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Accessing Cardiff's Hidden Creative Economy: Project Report

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Abstract

This research interrogates notions of working habits, aspirations, education and training opportunities held by the Cardiff region's "embedded creatives", i.e. those people performing jobs defined by the DCMS as creative who are occupied in organisations whose primary activities are not defined as creative by the DCMS. Its context is a digital revolution that has created opportunities for creativity to influence workplaces by increasing the usefulness of creative processes for competitive reasons. As creativity-valuing culture becomes more pervasive in daily life, so creativity can be seen as growing naturally into areas of work that have hitherto been less immersed.

Contents

1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research project addresses an under-studied but highly significant segment of the creative economy: "embedded creatives". These are people who perform creative jobs, but do so in organisations that are not part of the core creative industries, and not inherently creative in their focus. The creative economy comprises large and increasing numbers of creative workers inside and outside the creative industries, meaning that to fully understand it, both types of creative must be taken into account.

This is an exploratory and preliminary study, designed to rapidly outline a picture of the embedded creatives working in the Cardiff region, using qualitative interview methods with thirty-seven participants sourced prospectively and through local networks. This data is supplemented by a short survey that compliments it through questioning participant perceptions of their skills and professional networks.

The results of the project expose areas of opportunity for further engaging with embedded creatives that could be used to maximise their potential for Cardiff, and provide a rich texture of qualitative information to supplement the predominantly quantitative data that has already been produced in this area.

2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The overarching research interest of this project stems from a need to better understand the perceptions, aspirations and feelings of the "embedded creative" population in the Cardiff region. This group of workers has not been studied in depth before in the UK, and so this project serves as a preliminary interrogation of their feelings towards the label "creative", their sense of mobility, satisfaction and creative freedom in their jobs, and their access to training and peer networks. As its starting point, it takes definitions supplied by the UK Government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which defines both a range of possible creative jobs, and the creative industries which they partially exist within. However, though these definitions are essential and widely used in the predominantly quantitative research that is conducted in this area, in order to test the validity of these definitions against the perceptions of those they set out to describe, a more qualitative approach was deemed necessary.

Thirty-seven interviews were conducted with embedded creatives from the Cardiff region. Participants were interviewed using a question structure derived from a literature review, which was slightly evolved during the course of the data collection as the researcher became more familiar with the effectiveness of the questions. Sessions were audio recorded and the recordings transcribed on behalf of the researcher. The transcripts were then "coded", using NVivo 10 to perform a thematic analysis in which themes discussed in each interview were identified and applied to all transcripts. This coding structure is reproduced in an appendix below (Section 13.1), and served as the basis for the discussion of findings.

The literature addressed by this research falls into two broad categories: the quantitative studies conducted by organisations such as the DCMS or the innovation charity and think-tank NESTA, and various disparate qualitative studies that have been conducted in universities such as Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Australia, and others. The qualitative studies that have so far been produced deal mostly with those people working within the core creative industries, rather than the embedded creatives working outside it, which are the focus of this particular project. A recent book produced by scholars at QUT, "Creative Work beyond the Creative Industries" (Hearn et al. 2014), is notable for its focus on embedded creatives.

As definitions form the starting point for this investigation, and the foundation upon which the qualitative data collection proceeded, the following section will briefly state and discuss some of the most salient definitions.

3   DEFINITIONS

3.1 CREATIVE ECONOMY

The creative economy is defined by the DCMS (2016a p.36) as including "the contribution of all those employed in the creative industries as well as the contribution of those who are in creative occupations outside the creative industries [i.e. embedded creatives]."

3.2 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The creative industries are a subset of the creative economy. They are defined by the DCMS (2016a p.36) as "those industries with a high intensity of creative occupations. It includes those in creative and non-creative jobs within the creative industries and is a subset of the creative economy."

3.3 CREATIVE INTENSITY

From the DCMS (2016b p.7): "The number of creative jobs in each industry is divided by the total number of jobs in that industry. Industries (SIC07) which have more than 6,000 jobs and a "creative intensity" of more than 30 per cent are considered as candidates for inclusion [in the list of creative industries]."

3.4 EMBEDDED CREATIVES

Embedded creatives are the subset of the creative economy that contains people working creative jobs who are based outside the creative industries (as opposed to specialist creatives, who work within it). These people are therefore, according to DCMS definitions, those performing a job such as marketing, advertising, web design, etc. in an organisation sector whose creative intensity is below the threshold needed to qualify it as part of the creative industries.

3.5 SOC AND SIC CODES

"The Standard Occupational Classification is a means of classifying the occupation of a person according to the work they do and the skill level required." (DCMS 2016a p.36)[1]

"The Standard Industrial Classification [is] a means of classifying businesses according to the type of economic activity that they are engaged in." (DCMS 2016a p.36)

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[1] See here for latest versions, SOC2010 and SIC 2007:
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/index.html

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/standard-industrial-classification/index.html

4   LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature so far produced relevant to this area falls under two broad groupings: predominantly quantitative work conducted in the course of producing policy-relevant reports concerning the creative economy in the UK, its structures and sub-structures, size, growth, economy contribution etc.; and predominantly qualitative work that takes a more descriptive look at embedded creatives more specifically, which has mostly been conducted outside the UK.

4.1   QUANTITATIVE STUDIES

The vast majority of the quantitative and policy-influencing research that has been undertaking on the creative economy focuses specifically on the core creative industries, to the point at which it is possible to say that there is effectively no large-scale quantitative work in the UK on the economic or innovation implications of embedded creative employment, except where presented as a sub-section of broader research (e.g. in acknowledging the proportions of the creative economy made up by specialist, embedded, and creative industry support workers).

Those proportions are captured in the DCMS' Creative Industries Economic Estimates (2016a pp.16–17), published annually, which most recently describe the gross value added by embedded creatives as 37% and specialist creatives as the remaining 63% of the £133 billion total accounted for by the creative economy (in 2014). This total accounts for 8.2% of the UK economy, up almost 1% as a proportion and 25% in absolute terms between 2011 and 2014. In comparison with the latter figure, the UK economy grew 12% in the same period, so the creative economy in both its specialist and embedded forms is increasing its relevance to economic growth in the UK.

In order to improve the evidence base for understanding how creative activities contribute to innovation in the Australian economy, Higgs and Cunningham (2007 p.4) advanced their "creative trident", in which the creative economy is seen as comprising *specialist* creative occupations (creative; within the creative industries), *embedded* creative occupations (creative; outside the creative industries), and *support* occupations (non-creative; within the creative industries. This has proven useful since because it provides a clearer understanding of where creative value is being generated: for instance, Higgs, Cunningham and Bakhshi (2008 p.55) find that embedded creatives are more numerous than specialist creatives in the UK economy.

It is rare for quantitative approaches to be applied in this field on a local level; more typically such methods are used to create policy-directed documents on the state of the UK's creative economy

through various lenses. Bakhshi, Davies and Freeman (2015 pp.58–60) have used statistical data to provide sub-regional analysis of the UK's creative economy (in comparing it with the high-tech industry), which shows county-by-county variation across the UK in the proportions of workforces employed as specialist creatives, support workers (i.e. non-creatives in the creative industries), and embedded creatives. The purpose of this is not to provide narrative, but visual illustration of sub-regional variations. These are useful in showing areas in which creative economy employment is a particularly large share of the workforce (London particularly, the south midlands, Cambridgeshire, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh etc.), and could serve as a starting point for more narrative-driven explorations of working life in these areas.

Though the DCMS classifications used to construct economic estimates have proven successful and influential in the UK and internationally, Bakhshi, Freeman and Higgs (2013 p.21) point out that they suffer from a shortcoming: "the creative occupations which underlie the DCMS classification are not themselves defined rigorously."

This highlights one of the initial foundational problems that this project addresses: there is a lack of descriptive research in which creatives are asked (specifically those embedded within non-creative organisations) if they view their work as creative and if so, how. Is it important to them? Have they always wanted to work in this way? What value do they feel they are adding? These questions cannot substitute for the above, but they can substantiate and add detail to them, and apply locally in a way statistical approaches typically do not. Descriptive questions must be approached using a qualitative methodology.

4.2   QUALITATIVE STUDIES

The body of literature so far produced on embedded creatives is small in comparison with that produced on specialist creatives, however the work that does exist raises a number of questions that serve as the starting point for this research.

As mentioned above in the Project Overview, one of the key texts concerning embedded creatives is a recent publication, Creative Work beyond the Creative Industries by Hearn et al. (2014), which, after providing introductions to the foundational issues, includes several case studies of creative employment, although its perspective is mainly Australian as the book is a product of Queensland University of Technology.

Pagan and Rodgers (2014) look at embedded creativity in Australian healthcare, finding that software and digital content creators are strongly driving growth in that sector. Additionally, they

report that advertising and marketing, architectural and design, and music and performing arts occupations within Australian healthcare were becoming more numerous (over the first decade of the 2000s).

Rodgers (2014) examines embedded creativity in Australian manufacturing, and provides evidence that participants sometimes felt their input was not valued by their less creative organisations, reflecting a reliance on embedded creatives merely for *communicating* ideas, a trait also noted by Laaksonen (2012 p.19). This assumption is arguably borne out by the large numbers of advertising and marketing occupations in the sector.

Reflecting the widespread increase in roles for digital embedded creatives, Goldsmith focuses on this specifically (again, with an Australian perspective), and cites the common collective definition of the group as a particular problem, meaning its "dynamics, needs and potential are rarely considered" (2014 p.141).

Bennett et al. (2014) (academics in Perth, in collaboration with colleagues in Vancouver) present findings on participants' work, time and energy following a survey delivered in Perth. They relate their findings to the Creative Trident model outlined above, stating that, as Higgs, Cunningham and Bakhshi (Higgs et al. 2008 pp.34–35) acknowledge, the Creative Trident cannot capture the complexities of a single employee owing to weak resolution of industries (particularly in the UK), but that the in-depth survey approach can compliment it by revealing what lies beneath the data sets (Bennett et al. 2014 pp.170–71).

At the current point in time, the majority of the qualitative work on embedded creativity so far produced has originated in Australia, where the importance of design skills embedded within manufacturing processes is recognised by government: "[Design] is a critical enabler of productivity and innovation, and has been shown to play a significant role in the growth of firms and sectors" (Prime Minister's Taskforce on Manufacturing 2012 p.75).

In another contemporary publication, Hearn and Bridgstock ask what is the nature of the work done by embedded creatives (2014 p.43), and draw attention to a number of presumed differences they would expect to find between embedded and specialist creatives (2014 pp.52–54). These are reduced and reframed here in the form of the following questions:

- Are there/were there challenges in establishing one's creative working culture in a larger, non-creative environment?

- What types of people are in embedded creatives' professional networks?

- How do embedded creatives keep up with formal professional development needs?

- What kind of career possibilities are presented to embedded creatives?

- What kind of scope is there for radical innovation?

This list substantiates the need in academic literature to build a picture of the embedded creative initially in quite a broad way, by considering the types of jobs they do, the types of networks they form, and the sense of creative or career path freedom that they perceive in their work. This is a need that Hearn and Bridgstock (2014) frame from the outset in economic terms:

> …there are now detailed empirical studies, as well as a nascent theoretical base, to suggest that the transdisciplinarity which results from embedded cultural creativity is an engine for growth in the broader economy. Thus it is relevant to both policymakers and managers (2014 p.40).

Citing a lack of descriptive work on embedded creatives, Hearn and Bridgstock (2014) evoke that "nascent theoretical base" in the form of the concept of "culturalisation of the economy" (2014 p.44). This phrase refers to the shaping of modern corporations by an increased economic importance of goods with cultural components (2014 p.45), which is explained, in part, by Stoneman's (2010) idea of "soft innovation", in which the appeal of a good is said to be more important than its functional performance. Of particular interest here is that Stoneman posits soft innovation as being of equal relevance to organisations outside the core creative industries as it is to those within it, which makes it eminently logical that many of the participants interviewed for this project were found in marketing and communications jobs: these are the people who are theoretically engaged in strengthening the position of non-creative organisations in the "culturalised" economy.

Rodgers (2015 p.3) reasserts the paucity of qualitative work on embedded creatives, and also poses broad questions in the course of writing about jobs for creatives in Australian manufacturing, outside the creative industries (See also Rodgers (2014), where the author has a chapter covering the same area):

- Who are embedded creatives?

- What do they do?

- What are their career paths?

- How do they add value to industries they work in?

4 Literature Review

The link between the importance of the embedded creative and the importance of "soft innovation" is implied by one of the participants in Rodgers' study, who observes that embedded creatives differ from the engineers in their firm in their ability to "think outside the box, consider the big picture… [and] consider whether the product is appealing" (2015 p.10). The participant goes on to note the "unique expertise and knowledge specificity" that embedded creatives can develop over time in an organisation afforded by relative career stability[2], foreseeably something that a specialist creative would not be able to bring because they don't have the longstanding exposure to their client's potentially subtle needs.

