

THE HIDDEN STORY

Briefing for regional & university leaders

Cultural infrastructure is highly valuable, boosting the quality of life and civic harmony, as well as local economies. The creative industries are significant to the success of the UK economy, contributing £87.4bn GVA in 2015.¹ Universities play a key role in the success of the sector. In 2015-16 the benefits of over £46m of public money for research and knowledge exchange flowed through to the creative industries.

The Hidden Story research assessed the modes and impacts of university knowledge exchange with the creative industries.² This briefing summarises the report findings that have implications for regional and university leaders.

HOW DO THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND UNIVERSITIES DEVELOP CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE TOGETHER?

We are seeing a significant intensification of relationships between universities and creative and cultural industry enterprise at all levels. As local arts funding shrinks, universities are increasingly involved in supporting provision, often competing for national funding on behalf of their region. Universities also convene and service creative networks in cities and regions which can be as important as the subject specific knowledge or research approach that they bring to the table.

Given its importance and scale, it is vital that we have a common approach to evaluating the impact of this activity. This research proposes a standardised taxonomy for these activities, to provide the creative industries, policy makers, regional authorities and university leaders with a common language.

A NEW TAXONOMY FOR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Type 0. University Teaching, Learning and Enterprise Activity

The traditional role of universities as providers of learning infrastructures and facilities, and as educators of the next generation of practitioners. Here (Knowledge Exchange) KE is partially informed by research.

Type 1 (a). CPD

Updating skillsets for practitioners which recognise emergent roles and technologies within the sector - often supplemented by the employment of graduates with these skillsets (Type 0).

Type 1 (b). Participative Workshops, Conferences and Networks

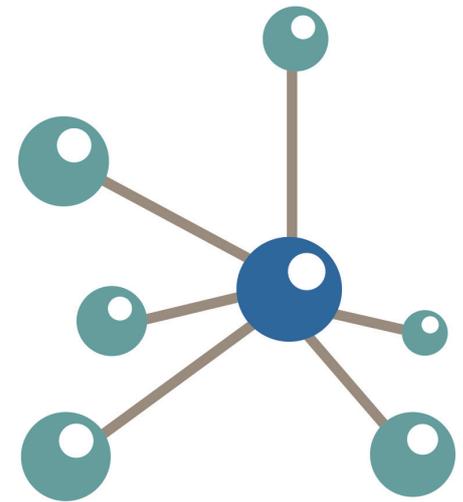
Largely focused on innovation, and co-curated by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in a knowledge partner role, these events provide a forum for the open exchange of knowledge and the cultivation of highly meshed networks.

Type 2. (a) KTPs/KE into Individual Organisations (incl. consultancy and contract research)

Predominantly process or technology led, intensive interventions result in significant organisation change, based around the exploitation of IP. Such impacts are largely restricted to the individual organisation due to commercial sensitivity.

Type 2. (b) KE into Creative Industry Sectors

Typically closed innovation, with HEIs as



intellectual, and often inter-disciplinary, partners alongside private sector investors; predominantly content, process or technology led.

Type 3. Commercialisation, licensing and spin-outs

Typically closed innovation, with HEIs as intellectual, and often inter-disciplinary, partners alongside private sector investors; predominantly content, process or technology led.

Type 4. Incubation and Digital Hubs

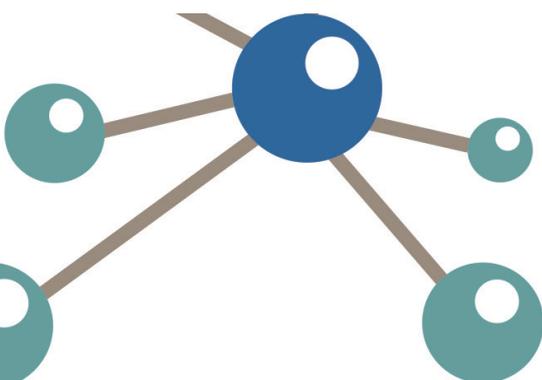
Characterised by significant localised infrastructural investment. Clustering is a key mechanism, and is dependent on the quality of facilities and incubators, and highly meshed interconnectivity between organisations. Such developments have a potentially high impact on capacity development, and are typically reliant on public funding with some private capital, with HEIs playing a key role as resource providers.

