questions:

How can locative technologies, performance and design fiction engage people critically and enable them to collectively imagine alternative futures for their built environment? Can emerging technologies facilitate playful ways of social dreaming and doing critical design together in a given place? Also, can we use some of these performance and digital tools to encourage more diverse people to get involved in consultation processes?

Having brought in architecture firm Stride Treglown as an additional partner, Clarke and Speakman obtained funding through the University of Bristol Research, Enterprise and Development (RED) Knowledge Exchange Fund to create a prototype tool to answer these questions.

Whether a partnership began through a direct approach or through an intermediary did not demonstrably shape its trajectory. Both forms of initiation involved an identical period of unsupported collaboration, in terms of finances, resources and teaching relief, to develop ideas, nurture the partnership, and begin the knowledge exchange process prior to external funding being awarded. None of the collaborators mentioned begrudging this period, although several noted that they treated the work, at this stage, as a passion project. Dawson, for example, noted that 'we did this on top [of our normal workloads]. I did it on the weekends ... and on holiday'. One could posit that the willingness of collaborators to invest their own time in initiating a project, and potentially their own finances to pay, for example, for the travel costs required to meet with partners and workshop ideas, stems from the fact that both academia and the creative industries are largely vocational industries. A motivation to create knowledge, change understandings and produce works of originality arguably drew both parties to their respective industries, and this is mirrored in the drive which underpins knowledge exchange projects. Such vocational pursuits, however, can easily be taken advantage of; as subsequent sections demonstrate, the lack of infrastructure available to support early-stage knowledge exchange work can cause later difficulties surrounding, for example, intellectual property (IP). One could also question the ethics of HEIs relying on academics doing knowledge exchange projects in their own time, but then later returning such projects as Impact Case Studies for the Research Excellence Framework (REF), as well as the ethics of a working relationship where both parties are donating time, but the academic is salaried while the creative is freelance. Such questions notwithstanding, these partnerships indicate that engaging in a pilot project can be essential to accessing the larger sources of funding required to scale up projects, deepen the knowledge exchange process and increase beneficiaries. This is not to say that engaging in an unsupported pilot project is a guarantee of future funding, as there are certainly other influences at play, including, most significantly, the requirement to ensure that the research aims and objectives from the academic collaborator fall within the scope of research funders. Nevertheless, irrespective of the method of initiating a collaboration, the process of starting small and scaling up pending the allocation of resource is a well-established pattern.

The challenges of multi-partner collaborations

Both academic and artistic contributors recognized that collaboration requires a willingness from both parties to learn one another's organizational or industry culture and language. Projects involving three or more partners appeared particularly challenging, as participants had different agendas. Dawson, Hay and Rosling, who also worked with professional actors, articulated this explicitly, noting that 'when you do a collaboration, in fact, every single stakeholder has their own agenda and their own aims'. Rosling additionally attested to the challenges of reconciling timetables, such as her workflow as an artist with the calendar of her academic partners:

But the other thing was just timescales that different groups work in. When working as part of a creative studio full time, you're managing a massive workload, and you've got a really defined process that you've got to go through, to be economical, financially and also with all your

overheads. But with the university, it's this very slow process, where the researchers are constantly doing these projects on the side, and they've got to prioritize other workflows and workloads. So the management was really tricky about how to depend on and get the meat that we needed from them. And it's not through lack of caring. They were more excited to do our project than their own usual everyday stuff, but it's just the practical realities of how time is split.

Multi-partner collaborations were not only characterized by different parties having different agendas, but also by unequal levels of investment. Discrepancies often occurred, for example, around in-kind contributions, such as the extent to which each party was willing to market the resulting output on social media. Kidd and John, who worked with National Museum Wales on a storytelling application for St Fagan's National Museum of History, noted in retrospect that this problem could have been avoided 'if there was a pocket of money that was solely for the marketing, that went to the museum'. Yet while additional funding might solve some problems, it can create others, with Wood noting that the industry funding she obtained for her game development was based around commercial goals with key performance indicators (KPIs). Within the same knowledge exchange project, individuals may hold different interests, with some parties more invested in the process of knowledge exchange, some in the afterlife of the co-created output, and others in both process and product equally. Upfront discussions about expectations, time frames and budgets for the complete process, including the promotion of any outputs, can reduce later areas of tension.