"[Embedded] creatives", Rodgers reports, "bring an extra pair of eyes that can change things and create concepts." Her participant notes that "creativity and innovation is essential for survival", providing the view that embedded creatives are essential within structures of non-creative jobs as they bring the edge that can make a difference to the customer, the difference that again refers us to the "culturalisation of the economy" introduced above in Hearn and Bridgstock (2014 p.44).

Further to these points, Rodgers' data suggests that the embedded creatives she studied did not feel sufficiently valued, and that the importance of design and creative input are less well understood outside the core creative industries. According to Rodgers, promoting "dynamic capabilities" will allow employers in non-creative sectors to make the most of their embedded creatives to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. Teece (2007 p.1319) posits this sustainable advantage as depending on the organisation's dynamic capability to "create, extend, upgrade, protect, and keep relevant the enterprise' unique asset base."

Vinodrai (2006), while discussing the career paths of industrial and graphic designers in Toronto, raises some more specific questions related to issues of career mobility: "High levels of interim career mobility facilitate the transfer of (tacit) knowledge and practices, and this rapid circulation of skilled workers in the local labor market makes it critical to the support of high levels of innovation within the region" (2006 p.239). If embedded creatives are less career-mobile than specialists, are they less able collectively to innovate to the same extent? Relating to this in a UK example, Henry and Pinch (2000 p.195; 2002 p.139) talk about the transfer of skilled workers, and how it reproduces knowledge, norms, and practices through time. They refer to specialists working in "Motorsport Valley" in southern central England. Given a lower frequency of movement between jobs, their work

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[2] Career stability is one of the differences Hearn and Bridgstock (2014) expected to find between embedded and specialist creatives

raises the importance of understanding career mobility among Cardiff's embedded creatives. Do creatives therefore circulate fluidly through both the creative and non-creative industries, or are specialist and embedded creatives mutually exclusive, circulating, but only within their respective industries? Or, is there one group of specialists who circulate through the creative sector, and one group of embedded creatives who don't circulate much? Or some other combination?

Vinodrai (2006 p.254) found no clear agreement as to the detriment of working as an embedded compared with as a specialist, although her participants felt that working for certain "star" creative sector companies was more valuable. Therefore, for people in Cardiff who have worked as both specialists and embedded creatives, is there any clear advantage to one over the other? Does one place the participant at a disadvantage in terms of career advancement, or in terms of job satisfaction, creative freedom, security, etc?

Hearn, Swan and Bridgstock (2012 p.40) point to the role of education as a gateway into either specialist or embedded creative work. They suggest that most graduates want to specialise, seeing it as the intended outcome of their studies. Pathways into embedded work are not sufficiently revealed. These questions, consolidated in the next section, served as a starting point when designing the format of the interviews that made up the majority of the primary data for this project, linking the enquiry process performed here to the gaps in knowledge previously identified by other international scholars.

5 PRELIMINARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature suggests a number of questions that this project could address, which serve as a starting point for the design of the data collection structure. This will generate data in line with the areas of interest identified by other scholars. The questions can then be refined (see Section 8) once the potential of the data body is understood more fully, allowing more case-specific questions to be addressed.

This is a mixture of questions posed by the literature and by members of the Creative Economy Team. It will not be possible to answer all of these questions in the project due to constraints, so when the refined list (See Section 8, page 22) is posted and related to this list, the differences will be highlighted and used as a basis for the further work section (See Section 10.5, page 65).

From the initial project proposal and colleague recommendations:

- How can Cardiff's embedded creatives be better identified, understood and engaged with?
- How familiar are Cardiff's embedded creatives with the work being carried out in this area by the University?
- What professional networks (physical or digital) do they currently make use of?

From Bakhshi, Freeman and Higgs (2013 p.21):

- There have been DCMS definitions of creative occupations, and there have also been methodological revisions proposed, but there hasn't been much in the way of asking people (particularly creatives embedded within other working cultures) if they view their work as creative, and if so, how.

From Hearn and Bridstock (2014 pp.52–54):

- Do embedded creative experience challenges in establishing their creative working culture in a larger, non-creative environment?
- What types of people are in their professional networks?
- How do embedded creatives keep up with formal professional development needs?
- What kind of career path or possibilities are presented to an embedded creative?
- What kind of scope is there for radical innovation?

From Vinodrai (2006 p.254):

5 Preliminary Research Questions

- For people (in Cardiff) who have worked as both specialists and embedded creatives, is there any clear advantage to one over the other? Does one place the participant at a disadvantage in terms of career advancement, or in terms of job satisfaction, creative freedom, security, etc?

- Do creatives circulate fluidly through both the creative and non-creative industries, or are specialist and embedded creatives mutually exclusive, circulating, but only within their respective industries? Or, is there one group of specialists who circulate through the creative sector, and one group of embedded creatives who don't circulate much? Or some other combination?

From Hearn, Swan and Bridgstock (2012 p.40)

- Pathways into embedded creative work for creative graduates are not sufficiently revealed. To what extent is this true of Cardiff's embedded creatives, and what are its implications?

6   RECRUITMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

Participants were targeted in organisations that conduct work that places them outside the creative industries, using a mixture of phone calling and emailing. Initially, networks of people already known to the Creative Economy Team were leveraged, and these were supplemented by prospective recruiting. This resulted in a cohort of participants that were mostly based in marketing, public relations (PR), and communications roles, with a few in addition who have web and graphic design skills. This group numbered thirty-seven members, and was recruited and interviewed over a period of approximately twelve weeks. Sitting, semi-structured interviews were conducted with them, using a question structure derived from the initial literature review and agreed with more longstanding members of the Creative Economy Team. This structure was minorly revised during the first few interviews as certain questions identified themselves as unhelpful. In all cases, flexibility was offered to the participant to go off topic to a certain extent, in order to explore themes that connect with those of primary interest, and to allow extra salient dimensions to emerge where possible. Interviews were conducted in a range of venues around the city: meeting rooms, where available, on organisation premises, university meeting rooms, and occasionally coffee shops.

In addition to this, a short questionnaire was created using Google Forms, the purpose of which was to retread some of the themes of the interview sessions so that the participant base of the project could be broadened, both during the project duration and after it, if required, and to add some quantitative information to the interview data that could serve to illustrate it and emphasise relevant points. The researcher had not initially intended to perform a questionnaire in addition to the qualitative data collection, but time was identified to do this within the schedule, so it was created using Google Forms and distributed. Although not the main focus of the data collection process, the responses, which included a number of descriptive answers that thematically overlapped with the content of the interviews, proved an interesting alternative form of information. Additionally, the questionnaire allows the data to be collected from participants who were impossible to reach in person, it ensures complete parity in terms of questions, which may be useful in certain specific instances, and it also provides a platform for another researchers to continue contributing to this work after the project has ended.

As the questionnaire is ongoing at the time of writing, and the data from it only very limited, the discussion has not been directly based on an analysis of it, however a transcript of the questions is appended.

6 Recruitment and Data Collection

In May 2016, just after the completion of the final interview, a lunchtime seminar was put on for the cohort of participants in order to thank them for taking part, present to them some information about the wider work of the team and its connection to the project, and hence their involvement, and to validate some of the preliminary findings that had emerged from the data analysis at that time. Owing to circumstances this event also served to introduce two new participants to the study, both of whom made valuable contributions. The purpose of this was to present the method used for deriving the codes, and to use the topics identified through the analysis process as prompts to instigate a group discussion. In this way the validity of the process could be tested by returning to the people whose opinions it was intended to represent. The group found the interim analysis interesting and validated it by giving written and spoken responses to the thematic areas that asserted their relevance to their work, and were in agreement with the sentiments of the original interview sessions, while providing clarification and further ideas in several areas.

7   IDENTIFICATION OF KEY THEMES

The thematic headings used to arrange the findings arose from the creation of affinity diagrams that show groupings of coded content (i.e. similarities in the things being discussed by the participants). The way these have been derived is shown below.
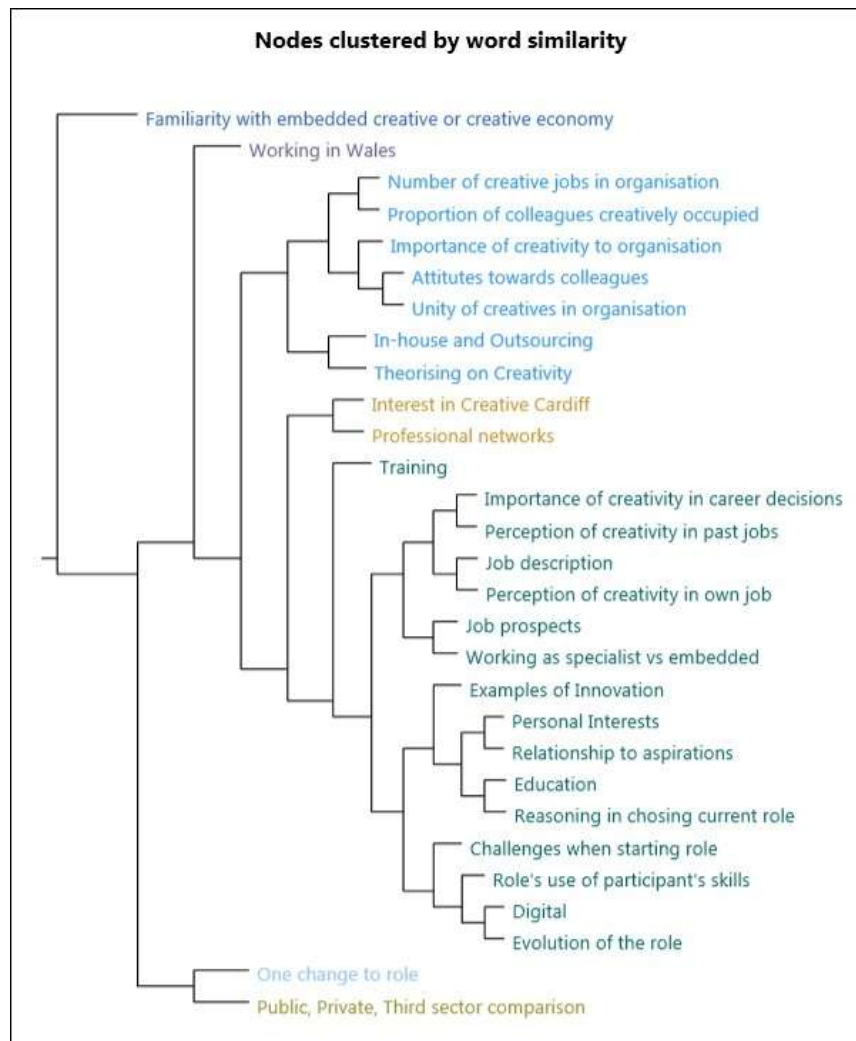
This first diagram contains all the codes. The affinity diagram is an output from NVivo, the software used for the analysis in this project.

The affinity diagram shows codes grouped together according to the similarity of their content (i.e. what each participant was saying about that subject).

The colour coding is user-specified, and allows the result to be easily divided up into sections. In this case, there are three main sections that appear to be of interest, as well as a number of "miscellaneous" codes that largely lie outside the general flows of the discussions (respectively: the participant's familiarity with the terms "embedded creative" or "creative economy"; particular aspects about working in Wales; changes that participants would like to implement in their work, and; comparisons drawn between work in the public, private, and third sectors). Removing these "standalone" codes, for the sake of clarity, reveals a smaller group, which can then be better understood.

Nodes clustered by word similarity

This second affinity diagram allows the remaining codes to be shown. They are arranged here into five groups, for simplicity. As can be seen, sections in which the participant was discussing training largely stand apart from the other subjects.

By comparison, the purple group shows a subject area that was approached from many different angles by the participants. Considering the light blue, orange, green, and dark blue groups to be self-contained research themes, we can now unpack the purple group more thoroughly.

Nodes clustered by word similarity

- Importance of creativity in career decisions
- Perception of creativity in past jobs
- Job description
- Perception of creativity in own job
- Job prospects
- Working as specialist vs embedded
- Examples of Innovation
- Personal Interests
- Relationship to aspirations
- Education
- Reasoning in chosing current role
- Challenges when starting role
- Role's use of participant's skills
- Digital
- Evolution of the role

The final of the three affinity diagrams used here shows only those codes appearing above in the purple group. They are here grouped into four subgroups.

The four shown here, with the additional four shown in the previous diagram, make up an arrangement of eight interconnected themes, with several additional themes presented as standalone (possibly reflecting limitations in the interview structure).

These diagrams are not intended to provide hard-and-fast "proof" of any particular connections between codes, but rather are indicative. They show only how similar the content of participant conversations is when each particular researcher-applied code is present. In other words, when two codes are adjacent on a diagram, it suggests that when participants were talking about either one their language was similar. This provides a simple rationale for understanding how the codes can be arranged in higher order groups or code families for the purposes of structuring a discussion about them.