Type 5. Large Regional Cluster Developments

Characterised by substantial infrastructural ventures, typically coordinated by Combined Authorities with major anchor/beacon stakeholders, catalysing further public and private funding and/or inward investment. The focus is often on innovation capacity development within a specific value chain, via agglomeration mechanisms, typified by hub and spoke networks with HEIs as core knowledge/R&D providers, and in the case of larger clusters, serving a dual role as international ambassadors. Such approaches often trigger an influx of professionals in the creative industries, and can lead to gentrification and displacement effects.

Type 6. Cultural Consumption Channels

Typically focused on the development/exploitation of digital platforms – although these may embrace more physical forms such as touring exhibitions – these seek to increase access to (and monetisation of) creative and cultural offerings beyond a locale, including broadcast and downloadable



¹ DCMS Sector Economic Estimates 2017 (DCMS, 2017)

² Williams, A, Dovey, J, Cronin, B, Garside, P. (2017), *The Hidden Story: Understanding Knowledge Exchange Partnerships with the Creative Economy*. University Alliance

content. Such approaches typically capitalise on 'long-tail' economic models.

Type 7. Festivals

Bring together embryonic and established businesses and professionals in the creative sector; providing a platform for diverse offerings around key themes and kick-starting visitor economies. These typically adopt hub and spoke networks, with little connectivity between creatives, but have a potentially significant impact on regional economies through audience development, cultural tourism and associated economic multipliers.

Type 8. Iconic Builds and Place-making

Characterised by capital investments in iconic facilities which epitomise the brand values of a region and attract audiences and visitors. These contribute to place identity within the public environment, often reflecting heritage or contemporary themes. These have a low KE component, but typically house/host KE capability and activities, and may act as a catalyst for Type 12 community consultation projects.

Type 9. Curatorial Investigations

Typically rely on the (re)interpretation of collections to link art forms to contemporary issues, drawing on relevance to cultural identities, voices and issues, particularly for marginalised sub-cultures. Outcomes include exhibitions, archives and downstream community projects. Such projects are highly reliant on personal networks within (both cultural and practice) communities.

Type 10. Cultural/Artistic Commissions and Performances

Typically collaborative activities undertaken with, or reflecting on, communities (of practice, belief or co-location), and as such, rely on highly personal networks. These activities result in the creation of new works which are exhibited or performed, with the intention of promoting awareness and stimulating discourse and exchange.

Type 11. Arts and Wellbeing

As (12), but trialling interventions and exchanges based on consortia of HEIs, public health and third sector organisations providing access to patient, carer and community groups to reduce social cost.

Type 12. Socially and Culturally Inclusive Projects

Largely exploratory and low-cost interventions, such projects involve KE within specific communities or sub-cultures, promoting inclusivity, participation and empowerment, and mediated through public or third sector organisations – or simply providing space and venues for such activities – which increase social value. Such networks are highly personal and involve significant issues re, for example, trust.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING RESILIENT NETWORKS

Networks are capacitors for impact. A successful network is a system for increasing the productivity of both academic and creative industry partners. These ongoing porous networks of exchange and mutual R&D have a strong relationship with place-making understood in both its economic and cultural contexts as the conscious deployment of assets for regional advantage. Cultural vibrancy is frequently associated with wellbeing, economic development and urban success. Here university/cultural sector research projects can reflect and celebrate the identity of a city or region. They contribute towards the visitor economy and bring media attention.