Although the seminars revealed that challenges should be expected in knowledge exchange collaborations, the message was not all doom and gloom. Various contributors highlighted ways of avoiding or anticipating challenges. While not a recommendation shared in the seminars themselves, elsewhere Simon Moreton has made the case for a creative producer to manage the relationship between microbusinesses, individual academics and HEIs (Moreton, 2016: especially 110–11). When collaborations do not have access to such support, an alternative can be found in the method that Clarke and Speakman used for their scaled-up collaboration:

We went through a particular process that I'd really recommend, which is developed by Doteveryone, who have developed tools for developing responsible tech. We did some consequence scanning, where you explore the intended and unintended consequences of the app or the software, the technology that you're developing or the approach. We did that ... we also shared our languages and tried to develop collaboratively something of a mission statement. We were having really interesting debates, for instance, about the word 'agency', which was a word which to us as performance makers and people working with immersivity was a very familiar word. To the architects it was not really a word that they would commonly use, so [there was] lots of debate around particular words.

Although such a formalized process may not be appropriate when exploring the possibility of collaboration and initiating a partnership, from the point at which funding is awarded, or a project formally commences, Clarke's three-prong method of consequence scanning, language sharing, and writing a shared objective or mission statement can help avoid some of the common pitfalls and challenges in knowledge exchange collaborations.

Ethics and intellectual property

Almost every contributor to the seminar series noted that they were working in the dark, as it were, when negotiating the ethics of their collaboration and questions of IP. The ethical issues fell into two categories. The first related to submitting projects to university ethics committees for formal approval. Gray and colleagues, for example, noted that the fact that their ethics application had to be planned for well in advance caused later problems, as it:

... placed some limits on what we were able to do and, more importantly, what Kilter [the creative partner] were able to do. The biggest impact this caused was that tighter planning restricted how spontaneous some of the activities in our sessions could be. For the Kilter team, this was particularly keenly felt, as having the creative freedom to respond and adapt to their environment is something they clearly thrived upon.

The timing caused similar problems for my own scaled-up work with Punchdrunk: we negotiated our collaboration prior to me submitting an AHRC funding application, and due to the low success rates of such schemes, I did not apply for ethics approval until after the funding was awarded. When the ethics committee asked for amendments at this stage, it caused undue stress, which could have been avoided if I had had an informal discussion with an ethics officer prior to submitting my grant application. On the back of their experiences, Gray and colleagues also recommend that collaborators develop a shared ethics model, which should be planned well in advance, and should take care over matters where there could be discrepancies between how academics subject to ethics approval might work, and how creatives might work. They flagged areas of potential tension, including the signing of participant consent forms, and the sharing of materials that could inadvertently lead to participants being personally identifiable, including in photographs, videos and audio.

The second area where contributors identified ethical challenges was in the working relationships between the different parties. Often, these challenges related to money, and the assumptions surrounding cost that each party might make. For example, Gray and colleagues' project required all involved to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, as they would be working with children. Their university employer provided an avenue for staff to obtain a DBS check, but their external collaborators did not, and they were faced with this unanticipated cost. Dawson, Hay and Rosling noted that even when costs are included in a grant, such as for a creative's professional contribution to a project, the rates may be at equity level, and contributors may prioritize other work which pays more competitively:

One of the challenges is, you're paying people, but you're paying people less than you would pay them if they were doing a non-university film, as it were. So we did have a kind of crisis, about five days before the shoot, where our main actress, reasonably well-known, got a properly paid job, pulled out. And we had to find someone very last minute, to do all of this.

Although knowledge exchange funding may not be able to compete with a commercial enterprise, Dawson, Hay and Rosling advised that, at the very least, collaborators should think about pay practically, and treat artistic collaborators ethically, to safeguard as much as possible against future crises: 'You need to be very professional and think about how many hours, what is the timetable? That they need to do this as a kind of main project, yes? Not a thing on the side.' Simon Moreton (2016: 110) has

elsewhere flagged the significance of the relationship between ethics and economics in knowledge exchange collaborations, which can inadvertently:

... lead to a perpetuation of conditions of self-exploitation and precarious labour common to the creative sector ... there is an ethical and economic question about managing sustainable relationships, as well as imagining what the needs and skills of the sector more broadly might be.

Having an awareness of the financial implications of collaborating at the beginning of a project is crucial to creating a robust, ethical and sustainable relationship.

The ethical issues revealed in the seminars extended beyond financial considerations, and boiled down to ensuring as far as possible that knowledge exchange relationships are non-hierarchical and represent a true collaboration, rather than involving one party advising the other. My own collaboration with Punchdrunk involved work on a creative output that Punchdrunk owned. I was faced with some unavoidable challenges due to the output being created in an external organization, in a different city. To attempt to mitigate the challenges, we designed our collaboration for my grant so that I would spend extended periods of time on secondment to the company, rather than simply join meetings remotely when they intersected with my research area. Secondments allowed me to be involved in a wider spectrum of development activities, and to participate in company meetings, both of which helped me feel like an equal collaborator rather than an academic adviser. From the artistic perspective, Rosling noted a similar desire to be involved in, or at least consciously invited into, the entire process, and recommended that non-academics are included in the early phase of a project to avoid creating the impression that they are simply brought in for public engagement at the end of a project. Clearly, similar concerns are evident on both sides of the equation. An ethical knowledge exchange collaboration is founded on principles of equality.