These eight thematic areas are summarised under the following headings in no particular order:

- Creative colleagues and their importance to the organisation
- Issues of in-house vs. outsourcing
- Remaining in contact: professional networks and Creative Cardiff
- Training
- Creativity in one's career
- Job prospects and issues of embedded vs. specialist employment
- Change and the digital

The next important step is to determine which of these eight groups are the most important. Owing to the extent of the primary data gathered and the constraints of the project schedule, it is

necessary to focus on those that are most significant. For that reason, the codes were first arranged according to the number of times they are used to refer to passages of text. Those in the top fiftieth percentile were selected (i.e. those that appear at least half as often as the most frequently used code).

The most common codes were then tabulated against the above eight thematic areas in order to present a picture of where they were occurring. Thematic areas that score poorly here, although they may be relatively self-contained, are clearly also of only marginal interest – interesting to certain participants, but not brought up again and again as is the case for the more central themes. These are presented as follows:
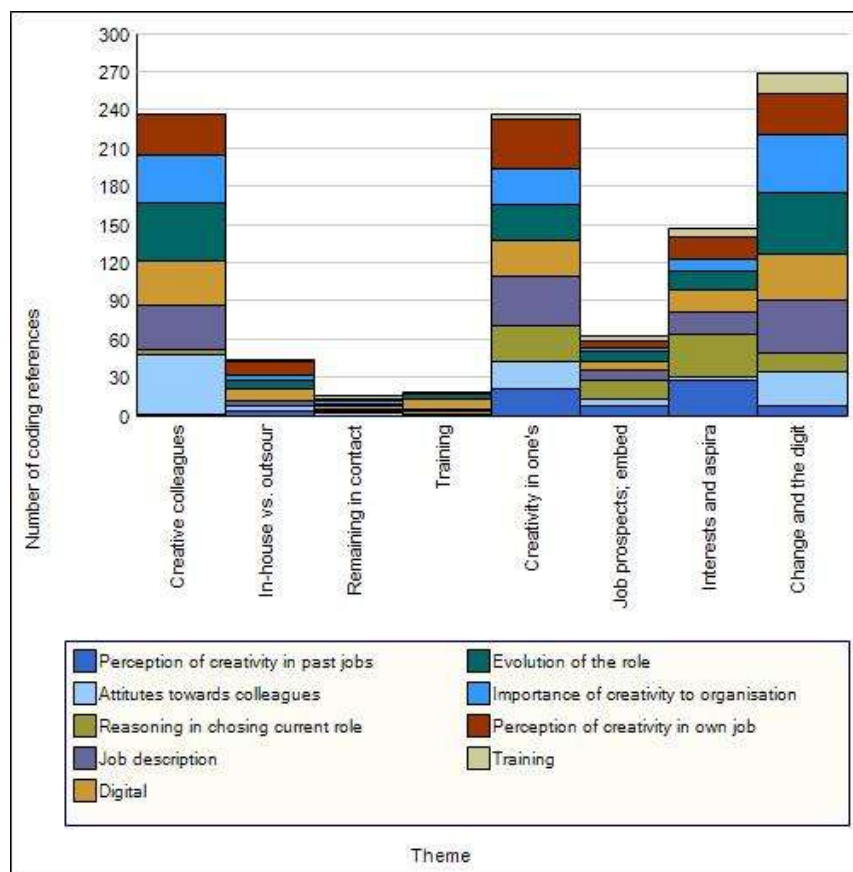
The graph identifies four thematic areas as being of particular interest: creative colleagues, creativity in one's career, interests and aspirations, and change and the digital.

This therefore provides a rationale for focusing discussion on those themes that contain the most commonly discussed issues to Cardiff's embedded creatives. These four themes can in fact be further simplified, as they can be grouped into two pairs that approach two themes from slightly different angles:

- First emerges a discussion of the digital revolution and the effect it is having on the jobs of embedded creatives, how they relate to and work with their colleagues, and how this embedded network is used by the company. This comprises both the "change and the digital" and the "creative colleagues" groups shown above.

- The other two, "creativity in one's career" and "interests and aspirations" also combine to make one more logical discussion, which in this case would look at the career history of the cohort and relate it to self-conceptions of creativity, personal values, and how they become expressed, or otherwise, in a career over time.

These two groups therefore form the main categories under which the initial findings of this project are presented.

8   Key Themes and Refined Research Questions

From the above two identified research themes, taken in conjunction with the literature that has so far been produced on this area, the following research questions can be raised in order to better frame the findings.

These are supplemented by a third theme, which more specifically targets the needs of the Creative Economy Team, as outlined in the initial project document. The following research questions overlap with the initial, literature-generated ones as far as possible, but they are necessarily a product of the collected data, meaning that certain questions could not be tackled. These gaps are therefore identified below in the section of possible further work avenues.

Theme 1:

- How are increases in digital skills and digital communication methods impacting the role of the embedded creative? (See page 24)
- Is this affecting their theoretical position specialist holders of creative skills within non-creative organisations? (See page 31)
- Is this affecting their relationships with their colleagues, and the ways in which work is split among them? (See page 34)
- If so, is this reconfigured embedded creative "network" understood and used differently by the organisation? (See page 38)

Theme 2:

- How creative are embedded creatives? To what extent to they view their work as creative? (See page 41)
- How important is the ability to exercise creative skills when the participants are looking for a new job? (See page 43)
- To what extent do the aspirations and interests of the participant lie in creative endeavours, and to what extent is creative work merely a process through which more authentic aspirations and interests are revealed? (See page 46)
- To what extent do the participants pursue "radical innovation" in their work, and to what extent is creative thinking simply a means to accomplish the usual business of the organisation? (See page 49)

Theme 3:

- What professional network opportunities do Cardiff's embedded creatives currently use? (See page 51)
- How could Creative Cardiff better support Cardiff's embedded creatives? (See page 54)

9 FINDINGS

9.1 *EMBEDDED CREATIVES IN THE CHANGING DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS LANDSCAPE*
How are increases in digital skills and digital communication methods impacting the role of the embedded creative?

Goldsmith (2014) focuses particularly on the significance of increasing numbers of digitally-literate creatives in non-creative organisations. The importance of digital skills was reflected in the Cardiff conversations, so the relevant findings are presented as follows.

The first important aspect to acknowledge is that, although digital skills have been consistently growing in influence within creative work processes, their uptake is not yet complete: we are still living in a society that is transitioning to digital acceptance, as is reflected by policy focuses over the last few years on digital infrastructure, rather than content (Goldsmith 2014 p.128).

> P[3]:   There's an argument that digital is being seen as, 'We need to do this for everything, this is the answer to everything' … but, even as a digital champion, I disagree with that … because, if we're trying to reach those who don't have access to the internet, why are we using digital? We need to look at different avenues of communication … and that's where, in my mind, creativity comes in.
>
> *Unnamed, Social Media Officer, Unnamed organisation*

The role of the embedded creative has various dimensions that digital developments, and a discourse about their uptake, apply to. The above quotation begins by stating at the outset that digital is still seen (here in a public-facing setting) as being one of several strategies that are used to reach an audience. As the participant points out, large proportions of the population in Wales are not online, which immediately precludes them from the reach of most digital marketing or communication channels. Digital is not in this case a panacea, and embedded creativity should not necessarily be only about digital, but rather about responsiveness and adaptability.

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[3] In all interview excerpts "P" denotes the words of a participant and "I" for the words of the interviewer

The limits of digital saturation in communication are also expressed in the following business-to-business context:

P: [Technical] product brochures, people still want them. Often they're done on the website. There's still this desire to have something which is a dedicated document. Some people prefer to use a website and click down to find the most specific information, other people like to have a physical copy. That's declined by at least two thirds, in terms of how many we print, but there still is demand for printed material… [Social] media is still not particularly strong. I think you need to have a presence, but we don't see big numbers, we don't see big enquiries…

[…]

There are those that have resisted and there are those that have adopted the digital revolution, they've embraced it.

John Dunnington, EuroClad Ltd. (Construction)

Here, although switches to digital formats for conveying product information have been extensive, some subtleties are also presented: online content is provided that is simply digitised versions of offline copy (e.g. PDFs); there is still some print material in use despite the changes; social media hasn't (so far) transformed selling business-to-business; some companies have embraced digital, but not all.

The above quotations are suggestive of a communications environment that has changed dramatically, but not wholesale, and continues to change. Part of this change has been the relationship to mainstream media channels, which were previously relied upon for getting messages out from certain organisations (particularly charities).

P: Well we used to be story sellers, we used to identify stories and then take them elsewhere, usually to a magazine or a newspaper and hopefully a reporter would either come along and do the work, the creative work, based on our judgement and our selling in, or we'd help prepare a feature or a story. Now we've gone from being story sellers to story tellers, our own story tellers.

Unnamed, Media Communications Manager, Unnamed Organisation (Charity)

In the above quotations, the job being done by the embedded creatives is seen to have changed. Social media have allowed not only the creation of narratives to take place inside organisations – even small or poorly funded ones – but also their dissemination. This has directly altered the role being done by the embedded creative, as shown:

P: We've got a digital storyteller now

          […]

          It's a brand new role, it's one of the… first storytellers within the charitable sector as far as I'm aware, and um, yeah he goes out, he speaks to anyone and everyone who's used our services, because one of the big things we've found is that people really get on board once they can see the difference that it's made to somebody.

Luke Merlini, PR and Communications Manager, Tenovus (Cancer support charity)

This reveals a new type of embedded creative job made possible by the digital. Only a creative could do this role as it requires creativity by definition. The applications for this do not only relate to the charity sector. The following example references work being done by the Office for National Statistics on storytelling using statistics.

P: [A] lot of information staff are now working with stats in a more creative way. I know the Office of National Statistics has done a lot of stuff on storytelling with stats and obviously a lot of people create infographics now which is a slightly more creative way of displaying statistics rather than the more traditional way…

Rachel Lewis, Communications Manager (Digital Lead), Unnamed Organisation (Healthcare)

The implication is conveyed in many of the conversations with embedded creatives that digital technologies have achieved two main potentials: they give the creative more control over the creative process by allowing more steps of it to be subsumed into their role; they also allow for more potential solutions to a communication challenge, and the rate of change means that

new possibilities are constantly being created. Arguably, this augments the intensity of the creative process.

When one participant talks of the change that has occurred in their role over a number of years, from initially being in charge of essentially beautifying Microsoft Word documents to actually creating digital content, the following explanation is offered:

I: [Is] there anything in particular that's caused that change...?

P: I think it's probably a few different sorts of things over time, it was sort of, recognising – I suppose there were a couple of failed projects, that sort of make you realise that things are not quite, that the people that you think would be reading information, or accessing things in a certain way, um, actually were not, so something's gone wrong there in terms of our understanding of users [A], our end users, um – I suppose, development of more sort of digital information and the need for that to inform things, that sort of has – influenced it [B]. A reduction in budgets as well probably had a massive sort of influence on that [C], and – I suppose, now, from senior management, there is more acceptance of, I suppose the ideas are offered from the team as a whole as, to look for things, because you're often looking for sort of more efficient ways of working [D], and we sort of base everything that we do on research. Whereas before I think the specialists in the-, of- - subject areas as opposed to communications or creative things perhaps had more influence in that sort of whole thing [E].

Charmine Smikle, Senior Communications Officer, Care Council for Wales (Regulator)

The participant raises five interesting, interconnected points here in suggesting why the job has changed in light of the evolving digital sphere. They point first to failures in the methods that were known; print-based communications projects lost their effectiveness [A]. Secondly, the participant raises the point that communication in primarily digital channels was probably connected to this [B]. Budgets have fallen over this period, meaning communication is both more important, and must be conducted with fewer resources [C], meaning there is an increasing organisational emphasis on finding efficient ways of working, in other words, in

allowing employees to innovate on a more individual level [D]. This places the job of creating and communication a technical document relatively more into the arena of the embedded creative than would previously have been the case, when a technical subject specialist would have exerted more influence [E].

The evolving emphasis on the communications or marketing creative as a source of ideas, rather than as simply a conduit for the ideas of others, has brought with it a continuous need to be familiar with a range of creative tools and platforms.

> P: If I didn't have the skills to make films and edit and stuff, we wouldn't have been able to do that because there's no budget.
>
> I: Where did you get those skills from?
>
> P: I did some training. When I was in my last job
>
> *Jo Berry, Communications Officer, Welsh Treasury (Government)*

In some situations, the course of action appears to be to learn skills on the job where one can because there's insufficient budget to upskill employees or to employ a specialist, whether as an agent or as another embedded creative. In the case of the above participant, movement between jobs fuels innovation. They wouldn't have had the skills needed unless they'd learnt them on a training course on their previous job, then moved jobs and brought those skills into a new application.