Our research showed that successful regional creative ecosystems are characterised by:

- Co-creation between partners; where equal cross-disciplinary partnerships operate.
- Cross-sector collaboration between private, public and third sector agencies; including universities and regional creative networks.
- A strong value approach where sharing, generosity and openness were valued more highly than competition or self-interest; leading to high generation of new ideas and new start-ups.
- Attributes such as cheap creative spaces, meet up opportunities, co working opportunities and 'beacon attractors', i.e. lead names in the creative sector.³

The research findings recommend an approach by policymakers, regional leaders and universities to ensure these high-value network activities are supported⁴:

- Remove funding disincentives to undertake network activities.
- Ensure a continuous ladder of funding opportunities to allow burgeoning networks to grow and establish themselves.
- Ensure a diverse portfolio of funding awards that can reach the smallest companies.
- Help to build network resilience and to grow new clusters through development of creative leaders and by reinforcing meshed networks between universities and the creative industries.
- Develop new creative leadership curricula drawing on learning about successful collaborative behaviours.
- Universities and research infrastructure leads should improve the quality of the data about the knowledge exchange with the creative industries.

HOW CAN REGIONAL LEADERS AND UNIVERSITIES WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE MORE VALUE FOR LOCAL CREATIVE ECONOMIES?

The total investment in university projects in the creative industries was £255 million between 2011 and 2016 from large-scale public funders (not including QR funding, which cannot be traced in terms of its expenditure). Currently there are poor mechanisms for understanding the return on public investment however. Arts and Humanities research overlaps with the creative economy (Figure 1) but is not limited to this, as it generates far broader societal and wellbeing benefits.

The research proposes the development of an evaluative toolset – the Impact Compass – to be used by university and regional leaders. This will provide a 360° perspective on the impact and performance of a project or a portfolio of projects, to inform and shape the impacts of KE relationships and their contributions to the specific contexts of local creative industries.

The aim is to benefit communities of academics, practitioners, research managers and local stakeholders by harnessing knowledge exchange, and use this to inform the allocation of cultural resources to achieve social and economic benefits. This is manifest in metrics such as innovation and job creation, and makes regions more liveable and attractive places to residents, businesses and inward investment.

Through comparing the coding derived from our own interviews in the case studies above with codings derived from Researchfish and Gateway to Research (GtR) we were able to derive the following evaluative categories of impact:

- social and cultural cohesion;
- learning infrastructures;
- the fostering of innovation;
- wealth creation; and
- the creation of quality places.

These are shown in Figure 1, which illustrates the potential KE and impact spillovers between the creative economy, and the wider art and humanities. Research in other disciplines can also have creative economy implications.

³ Bristol and Bath by Design Report, pp146-7

⁴ Further detail in the accompanying briefing for national policymakers

USE OF THE CULTURAL IMPACT COMPASS TO ANALYSE THE FULL EXTENT OF IMPACTS IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

The influence of the Arts and Humanities is not restricted to the innovation/creativity agenda, the creative economy or cultural consumption (measured in terms of GDP), but extends to quality of life indices (measured by reductions in opportunity cost).

The research therefore identifies 32 impact parameters on an 'Cultural Impact Compass' which provide a sufficient and necessary set of cultural and creative impact markers. As in any ecosystem, outcomes are interconnected. Mapping projects onto this 'compass' representation provides a framework for analysing research impact, aligned both to core aims and to ancillary outcomes, fit with regional strategies, and for assessing trade-offs between parameters. Figure 2 shows test cases to indicate how the compass might be used.

