

**Creative Digital Collaboration in Publishing:  
How do digital collaborative partnerships work and  
how might publishing companies adapt to facilitate  
them?**

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## **Declaration**

I, Francesca Rachel Catriona Hall, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:



## **Abstract**

Digital transformation has led to many challenges and opportunities for the book and journal publishing industry. In response, publishers have been developing new apps and websites and expanding their digital portfolios. New product development of this sort is complex and iterative; it requires new ways of working and publishers have been experimenting through collaborative projects. While publishers are experienced at working with people, whether content creators or suppliers, these new collaborations reflect a different approach. They involve working with different sorts of creative individuals and organisations, revealing more clearly how publishing sits within the context of the wider creative industries.

This research examines new-style collaborations that experiment with innovative digital formats in order to understand how they work and what publishers can do to facilitate them. It presents an initial survey conducted with industry leaders to examine their approach to digital change and their view of the importance of collaboration. It then takes a case study approach, examining four cases in depth, using interviews, observations and document analysis.

The first three cases look at products (a gamebook, an education project and an academic website) to see how collaborations are formed and operate, examining shared characteristics that reflect theories of collaboration and network behaviour. The fourth case explores how collaborative activity can be facilitated within an organisation through workspace.

A blueprint for setting up effective collaborations emerges from the research, which concludes with two summary concepts. The first, para-organisations, shows publishers how they can structure experimental projects through small satellite organisations that sit outside

traditional hierarchy and are dynamic, have agency and are active in the process of innovation. The second is about using work-spaces and corporate culture to develop a collaborative mindset. This focuses on developing staff skills so that they have collaborative sensitivities to network effectively, collaborate well internally and externally, and see the opportunities for learning, creativity and innovation through collaborative activity. These approaches allow the industry to innovate and compete effectively in order to thrive in the rapidly evolving new digital landscape.

## **Impact Statement**

The emergence of digital technology has had considerable impact in almost every aspect of the publishing industry, and in particular in the area of digital product development. In an initial survey conducted for this thesis, leaders across different sectors in publishing acknowledge that, as part of their digital strategies, they need to collaborate more in order to compete and grow. They are also aware that digital innovation can be disruptive, costly and time consuming. In the survey, therefore, publishers show that they are interested to develop ways in which they can collaborate and innovate successfully on digital projects. As one survey respondent said: ‘there is no way of knowing what the next technological or social innovation will be, but we do know that innovation moves quickly...are publishers, with siloed teams, able to respond quickly to those changes?’ This research centres on examining ways in which publishers set up, facilitate and sustain creative digital collaboration effectively in order to respond to those changes.

The research has impact in a number of ways. First, during the research process, participants reflected on the importance of digital collaboration, recognising what worked well and what was less effective. They were interested to review their projects in order to inform their ongoing collaborative activity: a digital director noted that looking back on it led her to recognise the value of the agile process; a chief executive commented that the research helped them, as they were ‘very keen to measure’ their change programme; while another noted: ‘publishing is an act of finding a proposition that is going to work’ and reviewing the case study led him to recognise what had been achieved.

The second broad impact is the relevance of the findings for the industry going forward. The thesis provides new knowledge in the form of a blueprint for effective creative digital collaboration, illustrating how publishing collaborations can be set up and structured in order to achieve success. Concepts that evolve from the thesis provide possible structural

solutions to the problem of organising, managing and sustaining digital collaborations. They show how publishers can structure experimental projects effectively; and how publishers can facilitate on-going collaborative activity through workspace use. These concepts can offer publishers impactful, implementable possibilities to innovate effectively. Currently the researcher is sharing ideas on collaborative mindsets with a major publisher for their relocation.

Finally, this research has importance for future academic research in this area. It extends aspects of collaboration theory in the creative sector by examining the way collaborations can be facilitated by parent organisations, and develops aspects of network theory through emerging concepts of value. Additionally, the research design presents a process for researching collaborations which can be used more widely: for instance, the researcher is currently carrying out a project at a museum, examining a programme for developing collaborative mindsets through workplace change.

In order to ensure effective dissemination, the findings will be presented in industry-facing talks and reports, as well as published in academic peer reviewed work and presented at conferences.