> P: It's sort of not where I thought I'd necessarily be [leading the digital work] but because I sort of developed the knowledge and the skills and sort of led most of the things it sort of become, and it's sort of more important now that it's sort of most of my job at the moment…
>
> I: And that's not something that you predicted when you started the job, I suppose?
>
> P: No, not really
>
> *Charmine Smikle, Senior Communications Officer, Care Council for Wales*
>
> *(Regulator)*

9 Findings

The participant highlights that they did not deliberately set out to find this job all the way through their career; rather, it was something they moved into progressively through gaining the right skills and taking a lead. It was not a case that they predicted print would die out and digital would become progressively more important, and therefore directed themselves towards it.

In subverting the traditional communications route of technical content creation within an organisation, followed by formatting into a releasable document of some sort, before release through print channels (mail, press releases etc.), digital technologies – particularly social media – are influential primarily because they allow organisations to establish closer and more customised links with audiences. This brings a risk, however, which recurs in discussions with marketing and communications employees, relating to the balance that must be struck between allowing employees universal access to the messages that emerge from the organisations, and the need to control and filter these messages. Evidently, this has profound implications for the job being done by embedded creatives in communications.

> I: You mentioned before that your job might change due to the change in digital technologies. This leans towards democratisation and access. Everybody has access to tools that allow them to be creators of content and sharers of content, could I have your thoughts on the implications of that for your role?
>
> P: I'm always amazed there isn't more of that. I think generally civil servants don't think that way.
>
> […]
>
> I think the organisation itself doesn't help with that either. You have to have special permission to get on to Facebook and they try and shut down ways of sharing information outside so it makes our life difficult sometimes. It's good because there are organisational messages head of comms [communications] wants to keep consistent.
>
> *Jo Berry, Communications Officer, Welsh Treasury (Government)*

The interesting – in some senses contradictory – situation occurring here is that for reasons of security not all employees are able to be content creators and sharers, even though that is

increasingly the communication landscape used by the general public, and indeed in other organisations where security is less important. The implication is that the communications team becomes a "gatekeeper" filtering, moderating and coordinating the message that emerges from the organisation.

> P: [Now] you're more of an enabler to help your staff to communicate using social media, so although you might have your corporate social media account, lots of people within the organisation can just use social media, whereas previously it very much would have been, you know, you would come to your comms [communications] team and they would do all that kind of thing for you, so communications is much more of an enabling role now.

Rachel Lewis, Communications Manager (Digital Lead), Unnamed organisation (Healthcare)

This organisation presents a slightly different view on the matter. Here, the ability of the (mostly non creative) employees to communicate to some extent is welcomed; the communications team is not seen as being the only arbiter of that message, as they perhaps would have been in the past.

> I: When you put that [content creation of an individual] at the bottom of an organisation as it were coming upwards and you have the traditional, perhaps, model of communication which would be particularly top-down, maybe the communications people are the ones who are trying to balance those two forces?

Unnamed, Media Communications Manager, Unnamed organisation (charity)

The final quotation is from the interviewer, rather than the participant, made while reflecting on this question with a communications manager from the charity sector. The embedded creatives in the communications team can be conceptualised as existing between two pulls: that of the technological and cultural potentials for democratic, unfiltered communication from an organisation's employees, and that of the need to control and moderate messages into something "official". The balance of these needs has implications for the relationship of embedded creatives to their colleagues, at least as far as communicating a message is

concerned. Should these embedded creatives have sole creative licence over the message produced by the organisation, or should other employees also have creative influence? If this creative activity is permeating an entire organisation to a certain extent, at what point is one said to be "creative", and hence too "embedded"?

Are increases in digital skills and digital communication methods affecting embedded creatives' supposed position as specialist holders of creative skills within a non-creative context?

As the demands communication functions place on embedded creatives have evolved in light of the digital revolution, so too have the relationships between embedded creatives and their other colleagues.

> I: Has that changed the structure of the team at all?
>
> P: It has because we've had to get somebody in specifically to look after our website… that's why there are five [embedded creatives] in [company location]. Two of them are working on the website, that's all they do, work on websites. They don't really do anything else, and developing the app… So we've had to take on new staff with new skills, because we didn't have anybody in the company who really had those skills. You know, we all know a little bit about the internet, don't we, but knowing a little bit about something is not how you could run a website, for instance. And that website is constantly changing, it's being updated… [The] nature of my job has changed, even with the nature of ourselves and the media. Years ago, you would write a press release, you'd send it out in the post with a picture … you'd send it off to the newspapers. We don't do that anymore. [Everyone] else is doing it [digital], so you've got to keep up with what everyone else is doing otherwise you get left behind.

> *Unnamed, Corporate Communications Officer, Unnamed organisation (electricity distribution)*

The participant raises several points here. Over time, they point out, the structure of the communications team has changed. This is because there is a skills gap between someone who "knows a little bit about the internet" (i.e. someone who's been brought up with digital

tools and is generally comfortable with them – often a "digital native") and someone who has the technical ability to create web and app-based content. This has led to positions being specifically made for creatives who have this ability. The participant concludes by observing that "everyone else" is doing this too, meaning that it must be the strategy in their organisation in order to remain competitive.

The increased reliance on the creative activities associated with communication has allowed some embedded creatives related to them to remain in relatively sole possession of responsibility.

> P: There was someone, when necessary, would do it … and there was someone before me who … we were redoing the website, that was her project … we got another company to do the structure of the website, we just needed to log on … put whatever content we needed. The design of it kind of pre-empted that there would be no-one here that would be doing the designs. Luckily, I managed to learn some coding to be able to do that now, so I can do a lot of the work, visually … putting my own images and whatever I want on there.
>
> *Unnamed, Marketing Executive, Unnamed organisation (office equipment supplier)*

Above, the embedded creative is put in a position of power by being able to take creative control over the digital output of the office. This has occurred because most people do not have access to coding knowledge; the relative rapidness of the change has allowed enterprising creatives to retain a position of specialism among their colleagues. Here we see evidence of a possible striation among those termed "embedded creatives": it is a vague term, insufficient in some senses for accurately describing the range of work being done, partly because it is difficult to delineate activities that can be termed "creative", and partly because among those people who are clearly engaged in creative work, some will be making use of far more technical skills than others. For instance, one embedded creative may be in possession of advanced programming skills that enable them to directly edit web content or create applications, whereas another performing ostensibly the same job might not. While both would be considered embedded creatives, and both might even have the same job title, the work engaged with and the relationship the employee has with their colleagues, and the

relationship between in-house and outsourced work in the organisation, may be quite different. This is explored further in Section 10.4 below.

I: Is it possible to speculate on how it's going to change in the future?

P: I think there is definitely a place to have somebody particularly involved in sort of some of the web and new web type things… 'Cause I don't think, as the team is at the moment, we don't have the capacity necessarily to have all of those skills.

Charmine Smikle, Senior Communications Officer, Care Council for Wales

(Regulator)

Similarly, where the embedded creative, or the team concerned with creative digital activities, has not been able to keep fully abreast of changes in the technology landscape, there may be a need within the team for someone to be employed specifically for certain functions (web design, in the case here). They see the current team as having a potential skills shortfall because the future may bring more demands than can otherwise be met.

P: [Social media has] become a big part of our job … it was never a part of the job before… it's a new skill you've had to learn. And obviously, you have to be very careful what you put out on Twitter… you have to be very choosy about your words and about the way you say things… not everybody's allowed to put anything on Facebook, only the communications team and the contact centre staff are allowed to do that. Obviously, we can't stop the staff having their own accounts, that's up to them what they do in their free time, but we do ask them to be very mindful about what they say and what they agree with and what they share because people can form an opinion…

Unnamed, Corporate Communications Officer, Unnamed organisation (Electricity

distribution)

Learning how to use social media in a business capacity is very different on a technical level from learning to code (and coding in itself can mean a variety of different things), but it does also carry implications. Again, we see the need for communications people to act as gatekeepers for the organisation: whereas in an earlier time communications people may

have created a message and then passed it onwards for dissemination, now the role is sometimes reversed (where content creation is not the sole preserve of the communications team); non-creative employees have the capacity to create content, which the communications team must then moderate before disseminating.

The extent to which a gatekeeper role must be implemented is of course dependent on the sensitivity of the organisation. Where an organisation is more about making relationships with members of the public, as might be the case for a charity, then the embedded creative is a facilitator as much as a curator:

> P: Whether the role needs to change, and we're all communicators really, we're all comms managers, is what I was telling people. You know you are managing your own communications now, even internal communications where we had an intranet site used to be me that posted the Wales news and every week I put a new story up on the news feed, and people would say oh can you put this story up and I said well actually you can do this yourself. You are your own story teller now, you don't have to wait for me to decide whether that's good enough, and re-write it, and put it in a style, maybe a house style or whatever.

> *Unnamed, Media Communications Manager, Unnamed organisation (charity)*

This begs several questions. Is the communications creative still needed, if not to manage and curate the content of their peers? In a hypothetical world in which all employees were able to exert some creative control over their content output, what role would the communications team play? Would everyone be the team? The following section addresses these questions by exploring changing dynamics among colleagues, and the work they collectively perform.

Is digital change affecting their relationships with their colleagues, and the ways in which work is achieved among them?

The following quotation shows how the creative, traditionally communications team-exclusive, activity of sending out messages about the organization has been extended to employees beyond the core "creative" communications team, and has been made official as a "Twitter team".

I: I was interested about what you were saying about everyone being expected to contribute to the marketing effort; how does that work in practice? Are you expecting people to Tweet and upload social media content?

P: […] Now we also have a Twitter team, so when I started it was just one person tweeting – now it's huge, so I decided to organise a Twitter team and we have representation from the junior school, different subjects in the senior school, people from marketing, people from our library and careers and we make up a Twitter team which means the Twitter feed is really informative and fun and you've got more brains than one and it means it's interactive, and we've noticed that our followers have grown extensively even people like the BBC Education will follow us cause we've now got interesting things to say…

Vanessa Yilmaz, Director of Development and Communications, Howell's School

(education)

In this sense, many more colleagues than would have been said to fall within the embedded creative category are now engaged in the creative activity of communicating with the organisation's external audience.

P: [We've] grown so now we're looking to take on a marketing administration assistant, someone to deal with the feedback from the website, to order the stock when needed, to book the events… When I first started we had a basic website that was done in FrontPage. Our data manager, because he was technically minded, did it all. The marketing team had little input in to that at all. We didn't have a CMS or anything.

I: So you couldn't edit it yourself?

P: No we had to ask him. It was a very data driven business then as well. It didn't matter so much about what things looked like as long as we were delivering the correct transport information.

Jo Foxall, Marketing Manager, Traveline Cymru (Transport communications provider)

The CMS subsequently gained has allowed the marketing team to expand (by creating extra jobs that they can be doing) because they are given more control over the website. Before, this was controlled by a single "technically minded" person; time has broadened the access of these tools by bringing systems to allow access (such as the CMS), which permit people less skilled in the pure programming and web design disciplines that would have been needed to build a website in the early days of the internet to incorporate those activities into their job. This means that the dispersal of content via the website is now a matter for the marketing team.

Digital change has affected the relationships between colleagues in different organisations, and different parts of large organisations, too.

P: If I was doing a job in [Organisation] helping children there'd be loads of people [to support me], there'd be conferences, different meetings, you'd be sent to different things, it's a far bigger industry for that niche of work whereas if you're working in isolation then you have to make those networks and what is the purpose of them as well? Why should I be talking to people in a similar position to me, what are we getting out of it, what's is our common agenda – is there one?

I: Did that feel like a sort of isolation from other creatives at [Organisation] or from other creatives in the industry?

P: In the industry I'd say, and I was mentioning earlier about feeling a little bit that we'd been left out, nothing's really developed, I feel that other people have maybe gained more and I just want to make sure I claim that back as well, within [Organisation] yes you'd hang onto them like bosom buddies. People who are doing my job in Northern Ireland, Scotland, best mates even though we only saw each other twice a year and we'd rely on that sort of buddying really.

Unnamed, Media Communications Manager, Unnamed organisation (charity)

The above participant makes two points: firstly that there is not the support from the organisation for them to learn from marketers outside it, from other parts of the industry – few networks, conferences, training opportunities etc. Secondly, they point out that they therefore rely more heavily on their equivalents in other parts of the organisation. It being a national organisation, there are other regional networks, whose marketing people aim to keep close together. Feeling that they had been side-lined for too long in terms of digital upskilling, without a culture of radical innovation in the organisation to fully capitalise on the potentials, the participant had recently departed in search of something they felt to be more progressive.

P: I'd say over the next two to three years, people in digital roles [will be looking to] embed digital, where appropriate, in their organisation and create extra creativity, extra resource, extra money-saving opportunities through the use of digital as more people move online.

[…]

[Managing] our online communities and our digital output, it may change from that kind of content creation because that might be embedded in organisations, where actually, staff are the content creators, they're the ones, outside of the marketing communications team, creating that content because they understand digital, and then you, as a communications team, are more, I don't know, pulling the strings or doing different things rather than content creation.