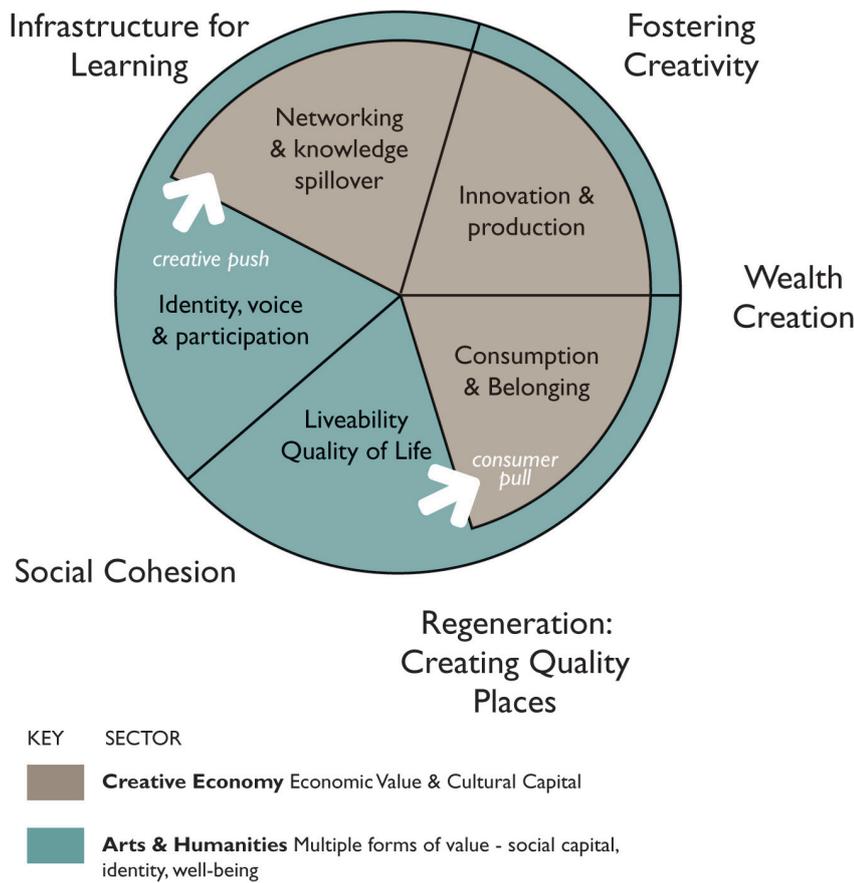


FIGURE 1: Mapping the creative industries onto the Arts and Humanities