While the individual parties involved in knowledge exchange collaborations can work actively to ensure that their partnership is ethical, IP is an area where all presenters noted that they had little control. Although some partnerships did not formalize IP, as they assumed that the output would not generate any profits, for those that did, the process was not straightforward, and it was often handled through organizational contract teams, rather than through the collaborators. There was a sense that contributors were unsure of what was a reasonable division of IP, and how to defuse tensions surrounding the expectations of artists, who would usually own the IP of their creative work, and universities, who own the IP of their employees. Wood notes that this tension required her to develop *The Glass Ceiling Games*, a concept that had emerged from a fellowship as a Falmouth University academic, through her own company, Story Juice. She said:

Universities often want to own the IP of the artists who work for them, which can be a challenge creatively and commercially. I was aware the question of IP ownership was vital to get right if we wanted to partner with a publisher and release in the App and Play Stores. Publishers don't want the complications of split or university-owned IP. I could avoid this as a part-time academic at Falmouth with an independent studio. It was simpler in this instance because I'd originated the concept and then switched it to my company to make it. I've been in a multi-partner collaboration between two companies and a university previously where we had to split the IP after the fact, which was very complicated and not recommended.

Kidd and John managed to divide the IP, but noted that it 'was a wrangle':

We own the content. The museum would, if [it] was ever sold, the profits would go to the museum. The university then own the format ... It just never occurred to me that the copyright would be an issue down the line.

More clarity surrounding IP is needed for academics and creatives interested in collaborating, ideally from a neutral party such as Moreton's (2016) recommended creative producer, or otherwise from a research officer or similar who intervenes at a stage prior to a legal team drawing up contracts. A legal team may still tread a university commercialization line, however, recommending that the university owns the IP, and then offer artistic partners a non-exclusive royalty-free licence. Such a recommendation is often made on the premise of protecting the researcher's ideas, but it can come at the possible cost of compromising the sense of an equitable collaboration. As it stands, IP is a complex area where different parties have competing interests, and its division is often taken out of the hands of the actual collaborators. The process of dividing IP can risk destabilizing a fragile collaboration still in its infancy. Those negotiating IP need to be sensitive and realistic, rather than profit driven, a conclusion to which the authors of the REACT report also come, when they recommend that 'care should be taken to avoid aggressive position-taking [with respect to IP] at the early stages of creative collaboration' (Dovey et al., 2016: 9).

Encouraging collaboration

The purpose of the Knowledge Exchange and the Creative Industries seminar series was to share key learnings from current and/or recent successful knowledge exchange collaborations, with success judged in terms of realizing either a co-produced creative output and/or in terms of spurring on further knowledge exchange with formalized aims and objectives and financial or in-kind support. A further marker of the success of the showcased projects is that they all led to additional research outputs, meaning that the projects involved not only the exchange of knowledge for artistic creation, but also the co-creation of new knowledge. The research outcomes of three of the collaborations – Dawson, Hay and Rosling's; Bevan and Gray's; and Clarke and Speakman's – are documented within this special feature, while those of my own work and that of Kidd and John's collaboration are published elsewhere (Cole, 2021; Huws et al., 2019).

In addition to achieving the stated purpose of sharing key learnings from successful projects, however, there was a further by-product of the series, namely that it acted akin to the networking events mentioned in the section on 'Initiating and scaling a collaboration' above. The seminars attracted a diverse group of attendees, with many coming from outside my host university. The attendance pattern is no doubt in part due to the location of the series, given that South West England and Wales, especially Cardiff, are particularly renowned for their creative industries and for supporting knowledge exchange collaborations. Creative Cardiff's 2016 Mapping Report, for example, notes that the creative industries constitute a significant and growing slice of Cardiff's economy, and that two clusters of relevance to my series – namely music, performance and the visual arts, and film, television, radio and photography – have a volume of activity above the UK average (Lewis, 2016: 6, 10). Watershed's final report on the Network for Creative Enterprise includes a similar above-average statistic for South West England, noting that creative industry companies account for over 10 per cent of business in the Bristol and Bath area, and that the region's creatives 'are estimated to be 50% more productive than the UK average, and since 1999, there

has been a 106% increase in productivity in the creative industries across Bristol and Bath' (Moreton et al., 2019: 11). My focus on knowledge exchange projects that led to immersive outputs may have similarly driven attendance patterns, given that this is one of the highest growth areas within the UK's cultural industries: the UK Creative Industries Sector Deal (HM Government, 2018) estimated that the immersive content market would be worth over £30 billion by 2025, and pledged to invest £33 million in immersive technologies to ensure that Britain maintains a competitive role within this lucrative market. Nevertheless, there remain some other factors that may have encouraged the diverse attendance pattern, which are of relevance to those wishing to host similar events, regardless of theme or location.