I: So that's reliant on the content management system of some sort, presumably, and the up-skilling of members of the organisation who are outside the communications team?

P: Exactly, yes. I mean, any website is run on a content management system, but talking also in terms of social media platforms, so a bit of work that I've done, in both of my roles, is around training staff to think how they could become more ambassadors across social media

Unnamed, Social Media Officer, Unnamed organisation (Public health)

This quotation returns to the theme of communications teams being either the curators or facilitators of their colleagues' digital communications potential. The participant believes that

over the next few years, communications teams may move from creating content to being managers of digital communities, whether these are the organisation's online audience, or its internal employees. This is dependent on upskilling non-creative colleagues in the skills needed to effectively become digital communicators, something that the participant sees as having strategic value to the organisation, if properly understood.

If digital change affects embedded creatives' relationships with their colleagues, is this reconfigured embedded creative "network" understood and used differently by the organisation?

A range of organisational approaches to dealing with digitally-caused structural changes were reported. Had this research project been given a different scope and greater resources it might have been possible to interview non-creative stakeholders in management positions within the organisations – those people responsible for embedded creatives (even those who were themselves managers). This was not possible however, so views on organisations' approaches must be drawn from the words of the embedded creatives themselves.

> P: [It] was basically just managing the design of hard copy booklets, really based around what authors and things sort of wanted them to look like, as opposed to using, sort of, creative knowledge to look at how the users would actually best absorb the information, or how they would really practically use it on a day to day basis…
>
> *Charmine Smikle, Senior Communications Officer, Care Council for Wales*
>
> *(Regulator)*

This participant notes that over the course of their employment at the organisation (9 years) the job they had been doing changed from altering print documents created by others to something more critical and active. This simple observation serves to illustrate that the work required of the participant by the organisation has changed in two key ways: it has become more creative and it has become more strategically important. Those themes are connected. The need to advance strategically drives innovation, which provides the context for an internal locus for embedded creativity.

> I: It's interesting what you say about that [significant] number of traditional media people.

P: Yes but I think that's dated and I think that's in the past.

I: And it will change you expect?

P: Yeah, there's a new manager in there who will look at that and think well actually it's not fit for purpose anymore and we're chasing these articles and we know about the demise of regional press, we know about the fewer opportunities there are now to place articles so what's the point of all these people trying to compete with that and just get very basic coverage.

        […]

I: It makes me wonder if it's possible to discern any moods among the people in the traditional media team, whether they're trying to upskill themselves in digital, whether they're taking an interest in moving that forward themselves.

P: That's one of the things I was looking for within the charity but didn't get and that's one of the reasons I left actually because I felt it wasn't giving me what I needed…

Unnamed, Media Communications Manager, Unnamed Organisation (charity)

In the first half of this quotation the participant refers to the organisation's structure. It is composed of a large print media team, whose job is to create and disseminate print media via traditional channels. This, the participant asserts, is susceptible to change by new management, who will conclude that it doesn't offer value anymore and reduce it. Further, they refer to the organisational culture. Corresponding to the first point, the participant complains that the culture in which they were working did not allow for sufficient skills development to stay abreast of developing digital technologies. This contrasts with the previous quotation, in which the participant reflects on how their job has changed dramatically in less than a decade.

This example comes from the charity sector, as does the following, which serves to highlight the potential differences in opinion that can be found even in the same broad sector.

P: When you have a good website which is updated and it's kept regular and looks professional, I think it gives a professional image. I think there's lots and lots of charities in Cardiff and most of them have not had any money so they don't have good websites unfortunately. They haven't got the skills, they haven't got the money to do that themselves and I guess I can be a little bit snobby about websites. Even though being, not particularly much of a designer myself, when I look at websites and they're badly made and they're out of date, I do kind of reflect on the organisation badly.

Stewart Harding, Information and Communications Officer, Diverse Cymru (Equality charity)

For an organisation like a charity, which is dependent on goodwill and clear communication from potential supporters, appearing professional online is here seen as a key distinguisher in the market. This arguably affects small charities more, which may not have resources to put towards large fundraising or marketing activities in other areas.

The final quotation of this section raises questions about the role of the communications job, and hence the role of many embedded creatives working in the Cardiff region.

P: [The organisation is] a huge, huge charity and having just a few people in comms, and actually are those people important anymore? The service can communicate directly. Who would I be [as a manager] to go and say well actually no I think you need a strategy here, you need this, that and the other? [Digital communication has] completely exploded hasn't it, and what are the controlled mechanisms?

Unnamed, Media Communications Manager, Unnamed organisation (charity)

How possible is it for a small team to be gatekeepers, asks the participant? How possible will it be in the future to really control the employee-generated content that an organisation could consider part of its marketing output? How desirable would control be?

More work is needed to understand how non-creative managers perceive the potential value of their creative employees, and how they see their creative value and organisational

structure changing in coming years to meet different demands. These issues will be discussed further below in Section 10.

9.2   CREATIVITY IN THE CAREERS OF CARDIFF'S EMBEDDED CREATIVES

This section investigates the career histories of the cohort and relates them to self-conceptions of creativity, personal values, and how they become expressed, or otherwise, in a career over time.

How creative are Cardiff's embedded creatives? To what extent to they view their work as creative?

The general impression given by the embedded creatives spoken to for this project was that creativity is a property of their jobs, but should not be seen as the quality that defines it. Their jobs involve some creative work, which is frequently – not always – in the course of creating text copy or simple graphics for web or digital formats. This reflects the definition of "creative intensity" used above to describe how various occupations differ from one another in the degree to which creativity should be considered a core pillar or a peripheral activity.

> P: I do consider myself to be a creative person, and I think there has been a creative element to most of the jobs I've had, um, to a greater or lesser extent. However, if you ask my husband, he would say that he didn't consider me particularly to be a creative person, but I think that's because he is speaking from a particular viewpoint, which is that, he's a writer, so he knows that he's a creative person, and um, compared with him, then I suppose you could say that I'm not, because you know, he-he-, it's something that is intrinsic to his being, if you like, whereas with me it's something that I like do as part of [my work]…

> *Alice Percival, Assistant Subject Librarian (Business) and Executive Officer of Cardiff University Press, Cardiff University*

The above participant refers to creative intensity. This particularly highlights a limitation with the collection of data performed here, which is that by only speaking to the embedded creatives themselves there is a risk that valuable perspectives from people connected with the participants could be missed. Unfortunately this is a necessary limitation, given the resources available, but, as shown here, in certain cases other perspectives are available. The participant refers to the inherent problem in defining "creative": for a property that is potentially personal and variable, creative labelling is a matter of perspective. The participant would

define themselves as creative, however believes that their partner would not, the difference being that he is a writer. This raises the possibility of two definitions of creativity: one where creativity is a toolset deployed in the course of a job, another where creativity is "intrinsic" to one's being. The possibility of these corresponding to two different embedded creatives is not clear at this stage, although it seems likely that the majority of embedded creatives would fall into the former category, as far as their day job were concerned.

The following quotation shows some complexity to this distinction:

I: [Did social work particularly interest you?]

P: No I wouldn't say – actually I would say the topic really wasn't that interesting to me overall, but there is a lot of opportunity for me to be creative there and the job's changed a lot, and I get to choose. I have a lot of influence in terms of the type of creative thing that we can sort of impalement and try out, so. It sort of makes it very interesting.

Charmine Smikle, Senior Communications Officer, Care Council for Wales

(Regulator)

Evidently this quotation shows that the participant feels they have scope for creative work in their job, but it also suggests that they view their creative work as being more important to them than purely a toolset that is used in the course of a more interesting line of work. The relative lack of interest in the subject matter of the job is evidence that the creative process itself is of primary importance to this participant.

P: I do enjoy, you know-, I like design particularly, you know graphic design, um I like things to look attract-, you know, I'm quite visually focused, um, I think that leads me to consider roles that have more of a creative potential maybe, but it's not something that I'm out and out do-, hell-bent decided I am-, you know, 'I am a creative practitioner and I need to be in a creative-', that's not, how it is at all, um. I'm a worker and I need to earn a wage is how it is.

Angharad Dalton, Policy and Projects Officer, Institute of Welsh Affairs (Think

tank)

This quotation evidences the alternative viewpoint, in which the participant uses creative activities in the course of doing a personally interesting job. The creative elements of their work are therefore encountered in the course of pursuing this superior interest. As the participant points out, they do not consider themselves to be a "creative practitioner", but rather just a worker who happens to use creative tools to achieve their work.

> P: I think what happens then when you're within a role that has a creative element, that the further and further you go up the management ladder the less creative you can be. You manage other people's creativity and perhaps you direct other people's creativity without having the opportunity yourself to be creative. This role because it's a much smaller charity, I do everything, which has its pros and its cons but so I do have the kind of strategic, planning, relationship-building that you have within a management role but I also have the opportunity to be hands-on. I meet people, which is really important to me, I build relationships but I also have creative input.
>
> *Unnamed, PR Manager, Unnamed organisation (charity)*

The participant would expect the level of creative work in an embedded creative's job to decrease depending on the seniority of their position. The more senior the position, the further removed from creative work one can become, as more time is spent managing people who are directly creating. The job changes to become one of managing creation activities, rather than performing them directly.

A dimension that should therefore be examined in more detail is that of the thought process that is involved in an embedded creative looking for a new job. Do they favour creative work specifically? Do they experience consistently creative careers?

How important is the ability to exercise creative skills when the participants are looking for a new job?

The following quotations describe a trend that is discernible in the data for this cohort, which describes the adventitious way in which some of Cardiff's embedded creatives either arrived in their creative role, or brought creative elements into a role that was lacking them. These reflect an often casual interest in writing, or a nonspecific sense of creative work, or "being creative", that suggest an impulse more than a consciously articulated set of values.

I: How have you been employed throughout your career history? Is there a consistent theme of creativity or is it-?

P: No not at all actually. My previous job before this was in another charity but it was a part time admin job and I kind of tried to do some of that but there wasn't much opportunity to do that kind of work there… So I kind of tried to do that because it was more interesting than what I was doing. But before that, no there was work on a reception desk, there was work closing dead people's bank accounts for over two years. That was not in the slightest bit creative…

I: And what was it that drew you to here?

P: Well at first actually, my job here when I came here was as an administrator because there was a vacancy… because there was all this… basically the information and communications officer post was basically vacant and I don't think they'd really thought about filling it in a way because it was a new organisation at the time… So I kind of took on that work… I managed to pick up lots of other things and managed to do the things that I wanted to do and eventually wrote my own job description…

Stewart Harding, Information and Communications Officer, Diverse Cymru

(Equality charity)

This participant outlines a version of events that is recognisable in the stories of several other participants. It links the participant's interest in creative activities with the job they currently perform in an adventitious way. Creativity is seen in these cases as being of interest to the participant, as desirable in their work, but secondary to the practical aspects of finding employment. Here, the participant describes how for several years they were performing work that had no creative elements at all. The change occurred after a non-creative job was taken at the current non-creative organisation. At this point the participant would not have been considered an embedded creative. Because the organisation was young it was undergoing change, and the participant found the opportunity to demonstrate the value creative activities could add, and thereby shape a new creative role for themselves, which follows their personal interests more closely.

I: How important has it been throughout that process? I mean obviously marketing has been something that must have been of interest to you for a long time? How did that come about?

P: Well it's interesting because I wanted to be a PE teacher but ten years of incessant football playing meant that my knees started to cave in at about 16 or 17 years old… I'd always had an interest in business anyway. So I think I was doing A-Level business anyway. I don't really know where it came from but I chose to do… I must have had some form of interest in it because I then chose to do marketing at university. I came to the University of Glamorgan, hence I've ended up in Wales…

[…]

Unfortunately I was made redundant and I had about five months or so of being on the dole and going and applying for jobs and doing lots of temp stuff… Then this job became available, here at Sport Wales or it was Sport Council for Wales at the time. I happened to live… I lived in [place name], so I only lived across the road…

Adam Fairbank, Marketing Manager, Sport Wales (Sports advocacy)

This participant paints a similar picture to the one above and others in the cohort. Their arrival in a creative job was secondary to an earlier primary interest (in this case playing sport), which became unrealistic to pursue. They realized they were interested in business, chose marketing at university, and then found a job in marketing based on their university placement. This job was lost shortly thereafter, leading to a period of non-creative work, which then ended when the participant found a position with their current organization, which they chose because it was conveniently located, its goals were allied with the participant's personal interests, and because it allowed them to use what they'd learnt in their degree. Again, this is a situation of circumstance and a general interest in creative work to match the employee with the job, not a calling that the participant had been striving for consistently. The extent to which a specialist creative would report a similar or different career path is unclear, one of the project's limitations being the lack of opportunity to interview them. Further work may therefore wish to provide the questions to both embedded and specialist creatives in similar careers or locations in order to test this better. These findings are also noteworthy in that they clearly

show a number of embedded creatives approaching their work not as "failed" specialists, who attempted and failed to use a creative education to gain a specialist creative occupation, but as workers who happen to use creative skills in the course of conducting work that has its own interest for them.