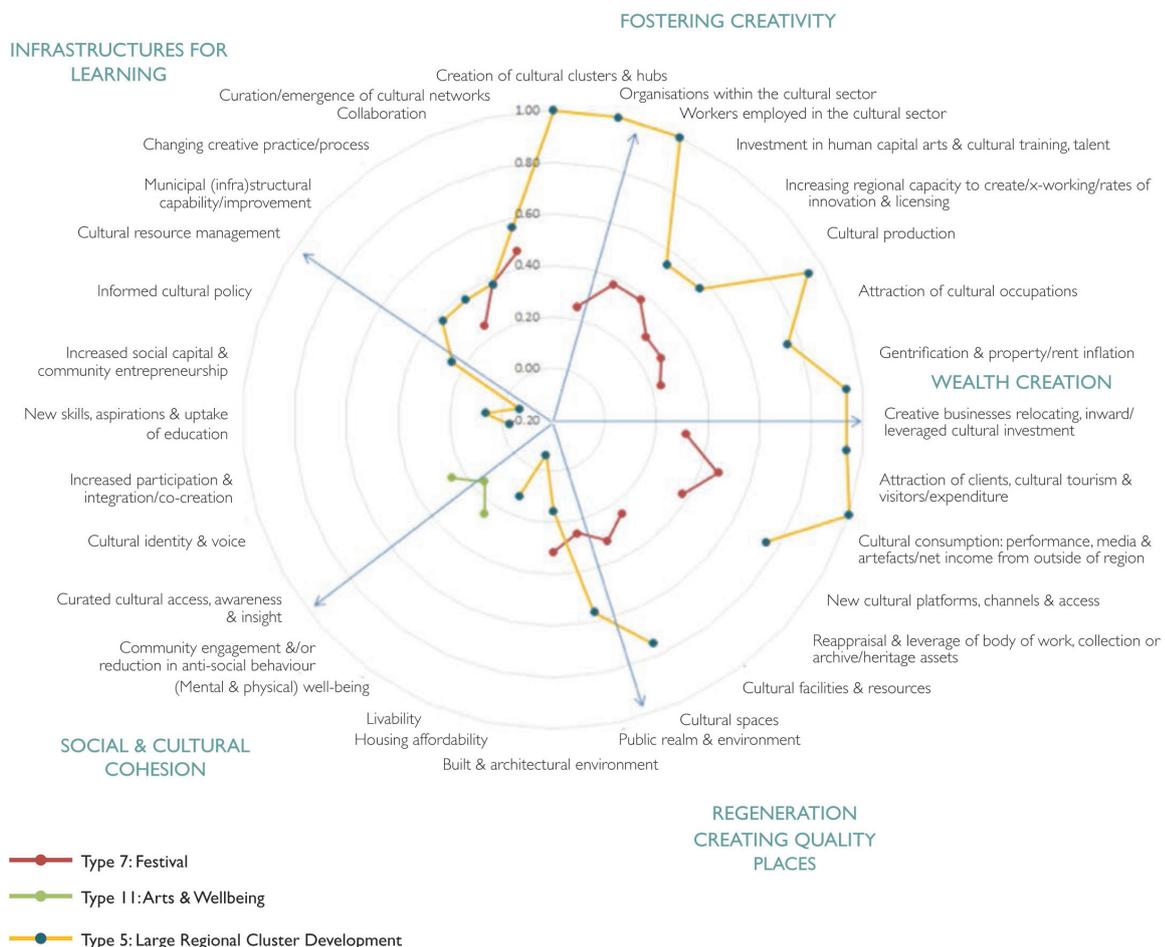
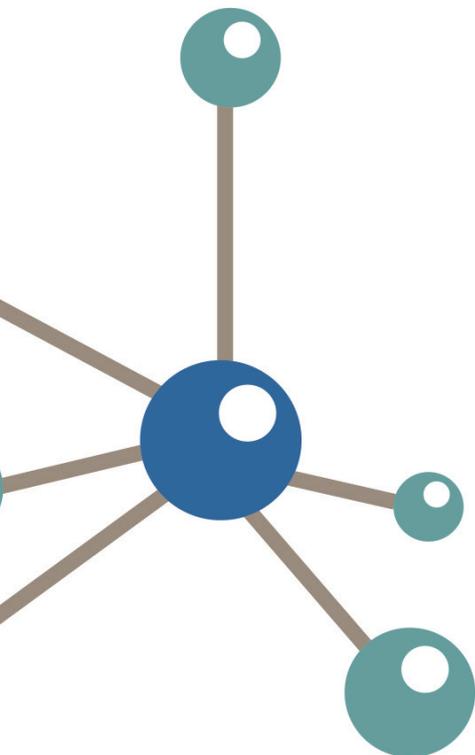
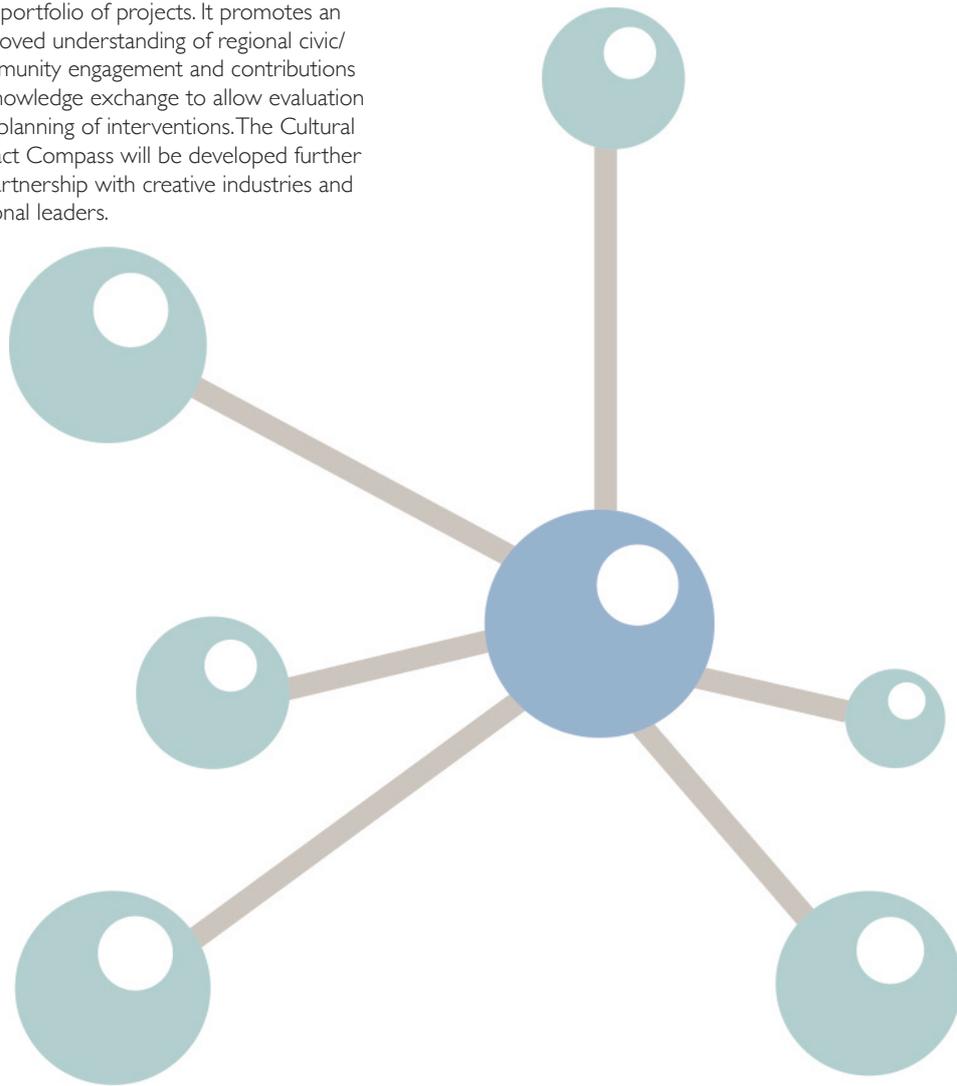