First, the series was highly multidisciplinary, featuring speakers from disciplines from the arts and humanities through to engineering. The artistic collaborators who attended to share their experiences also represented several different creative sectors. Second, guest chairs for each seminar further injected a fresh perspective into the discussions each month, and built the national reach of the programme. Finally, by curating an event aimed at sharing best practice in, and key learnings from, knowledge exchange collaborations, the seminars worked to lead by example, and offered an alternative approach to the more practical 'how to' training courses that many institutions prioritize when attempting to encourage collaboration.

I would recommend a similar format to this seminar series for other institutions looking to encourage collaboration between creative practitioners and academic researchers. I suggest that would-be convenors take the following factors into account:

- Look outside your own institution. Over half the presenters at the Knowledge Exchange and the Creative Industries seminar series came from outside the University of Bristol. Seeing how other institutions support knowledge exchange endeavours was illuminating, and served to spark fresh ideas locally, as well as to demonstrate wider patterns of work. To widen the net outside one's own immediate circles, consider contacting university public engagement and knowledge exchange teams, or independent organizations such as regional creative clusters, to ask for suggested speakers.
- Investigate what budgets are available to support the seminar series. Consider budgeting costs for speakers' travel expenses, catering for a networking hour following each seminar, and travel bursaries for postgraduate students, the precariously employed and the unwaged. Paying speakers an honorarium, if budgets are available, is best practice. However, it is still possible for these seminars to take place with little or no financial support, particularly if done virtually.
- Programme multiple speakers for each session to attract a multidisciplinary audience and showcase a range of knowledge exchange styles and formats for your audience. Each of my seminars had three separate 'drawcards', including an expert chair and (usually) two separate partnerships. Programming mixed sessions in this way was integral to drawing a diverse audience.

Despite the differences in the form, scale and outputs of the collaborations, several features recurred across my series. My key recommendations for individuals wishing to initiate collaborations are:

- Be open to different methods of initiating a partnership. Do not hesitate to approach someone directly about a potential collaboration, but similarly do not be afraid of 'matchmaking'-style networking events. Both methods of partnership initiation can be equally successful, and neither determines a specific partnership trajectory.

- Budget carefully. Have an upfront discussion early on about both the monetary costs involved, and the expected in-kind contributions. When it comes to paying freelancers, be clear and realistic about the hours involved. Enable the artists to commit to the project by paying them competitively.
- Consider embarking upon a pilot project. The showcased projects that received later funding built upon a pilot project, and scaled it up to include additional partners, deeper knowledge exchange processes, or more ambitious output goals. A successful track record for the collaboration, rather than for the individual contributors, appears to be key.
- Learn a partner's/organization's culture and language. If you do not have access to a creative producer, consider adopting a three-pronged method of consequence scanning, language sharing, and writing a shared objective or mission statement at your first meeting.
- Develop a shared ethics policy.
- Discuss IP early on, and with a neutral adviser.

Underpinning all of these learnings are two in-built tensions. On the one hand, a pilot project or a track record behind the collaboration appears helpful to winning funding from a research council, and is work that all the collaborators discussed here willingly embarked upon, often without formalized support. On the other hand, these periods of collaboration raise ethical issues, including that HEIs may later benefit from this work through the REF, that early-stage ideas may have later IP implications not properly accounted for during the initiation phase, and that expectations and investments in the project may be unequal. The fact that both parties have vocational backgrounds facilitates the opportunity for collaboration, but it can mean that work is taken for granted. Having support for early-stage ideas, not only for expenses, but also to pay for one's time or a workload percentage, would partially negate this tension. Such support may solve the first tension, but it creates a second: formalizing a relationship is arguably in opposition to the need to nurture a relationship at the beginning of a knowledge exchange partnership, when parties are exploring potential and brainstorming ideas. Discussions about ethics, IP and workload commitment can be premature when testing the ground to see whether a collaboration may bear fruit. Transitioning from the nurturing phase to the formalizing phase is a balancing act, but one that this snapshot of successful partnerships involving HEIs in South West England and Wales indicates is crucial to creating robust, ethical and scalable collaborations.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the AHRC under Grant AH/S00453X/1, and has received ethical approval from the University of Bristol Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee (REF: 95122).

I would like to thank all the participants at the Knowledge Exchange and the Creative Industries seminar series for their generous engagement with the project, including speakers, chairs and audiences. I am particularly indebted to the contributors from whose transcripts I have quoted in this article, with their kind permission.

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