To what extent do the aspirations and interests of the participant lie in creative endeavours, and to what extent is creative work merely a process through which more authentic aspirations and interests are revealed?

I: [Is] this what you've always wanted to do?

P: [pause] Do you know what, that's a really good question because I can't remember, what my first childhood ambitions were, it's all a bit blurry now, yes it is, yeah I always knew it would be somewhere in media entertainment, arts, somewhere vaguely, yeah, I think I always felt like that, so yeah, yeah, especially during my teenage years, I did media studies and aced it…

Jack Cooper, Marketing and Events Manager, Chapel1877 (Food and beverages)

The participant's aspirations were not clearly defined. Their present position does not appear to be one that they have always aspired to, however, it related to their vague childhood attraction to media and entertainment. There appears, with some caution, to be a pattern discernible in which vague interests in certain types of activity lead to a university degree choice, which in turn leads to employment as circumstance permits.

I: Is this job related to your childhood aspirations, interests at all?

P: No. When I was much younger I wanted to work in theatre [pause] and then I wanted to be a journalist like my dad, then I wanted to be a social worker… because it's that balance of kind of creative and wanting to work with people, I think that's an area that I'm, just trying to work to my strengths and I think that I'm quite good with people I like being helpful, helping people. But then I decided that social work was way too hands on and I didn't have the emotional strength and resilience to do that. So I kind of think I've arrived at a place that kind of combines all those things quite well, for me… I think when you work in PR you can be

pulled in that kind of corporate direction whereas that isn't where my interests particularly lie but this job definitely allows me to be creative but also yeah, it ticks a lot of boxes.

Unnamed, PR Manager, Unnamed organisation (children's charity)

In this case, the attraction of creative work is somewhat ancillary; it's an interest but not the main interest. This reflects a theme that was found several times among the Cardiff embedded creatives, which was that the primary reason for a participant being in a certain job was that they had an attraction either to the organisation or to the non-creative field in which it was operating, and sought relatively low intensity creative work therein. The extent to which this distinguishes embedded creatives from specialist creatives (who might conceivably have a more explicit focus on creative work processes), or from non-creative workers (who might too conceivably report an interest in creative work to some extent) is unclear, and would benefit from more side-by-side study.

I: [Does] this work you're doing now relate to childhood aspirations you've had? Is sort of art design something you've always been interested in?

P: Yeah. Yeah, um, I don't-, don't think I really knew when I was a kid, what my career was gonna be, but you know, ever since I was little, lying on the floor drawing pictures of TIE fighters and X-Wings shooting each other and stuff when I was little and just, I've always done art stuff…

Barry Richards, Senior Web Developer, Unnamed organisation (education)

The participant in the above quotation speaks from the perspective a graphic designer and programmer, and this evidences one of the stronger links expressed between an interest in creative activities as a child, and the career into which it is translated. This participant works in an education environment, which raises the possibility of the education sector offering different levels of creative freedom from other sectors. Again, this ideally points the way to a subsequent study that would compare actors in different sectors to see how the creative ideals of youth are expressible in various sectors, as an embedded creative.

P: I've always been creative, but more so, I've always kind of been interested in people and speaking to people, and I've always been that outward facing, in

fact, behind a desk probably isn't the best place for me, I'd much rather be out talking to people…

Unnamed, Marketing and Communications Manager, Unnamed organisation

(local environment charity)

In this quotation, the view presented is slightly different. The participant repeats the general interest in creative activities, but asserts that their primary interest is in interacting with people. A desk job (perhaps reminiscent of many specialist creative jobs) does not appeal. The participant works for a charity, which provides the environment they need to work closely with a wider community.

I: Do you uh, see this as relating to aspirations you've had for a very long time, say since childhood?

P: […] Well I always wanted to be a journalist, since I was-, since I was little, I was always-, always enjoyed writing. I guess I-, to an extent I didn't really know what it was that I wanted… [When] I was young, PR wasn't really a thing, obviously it was but you know, it was in high powered London agencies say, and you know, you grow up in South Wales and you don't hear about PR…

Luke Merlini, PR and Communications Manager, Tenovus (Cancer care charity)

The important point raised above also points the way for a more specific discussion that could take place during a subsequent research project looking at the relationship between education in creative subjects and both the routes into, and perceptions of, employment in specialist and embedded creative jobs. The participant highlights that as a child there was no awareness of public relations as a career choice, and goes on to point out that even when they began their degree PR courses were not available. This research project points to education being an important bridge between the sometimes vague interests shown by children, and the jobs that are available to adults.

An embedded participant from the education sector, who attended the project's lunchtime seminar, reported that creative degree courses place emphasis on employment in specialist creative positions, leading to a possible perception of embedded creative jobs among cohorts

of creative students as less prestigious, satisfying or valuable. Work on this specific hypothesis would be needed to lend it any substance.

The final quotation in this section describes a participant's interest in the future, rather than their reminiscence on their past journey.

> P: I think funnily enough one thing I have been thinking about over the last year was whether I could, if I had a sort of future career aspiration outside higher education after nearly seventeen years, am I going to retire here or am I going to do something else and I've got quite interested in actually thinking about whether I could do this job for creative industries… I think that's quite interesting, that's quite nice because it would mean doing this sort of work, so at the moment it's almost like I do an exciting – I think it's exciting – exciting bits of work in quite a dry area, I can make it more accessible and make it look a little bit more exciting.

Unnamed, Senior Communications Manager, Unnamed organisation (funding)

The participant talks about their communications job and the potential for turning it into a specialist job by making the people they work with (among whom they are embedded) into clients rather than employers. This could be an opportunity that arises from some upheaval, such as redundancies, but is interesting for the sense it conveys of the job being interesting to the participation, and the organisation into which it is embedded being contrastingly frustrating. This suggests that the participant desires greater creative control, but has found an occupation and set of skills that are fundamentally of interest.

To what extent do the participants pursue "radical innovation" in their work? Alternatively, to what extent is creative thinking simply a means to accomplish the usual business of the organisation?

There is relatively little evidence available in the primary data for this project to be able to tackle the above questions. It is the researcher's opinion from having discussed cases of innovative behaviour with the participants that virtually all of them are innovating (to a greater or lesser extent) as a way of accomplishing the usual business of the organisation, rather than as a way of bringing about change to an established sector or way of working.

Obviously, even within this relatively small data set of thirty-seven participants, there are variations: some innovate only very little, looking for ways to achieve the best effect in their work, but not to change it; others more actively seek out ideas, projects, and partnerships that could result in undiscovered value. Most, however, did not appear to be actively trying to reconfigure their situation.

An exception concerns one of the participants in particular, a web designer in the charity sector, who (as part of a small self-organised team, including one of the other participants working in a similar position) is attempting to coordinate a cross-organisational skills uplift. This is an attempt to bring more advanced digital design skills and practices in-house in Cardiff's charity sector as a way of providing competitive advantage (through enabling charities to target audiences better), educational advantage (a flattening of the digital skills hierarchy among different charity employees; gender equality through changing a traditionally male-dominated digital sector), and socio-cultural advantage (the perception of the sector as tech-savvy, and the trust thereby built).

The participant views the upskilling of charity workers in this area as resulting in an increase in the amount of niche content being published, which would initially boost competition within the sector, but ultimately lead to saturation and loss of competitive advantage. This, they assert, would impact the business model, which would be compensated for by the educational and socio-cultural advantages. By the participant's estimations, the sector as a whole would then be better prepared to approach new digital technologies, rather than relying on outsourcing.

They predict that this would shrink the specialist web design sector and cause an increase in the numbers of people working as embedded creatives, and as freelancers. In the case of small charities, which may not be able to afford to in-house design work, the participant proposes a network to communicate best practices, which might include use, for example, of free open-source software.

These points were not raised in total isolation; they were not outlined by other participants, but because of their relevance to the theme of radical innovation among Cardiff's embedded creatives, they bear repeating here. Additionally, they serve as an ideal platform for discussing the potential role of the Creative Cardiff, and how this could adapt in the future in light of the findings of this research.

9 Findings

9.3   CREATIVE CARDIFF

From the website[4]: "Creative Cardiff is a new network which connects people working in any creative organisation, business or job in the Cardiff region." Part of the remit of this project was to explore how the service could be made more useful to members of Cardiff's embedded creative community, they currently being less specifically targeted than members of the core creative industries. This was explored in the context of the professional networking opportunities the embedded creatives make use of, both in person and online, and then asking how Creative Cardiff could link up with identified needs.

What professional network opportunities do Cardiff's embedded creatives currently use?

The following participant mentioned CommsCymru as a useful platform, but claims that their workload is too great to permit them to make much use of such tools at present. This underlines a general problem with any such platform, which is that it must make a convincing case for users taking time out of their work schedules to use it.

> P: I don't have a direct line of management within communications. I have to find those opportunities myself. When you work for a big organisation kind of training and career development is sort of part of your employer's role and obviously you have to take a bit of responsibility. Within this role because there isn't... I am the only person within communications, I only have one person above me and that's the director after the trustees. So, I'm a member of CommsCymru… So they run kind of events and training and kind of breakfast seminars, you know I look out for courses… But I'm too embroiled in with my workload at the minute to think about any of that to be honest.

> *Unnamed, PR Manager, Unnamed organisation (children's charity)*

CommsCymru was a name mentioned repeatedly during the interviews. It is an online network for public sector communications professionals in Wales, so defines a target audience with some specificity. At the same time, this focus on "communications" appears to be broad enough to be appealing to many different people. This participant later describes

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[4] http://www.creativecardiff.org.uk/

CommsCymru as particularly useful because it focuses on the public sector (and is also evidently accessible to people in charities), thereby preventing the participant from becoming surrounded by private sector employees, from whom they feel they have little to learn. This comment is echoed by another participant, who describes CommsCymru as differing from chartered institute events in that the latter tend to be dominated by specialist creatives ("agency people"), which they find offputting.

The interest in sector-specific offerings is represented by a quotation from a designer from education:

> P: I would be happy to work in collaboration with other universities-, uh, you know, it would make a lot of sense to me if there was an area, especially in healthcare, that we could do something where-, uh particularly with regard to sort of funding it, uh if we got together to produce something that all the universities could benefit from.

> *Barry Richards, Senior Web Developer, Unnamed organisation (education)*

This perhaps reflects ideas people have already half-formed in their heads. In this case, the participant has an idea to do something relating to healthcare. A system that was able to provide people with inspiration in terms of parties they could partner up with might be useful and it would of course have to demonstrate a mutual generation of value.

In certain cases, current technologies already permit the embedded creative to share all they feel they need to.

> I: You mentioned that you're the only person in marketing here and there are forty-four or so others. How do you guys keep in touch? Do you keep in touch? Do you rely on each other to do your jobs or do you see each other very rarely?

> P: I don't think we, so much, rely on each other … and, in terms of seeing each other, it's rare. In terms of keeping in touch … I mean, a lot of phone calls … we use Google Plus … the communities … where we share photos, best practice, that sort of thing. If we've had a launch of, say, a brand or something and we've done this particular event … we've had really good press coverage ... sales were up a hundred and twenty five

percent, then I can share that with other people and say it might be worth you looking into doing something like this, 'cause it worked really well for us… and we do get a lot from that… So I wouldn't say we rely on each other for the job but it's more inspiration…

Cerian Price, Marketing and PR Coordinator, Unnamed organisation (retail)

The participant is an employee of a nationwide organisation, meaning that there is no one else doing their job on the same premises, but there are forty-four others around the country. Google Plus allows them to remain in contact, where they share good practice and provide ideas to one another on initiatives that have been successful in certain areas and may be translatable. Obviously, this is not necessarily applicable to small organisations, where all employees are generally in one place. In these cases, inter-organisation communication would be more relevant.

A similar set of working practises is described by another participant, who uses a range of channels to communicate with informative and inspirational people outside their organisation.

I: In terms of training requirements, is there a continuing development framework for you or do you seek out individual training or do you just clue yourself up based on your own initiative?

P: A mixture of all of those … I'm a member of CIPR … Chartered Institute of Public Relations … and they have a plethora of CPD [continuing professional development] courses and training sessions, ranging from social media to a little bit of marketing … then more traditional communications as well. But in terms of keeping on top of trends and up skilling, a lot of my information is from like-minded individuals that I follow and connect with and engage with across the platforms that I utilise as part of my day-to-day work anyway… So, big organisations like The Drum, Next Web and publications like that … but also individual influences within the third sector … there are a couple of people that write for Guardian Voluntary, around digital, that I follow and talk to … we discuss back and forwards. [There's] a third sector digital and communications network group on Facebook… [If] you have a question

there, it's gonna get answered within thirty minutes because someone's going through it as well.