FIGURE 2: Qualitative compass evaluation of case studies by project

This demonstrates significant differences in impacts for these projects:

- in the case of the Type 5, for example, significant impact in clustering, capacity building and production outputs have led to an influx in creative talent, property inflation and gentrification on the right-hand side. This has in turn created a deficit in housing affordability to the lower left, leading to the displacement and marginalisation of communities;
- in contrast, the Type 11 is highly localised around well-being, inclusion and awareness raising, where its impact relative to funding is comparatively high along a single narrow dimension. However, the project lacks the duration or resources for impact to permeate other orientations, demonstrating little bearing on individual/community voice, social entrepreneurship, infrastructure or (the design) process;
- The Type 7 festival provides a relatively cost effective means of matching creative supply (through support for production and performance) with cultural demand (audience development, sales and cultural tourism). In regionally focused events, the development of supply might 'pull' investment in fostering and infrastructures to support nascent talent. Similarly, an influx in visitors might 'push' or stimulate investment in larger/improved cultural facilities and spaces, leading to increased place-making and quality-of-life. The festival is notionally scalable, and could be used as a tool for inclusivity (cultural identity and voice) or exclusivity (the attraction of cultural professionals from outside of a region), either of which strategy has implications on the nature of the audience sought.

The Cultural Impact Compass provides a toolset for research managers and university and regional leaders to gain a 360° perspective on their impact and performance of a project or a portfolio of projects. It promotes an improved understanding of regional civic/ community engagement and contributions of knowledge exchange to allow evaluation and planning of interventions. The Cultural Impact Compass will be developed further in partnership with creative industries and regional leaders.



FUNDED BY



Arts & Humanities Research Council

PROJECT PARTNERS



University Alliance