Unnamed, Social Media Officer, Unnamed organisation (public health)

There seem to be two main needs being catered for by professional networking here: finding training opportunities to improve one's skill set, and connecting with informative people who can offer inspiration and advice on the creative challenges the participant is facing.

The above quotations, and others gathered for this project, provide glimpses of insight into how Creative Cardiff could be developed to better cater for the needs of the local embedded creative community.

How could Creative Cardiff better support Cardiff's embedded creatives?

A wide variety of views was found on the receptiveness to the idea of another professional networking site such as Creative Cardiff. As the following participant points out, the marketplace in Cardiff is already well catered for.

P: I think it would depend on the purpose 'cause I think there's lots of professional networks like for the purpose of [unintelligible] err there's lots of professional networks in Cardiff and I'm not sure what they do apart from networking erm so I think there's…lots of challenges and opportunities particularly in the creative sector in South Wales and I think if a network were to erm provide access to those maybe discussion talks around it that would be more of interest.

Unnamed, Policy and Projects Officer, Unnamed organisation (think tank)

The participant offers a vague notion of discussion around certain issues being useful, but is not specific about what these could be or how they would fit into a working day. Other participants offer more specific clues on the use that Creative Cardiff could deliver embedded creatives.

P: It's useful I mean you know we would be the people that employed agencies so… it'd be useful to have a hub of people anyway…

Emily Griffiths, Marketing and Communications Manager, Capital Law and People

(Legal and HR)

This participant highlights the potential value of a place where agencies can be gathered together in a sort of directory. This therefore would serve to link the embedded creatives with specialists in Cardiff in terms of business-to-business relationships.

I: You say as well that you feel Creative Cardiff could be an interesting process for someone in your position?

P: Absolutely because it puts you in touch with… not just the agencies, but also it gives you the opportunity to network with like-minded people… I'm the one who comes up with the creative bit in the middle [between senior management and the public]. So it is nice to speak to people and get different ideas about what has worked for other organisations and perhaps share what we do as well.

Jo Foxall, Marketing Manager, Traveline Cymru (Public information provider)

A common theme drawn from several of the conversations concerns embedded creatives' need to be connected with "like-minded" people because they are, by definition, embedded within cultures of less creative people. In terms of following new trends and coming up with ideas, several participants felt that Creative Cardiff could be a useful resource to them. Whether by this they would prefer curated content to show off good practice in the community, or instead community-generated discussion in the manner of, for example, a forum, is not clear.

I: It's interesting what you're saying about Creative Cardiff before, about how that sounded like something interesting to you. Could you explain that?

P: Yeah, it's simply being able to speak around local people or people around Cardiff that do something similar to what I do, being on my own here, in this job, it would be good to go around people who are doing the same as I'm doing … even though I do like it here and I consider myself valuable here, it would be nice to know what kind of trends people are following what kind of avenues are they going down, what

they think is the next up-and-coming thing, and getting involved in those conversations with like-minded people and having a good discussion about something that I wanna do as a career, instead of talking about the company as a whole, it's talking about what I wanna branch into or branch out of.

I: So you see that avenue as a communication, first and foremost?

P: Yeah, definitely.

I: Would that be something that interests you more, in terms of online communication or the opportunity to meet people at events?

P: Both, I don't see the need to distinguish them, really, meeting people online, meeting people face-to-face: I don't see a lot of difference in it, really.

Unnamed, Marketing Executive, Unnamed organisation (office equipment supplier)

The above participant agrees that Creative Cardiff could be a good platform on which to link his own creative "sub-culture" with others outside his organisation, in primarily a communication function. They do not express a preference for either online or in person communication, but suggest that either could be useful.

I: I was just wondering what your thoughts are on that type of service, if that's something you feel could be useful.

P: Definitely, I think so … from a practical point of view, as part of my CIM [Chartered Institute of Marketing] membership, I'm obliged to do a minimum of thirty five hours of CPD [continuing professional development] a year and those kinds of networking forums count towards that… From a personal point of view or a work point of view, then yes I think it would be beneficial. I think, for me, more in terms of just meeting with other people, discussing things … because you are quite isolated as a creative, certainly within marketing… So it would be good, possibly, just to speak to more like-minded people who have a

> better appreciation of what they can achieve through whatever creative medium.

> *John Dunnington, Marketing Manager, EuroClad Ltd. (Construction)*

This participant suggests that any networking, event, seminar, and webinar would count towards CPD, which could make an argument for the platform to find a place as part of an employee's workday, which is perhaps one of the key challenges in securing its uptake.

In terms of personal and working practice terms, the participant reiterates comments made above about how embedded creative working can be isolating, cutting one off from others of like mind, meaning that a platform that can bridge the gap and allow embedded creatives to connect across organisations would potentially have value.

> P: I think the opportunities side of it is quite exciting and I can see that being quite useful, I've seen that being useful already… Jobs, whatever it might be, you know, any sort of things: that I see as being really useful because I'm not sure who else is doing that at the moment.

> *Lynsey Jackson, Digital Communications Manger, Cynnal Cymru (Sustainable development charity)*

The above participant believes that the opportunities currently posted to Creative Cardiff are one of its more useful features, and provide a service that is underrepresented in Cardiff. They go to link the function of Creative Cardiff to a point that had been raised earlier in the conversation, which is that Cardiff contains quite a close-knit creative community, so events where it's possible to meet people whom one isn't already familiar with are advantageous to embedded creatives who are already attuned to the creative economy in Cardiff.

> P: I think one of the things I did really enjoy about going to the Creative Cardiff [event] was actually the, you've got the usual suspects in Cardiff, and there's always people you'll always see, and you're familiar with and they're quite high profile, and it was nice to see a couple of people that I haven't heard of before, or haven't come across…

> *Lynsey Jackson, Digital Communications Manger, Cynnal Cymru (Sustainable development charity)*

9 Findings

This is undoubtedly an advantage of physical events over a purely online presence, and lends support to the notion of encouraging a rich and changing group of attendees, rather than a fixed group of "regulars". On this point, it was noted in another interview that CommsCymru puts on a conference twice a year, which is a function that the Creative Cardiff team could look into.

10   IMPLICATIONS

A number of tentative implications can be drawn from this preliminary study.

10.1 *IMPLICATIONS FOR DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES IN EMBEDDED CREATIVITY*

The rapidness and extent of digital uptake in communications roles raises a question of the potential for technology to take over some of the functions that would normally be ascribed to (less-creative) employees. Where embedded creatives can create materials that provide information, for example, to members of the public who would formally have relied on employees directly for information, this could have an effect on the way resources in the organisation are split between hiring people to provide information, and hiring people to design systems that provide information on demand. Evidently this is not an ideal situation as far as job creation is concerned, but this line of thought can easily be extended into a future in which digital communications technologies are sufficiently sophisticated that organisations could be reduced in size, potentially emphasising the role of the those who create or control such systems, while diminishing the role of those who currently perform a similar job to the system.

The embedded creatives in the study seem to commonly use a less intense grade of creativity in their work than specialist creatives might in the course of theirs (though side-by-side comparisons are not possible here). Their jobs are not as "saturated" with creative activity as might be the case for a specialist creative. For that reason sometimes they consider that their work is not particularly creative, or alternatively consider that it is, but that others would disagree with them. In accordance with literature on relative creative intensities of job types, creativity should not be seen as binary but as a range of values that vary from person to person, job to job, and time to time.

Perhaps because of a less intense grade of creativity, Cardiff's embedded creatives typically seem to view creative activities as secondary to the main goal of their job: in other words, they are not "doing creativity" for its own sake, but are deploying it as a tool in the course of advancing the non-creative goals of their organisation. It may seem therefore that embedded creatives require no special treatment, advice or assistance in creative matters, but this would be to neglect an obvious point. Non-creative organisations interact with a changing creative landscape. It has changed rapidly in the last two decades and will continue to change. This brings new opportunities for embedded creatives in terms of the tools they can use, new

possibilities for relationships with traditionally non-creative colleagues, for whom activities involving digital technologies are increasingly graspable.

These are opportunities that affect those in marketing, communications and public relations roles because they make the most obvious use of systems that can reconfigure and share text and images, such as social media. For these people, chartered institutes such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) or Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) provide much in the way of career training and courses that enable workers to keep abreast of the technological landscape. These, and organisations such as CommsCymru, which promotes best practice among public sector communications professionals, achieve much to support people in certain specific fields.

What of embedded creatives outside the obvious communications and marketing areas? Areas such as programming and web design are still generally perceived as being sufficiently specialist that they lie outside the grasp of most embedded creatives. This may not always be the case however as programming literacy becomes slowly more mainstream in education agendas.

Graphic design sits somewhere between social media and programming as far as a simplistic spectrum of creative activities is concerned. Use of graphic design software to create more attractive publications, emails, social media pages etc. is relatively commonplace, but in-depth graphic literacy and knowledge of work processes, of the sort that might be used by a specialist designer, architect, games designer etc. were rare among this cohort. This is understandable as the use of creative skills by embedded creatives is always, by definition, in the service of a relatively non-creative organisation.

A potential conceptualisation of creative activities among non-creative organisations can be cautiously advanced by the above reasoning, one in which creativity can be seen as growing like a root network, feeling and slowly extending into traditionally non-creative areas as the creative culture we all inhabit becomes more pervasive (see above: Hearn and Bridgstock (2014 p.44) on the "culturalisation of the economy"), and more necessary to compete in. Communication outside the professional sphere has been changed most obviously by social media over the last decade, but this affects how work is conducted elsewhere as people's expectations, and their literacy in creating content for digital communication, become

continually more established (which affects, directly or otherwise, everyone from social media officers to educational app programmers).

For this reason, it would seem prudent to view embedded creativity not as a fixed subset of both the creative economy and the non-creative professional sphere, but as an advancing wave front that moves through them, carrying more creative (and hence commercially advantageous) thought processes and practices with it. This has been driven by a high level of digital communication in society in general (a creative "potential gradient", to borrow a term), which has led to an economy of creators able to interact with and manipulate its content for business purposes. Now that this is well understood in the professional sphere, competition between organisations creates its own "potential gradients": when one organisation achieves a lead, others must follow suit.

It is therefore advantageous to an organisation if more of its employees can be contributing to the ease with which the organisation interacts with the digital sphere. Budget cuts, which have affected many organisations within the last decade, particularly those in the public and third sector, place an additional demand to "do more with less", and leverage what value-adding activities a workforce can. This may appear to be driving a less intense form of creativity, in which more widespread use of text and image sharing prevail (such as is common in social media work), but it may be that such advancements are in fact the "thin end of the wedge", and as more complex forms of creative activity become understood they will be taken up by the organisations already most receptive to the concept of embedded creativity.

10.2 *IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF EMBEDDED CREATIVES*

Creativity was found to be considered an element of most participants' jobs, but not the character that defines it. It is seen as a set of practices that are used in the course of completing the non-creative work of their organisation.

In contrast with statistical approaches such as those used by the DCMS to build up a national picture of the creative economy, creativity appears to have a relativistic property, meaning that what one creative deems "creative", another may not. This relates to the concept of creative intensity, but highlights how even among relatively finely resolved definitions of creative occupation or creative industry, relativistic differences may exist.

Labels of creativity may not only be relative, but tacit. A person may not consciously define themselves as creative until prompted at length to do so. They may define themselves as

creative when asked, but only substantiate it with vague associations: "quite liking to write" and self-labelling as "a novelist" are not only very different in terms of intensity, but in terms of how consciously the person in question uses the label. Labels of peripheral creative intensities associated with embedded creativity appear to be only partially defined or stated, and therefore to be partially independent of actual real-world changes in job activity over time.

The level of creativity in a worker's job may vary considerably over time. When they are encountering creative work only adventitiously, for example, in the course of pursuing work that is incidentally creative in a subject area that is of prime interest to them, a job change, though retaining a certain narrative consistency for them, could change their creative intensity. Similarly, someone with a consistently creative career can find themselves being promoted steadily further from the "frontline" creative work being carried out by their subordinates. In such cases, the individual, their interests, self conceptions, behaviour and preferences will have remained fairly consistent, while their status as an embedded creative may have changed.

10.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR CREATIVE CARDIFF

If Creative Cardiff is to successfully target embedded creatives it must demonstrate that it has sufficient value to be a work tool, and that using it during work hours will be a useful activity to employees.

The potential use of such a system varied from participant to participant, with several fairly familiar functions being suggested: use for physical and digital networking; function as a jobs notice board; a source of training; a communication route to inspirational people and sources of ideas. An unfamiliar suggestion was to gather agencies together into a sort of directory for easier access by non-creative organisations. This would of course require constant upkeep.

Articulating the audience that Creative Cardiff addresses is important: too broad and its appeal is not clear to individuals; too specific and potential users will feel excluded. Does it serve *all* creatives, all *embedded* creatives, workers in web design, workers in the charity sector, web designers in the charity sector? How could its appeal be presented in such a way as to appear both broadly inclusive and individually specific? Regarding specificity, it may hypothetically be the case that inter-organisation communication channels would find better uptake among smaller organisations as opposed to national ones because they do not have

the benefit of offices in other parts of the country, containing embedded creatives with corresponding job titles.

If it is to be a destination for both specialist and embedded creatives, where there is interaction among those groups (at an event, for example) steps must be taken to ensure that it is not dominated only by one group. Embedded creatives report that communities with a creative focus can become dominated by specialist creatives, which is intimidating. Because Cardiff contains quite a close-knit creative community, it is common to attend events at which many of the attendees are already known to one another. Ensuring new people are brought into meetings with Cardiff's creatives is therefore potentially desirable. CommsCymru puts on a conference twice a year, which may provide a way of introducing the Cardiff creative community to creatives further afield. Networking, events, seminars, and webinars can all count towards CPD programmes, in which case Creative Cardiff could make a case for itself to be used as part of a working day. Aligning itself with various approval programmes could potentially also serve as a route into market segmentation.

10.4 *A TAXONOMY OF EMBEDDED CREATIVES?*

One of the points in which this research could provide a valuable lesson is if it were able to provide evidence of a taxonomy of embedded creatives in Cardiff. This is a difficult challenge because it is inherently problematic to take a diverse cohort, which arguably has more to differentiate it than to unite it, and reduce or compartmentalise it using simplifications. Two ways are apparent in which this task could be attempted: either by segmenting according to sector, organisation size etc. and seeing what job commonalities can be drawn from organisational commonalities, or by deriving bipolar constructs from the research data and applying them to the cohort.

The first approach is evidenced visually in Appendix 2 (Section 13.2). This approach would allow one, in the case of further research, to look specifically at a subgroup of organisations such as medium-sized private organisation, or small charities, and make the assumption that embedded creatives in those subgroups have elements in common that make them groupable. This does not seem foolproof, and would also have to be conflated with information such as the field an organisation is operating in.

The second approach might be best served by the use of the repertory grid technique on a certain sample of users. Had there been more time for this project, the researcher would have attempted to trial the rep grid with a number of the participants. The purpose of the

technique (which has evolved in modern social science use from a psychoanalytic method developed by George Kelly in the mid twentieth century) is to produce bipolar constructs around a given topic (a bipolar construct being a pair of opposing concepts such as "happy-sad" or "attractive-unattractive"). These are produced by the participant in response to a set of "elements", which are the items being tested, through a process of triadic elicitation (giving one way in which any two elements are alike and different from a third).

In this case, the elements might be colleagues in certain positions, certain types of job, certain types of organisation, certain types of label. The participant reacts to these, and expresses their reactions as a series of bipolar constructs. The constructs are then used to rate the elements according to how applicable they are. Thus, the construct "happy-sad" might be scored more highly by the participant against an element such as "my first day at work" and less highly against "time management".

The process is completed with the set of user-generated constructs being scored against all elements by the participant. After this is completed and the results noted (and the session usually audio recorded as well), factor analysis can be performed on all participants' results to show how similar they are: those who use similar constructs and rate them against the elements in a similar way can said to share similar perceptions of the landscape being investigated. This could reasonably be a basis for forming a taxonomy. This approach was regrettably not possible during this project, firstly because of time limits and secondly because the researcher is not trained in factor analysis (it being a specialised quantitative analysis method).

As far as the data gathered is concerned, two tentative groups may be detectable and serve as a starting point for further work:

- Embedded creatives seriously interested in digital technologies, as opposed to those who merely use them in the course of completing the non-creative work of their organisation; embedded creatives planning to use digital technologies to advance their subsector, and those who aren't
- Those who strongly self-label as creative, and those for whom creativity is tacit and rarely stated explicitly

It is not possible to speculate further because the thirty-seven participants were drawn from diverse backgrounds. Headings could be created in order to group them, but they would be

superficial, partly because embedded creatives do not seem to be a homogenous, structured, easily definable group, and partly because it would require more in-depth analysis than has been possible here.

10.5 POTENTIAL FURTHER RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

A comparative study of specialist and embedded creatives to offer insight onto how career mobility affects one verses the other, and how these affect things like regional innovation levels, would be valuable. It would also allow testing of the consistency with which each party pursued creative work during their early career.

It was not possible to gather much information about career pathways, or to perform structured analysis on what information was available. Approaches dealing specifically with research pathways have been used before in other settings, so their application to Cardiff's creative economy, or even the wider creative economy in South Wales, could prove valuable. This could be usefully linked to the role of education. Does it lead by default into certain positions? Do certain expectations create self-conceptions that interfere with career mobility (e.g. a student that self-identifies as creative might only consider themselves a success if they secure a specialist job after graduating, rather than an embedded one)?

The use of a repertory grid technique on a range of participants, followed by the appropriate factor analysis, would be desirable as a basis for developing a taxonomy of embedded creatives in Cardiff.

The avenues left to explore in this area are numerous, but could be structured into PhD proposal. The team may benefit considerably over a four year period from having a student who is able to do justice to the above three points, or others. A repertory grid approach and factor analysis to create groupings, in conjunction with qualitative analysis of session recordings, would provide sufficient data to sustain a PhD project, and the results could have significant benefits both for Creative Cardiff and for the research body in this field.

11   REFLECTIVE SUMMARY

11.1 PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

As little qualitative work has been carried out on embedded creatives worldwide, and none in Wales, this project carries a novelty that could be considered an achievement and increases the potential value of findings.

Thirty-minute qualitative interviews were conducted with thirty-seven embedded creatives from the Cardiff region. The participants were made aware of other work being done by the team, specifically Creative Cardiff, a professional network and information site for the creative community in Cardiff. This means that the research is strongly linked with pragmatic engagement and community-facing activities, both feeding into them and benefitting from them, rather than being conducted in isolated academic conditions.

The lunchtime seminar strengthened the links between the Creative Economy Team as a whole and the participant contingent, and allowed information about the wider context and purposes served by the research to be communicated to the largely non-academic audience.

In certain cases, the interview encouraged participants to think about their work in a way they hadn't before, or to open the beginnings of a critical dialogue with themselves about the nature of creativity and how it could be seen to relate to their work. Although difficult to directly measure, this was felt to be an achievement because it suggested the receptiveness of the subject group to the questions being posed.

11.2 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The project placed great demands on time, meaning that it was a perfect opportunity to push the use of project management skills. These had been developed by the researcher in the course of completing their PhD just before beginning this project, but the self-contained nature of the work, and the fact that the researcher was given sole responsibility for its day-to-day success, meant that a need was felt from the outset to keep documents networked (using Google Drive) and to schedule tasks in some detail to remain on target and keep colleagues informed with progress at any point.

Considerable effort was spent in recruiting participants to the study owing to the need to find a substantial group in a relatively short amount of time, and this necessitated becoming more confident and familiar with phone use and strategic in the choice of contact point.

11 Reflective Summary

The researcher was also able to develop their ability to plan and deliver events. The lunchtime seminar required the booking and arrangement of a suitable meeting room and catering, the gathering or purchase of various equipment and stationery, the planning of several connected activities and a schedule, and the creation of a presentation that would appeal to the largely non-academic audience. This required contacting a number of different university departments such as room bookings, car parking, and catering, working with Prezi to create the presentation, and being creative in order to devise activities that would keep the audience interested in the subject for the whole event. Furthermore, the opportunity to run the two hour session and manage its various tasks was great practice for a one hour seminar session that the researcher ran at the CILIP Cymru 2016 annual conference in Swansea three weeks later.

Both the research itself, and the work with the Creative Economy Team at Cardiff, provided many personal meetings with people who would not otherwise have been met. This was therefore an excellent opportunity for the researcher to network among academics, colleagues, research participants, Cardiff Council, and the Welsh Government, and additionally allowed a better understanding of the context of the subject area, as well as the nature of work as an academic.

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13 APPENDICES

13.1 CODE LIST

Attitudes towards colleagues

Challenges when starting role

Digital

Education

Evolution of the role

Examples of innovation

Familiarity with terms "embedded creative" or "creative economy"

Importance of creativity in career decisions

Importance of creativity to organisation

In-house and outsourcing

Interest in Creative Cardiff

Job description

Job prospects

Number of creative jobs in organisation

One hypothetical change to role

Perception of creativity in own job

Perception of creativity in past jobs

Personal interests

Professional networks

Proportion of colleagues creatively occupied

Public, private, third sector comparisons

Reasoning in choosing current role

Relationship to aspirations

Role's use of participant's skills

Theorising on creativity

Training

Unity of creatives in organisation

Working as specialist vs. embedded

Working in Wales

13.2 REPORTED ORGANISATION SIZES ARRANGED BY SECTOR

The following tree diagram shows the sizes of participants' organisations, as reported by the participants, divided according to the sector in which they exist. Micro organisations are defined here (in partial overlap with EU definitions, which also include a turnover component) as those employing fewer than 10 people. Small organisations contain from 11 to 50 employees; medium organisations contain from to 51 to 250; large organisations contain more than 250. Those who didn't report an organisation size are listed as "Unassigned".
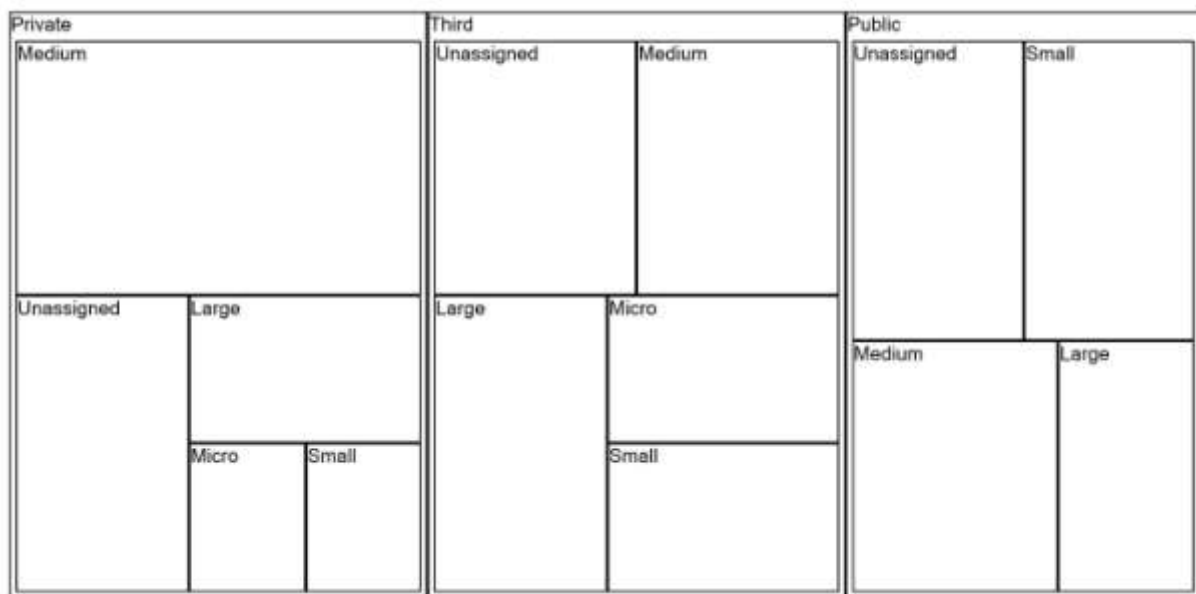
13.3 QUESTIONNAIRE TRANSCRIPT

1. Your Details

This is where you can enter your personal details, to help us contextualise your answers

   a. Name (optional)

   b. Organisation (optional)

   c. Organisation's sector/industry (e.g. private sector, retail etc.)

   d. Your job

   e. How long have you worked in your current job? (Optional)

2. Your Work

   a. Would you describe your work as creative? (Please circle a number)

(Not at all)   1   2   3   4   5   (Very much)

b. Please briefly explain. For instance, do you consider yourself to be working within the creative economy?

c. To what extent are creativity and creative skills valued in your sector?

(Not at all)   1   2   3   4   5   (Very much)

d. Could these skills be better valued within your sector?

(Not at all)   1   2   3   4   5   (Very much)

e. Please explain your answer

f. Do you have aspirations to address particular gaps in your skill set?

(Not at all)   1   2   3   4   5   (Very much)

g. If so, please indicate which areas (perhaps digital, comms, coding, legal, presentation, marketing etc.)

h. How much have you used the Creative Cardiff professional network? (Please circle one)

No familiarity   Have heard of it   Rarely used   Used often   Used to use

i. Do you think such a service might be useful to you in future?

(Not at all)   1   2   3   4   5   (Very much)

j. Please explain

k. If you've used it already, do you think it could be made to work better?

(Not at all)   1   2   3   4   5   (Very much)

l. Please explain

3. Additional thoughts...

a. Please use this space to add anything extra about your work as an embedded creative that you think we should know about

Thank you