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## **CHAPTER 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This thesis explores a particular phenomenon, that of collaborations, and the way they are organised and managed in a specific creative industry, publishing. New ways of collaborating appear to be emerging in the publishing industry, the catalyst for which has been digital change. The focus of this thesis is on the book publishing industry which has undergone some significant transformation due to developments in digital technology (Bhaskar, 2013, 2019; Bhaskar and Phillips, 2019; Ray Murray and Squires, 2013; Phillips, 2014; Steiner, 2018; Thompson, 2004): as Michael Bhaskar and Angus Phillips note: ‘uncertainty is the condition we operate in’ referring to the turbulence generated by rapid technological changes (Bhaskar and Phillips, 2019:424).

The impacts can be viewed as particularly significant in two ways. The first is around opportunity: it has led to new products and new ways of producing and distributing content. The second is around threat: the environment has changed such that new competitors can enter, and have entered, the market place. While publishing is the particular case in point, very similar impacts can be observed across other creative industries (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013; Deuze, 2007, 2013; Jenkins, 2008; Publisher’s Association, 2018; Simon and Bogdanowicz, 2012).

These impacts have led to new behaviours in the way publishing companies operate. One of these changes appears to be in the way the industry collaborates with partners around digital projects. Collaboration is important for many creative industries and it is significant that publishing appears to be collaborating with a wider range of creative partners, particularly in relation to digital product development. It appears too that there is a change in the way these collaborations operate. Converging cultures between different sorts of creative



outputs appear to be part of this change, as are new approaches to innovation as a result of increased competition (Jenkins, 2008, Kaats and Opheij, 2014).

The research examines the new styles of collaboration, observing the importance of behaving in particular organisational ways in order to make these collaborations effective (e.g. in terms of organisational learning and experimentation). These types of collaboration may be important for innovative developments, which aim to do something different from the day to day work of the publisher. This may indicate that the structure and organisation of the industry, as it currently is, may need to adapt, in order to facilitate these sorts of creative collaborations. There appears to be an increasing emphasis on encouraging and enabling digital collaboration through organisational culture and management approaches that make it easier for staff to connect and collaborate. Changes in work place environments that allow for experimentation and creativity are also part of this phenomenon.

The overall aim of this thesis is to examine how collaborations operate and to see how different participants view that collaborative activity. From that, it is hoped that conclusions can be drawn about whether these collaborations are behaving in new ways, and, if so, what their defining characteristics are. This research seeks to measure aspects of a collaboration that are not necessarily about the financial impacts of a project; it will pay attention to other aspects of the collaboration that may lead to different kinds of benefits – such as increased competitiveness and creativity, organisational learning and effective methods of innovation. In doing this it seeks to apply aspects of network and collaboration theories, with reference to the wider creative industries, in order to identify the distinctive behaviours of the collaboration.

This thesis explores three different digital projects which involve collaborative activity, taking a case study approach. It looks at the way these collaborations develop and

how they work to see if they seem to be operating in ways that could be termed as new and whether they share distinctive characteristics. It then explores a fourth case which provides an example of the organisational approach to encourage such collaboration. From this data the thesis then considers how far it is possible to encourage these sorts of collaborations through organisational behaviour.

## **1.2 The research questions**

The overall question is:

**Creative Digital Collaboration in Publishing: How do digital collaborative partnerships work and how might publishing companies adapt to facilitate them?**

This has been broken down into sub questions. These develop progressively. The first set of sub questions focuses on identifying whether there is a phenomenon to be examined:

- Is there an indication that new types of digital collaboration are being undertaken in the industry?
- If so, how far is the changing digital environment one of the drivers of new collaborative activity?

These questions establish the principle that there is some change apparent in the way collaborations are being undertaken. If this is proved, the second stage of questions focuses on examining the way collaborations work, examining three stages in the collaborative process:

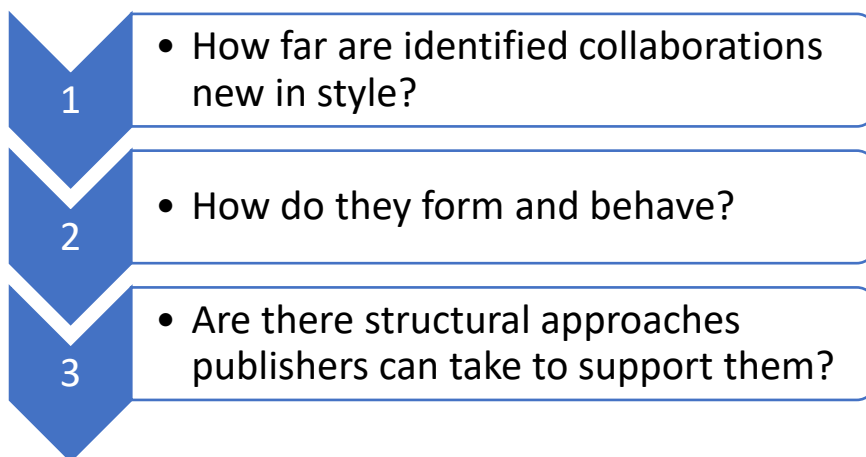
- Forming: how do collaborations come together and with what different sorts of companies/industries have publishers collaborated?
- Operating: How do these collaborations work?

- Outcomes: What are these collaborations aiming for as an outcome and how successful are they in achieving it?

It is hoped these questions will establish the ways in which these collaborations are different: this will lead to the final question where the research goes on to ask:

- Are there ways in which publishing organisations can support and facilitate collaborative activity?

The research questions can be summarised as taking a three-stage approach to answer the overarching question as shown in figure 1.1.



**Figure 1.1 Breakdown of the research questions**

### **Defining creative digital collaborations**

While definitions of collaboration are varied and will be explored in the review of literature and theory later in the thesis, this research starts with the concept of collaboration as an activity that involves a number of partners who step outside their day to day roles and activities in order to work together on a specific project. Companies and individuals can be involved in the collaboration; they are generally equal partners and develop a shared process

for working together. The collaborations studied here are digital collaborations in that they are aiming to develop or facilitate the development of new digital products. The collaborations are creative in that they are experimental; they are looking at creative ideas that may or may not be successful but involve trying out new things. They also sit within the wider creative sector, an environment where collaborative projects are essential for creativity and innovation. The research design, therefore, identifies creative digital collaborations that reflect these characteristics and also examines the organisational context in which such collaborations sit.

### **1.3 Scope**

#### **Industry scope**

The research concentrates on the book publishing industry and examines three different examples of digital products and one example of a structural approach to collaboration. It takes examples from across different sectors (educational, academic, consumer) as it is examining publishing industry as a whole. Some sectors are more advanced in digital development than others (e.g. academic publishing) but the focus of the research is on the collaborative activity itself and whether that has changed. As such, it is possible new ways of collaborating may be taking place in any sector of publishing, whether they are digitally advanced or not. It will examine any similarities and differences in the behaviour of the different sectors, particularly exploring whether they are outward looking or extending their boundaries in some way (through potential participants, for example). The research will look at different sectors and different sizes of projects to see if there are characteristics that can be identified across all of these sectors. The research also focuses on UK-based companies, though some of them may be part of international organisations, and so the collaborations examined are directed primarily to the UK market.

## **Product scope**

The focus of the research throughout is on digital collaboration which is identified as the collaboration on the creation of a digital product. Digital publishing accounts for 25% of UK book sales (The Publisher's Association, 2019); of that many are ebooks, converted print books using EPUB for reading devices and apps like Kindle. As John Maxwell notes, the ebook does not represent 'a revolutionary new moment for the book' (Maxwell, 2019:342); the format of the book is still very recognisable, even in this digital context, and as such is not a big innovation in form. This thesis does not look at ebooks but focuses on new forms of digital products which are here termed, as noted above, creative digital collaborations. The focus is not on the use of digital tools in order to collaborate, but on the creative product that emerges when developing new digital ideas. App and web-based products are the digital collaborations under scrutiny and they reflect one of the growing, creative areas of publishing in the form of new product development and innovation. This is important because the research fundamentally examines the longer-term drive within the industry to develop its creative strengths and innovate in terms of publishing format; it aims to explore the innovation around digital products as one of many possible responses to the digital transformation of the content industries and their related imperative for structural changes.

The digital products under examination are integrated, usually involve a variety of different content sources and data rendering, and are mostly multi-media. There is not a large quantity of these sorts of products nor organisations creating them. This means the scope of the sample is quite small and the products examined for their collaborative story are specific and not necessarily well-known. Additionally, the examination of the organisational environment in which collaboration is being encouraged (which is a focus for one of the case studies) helps understand more about the strategic motivations behind undertaking digital collaborations (rather than on a specific collaboration).

## 1.4 Outline of the literature and conceptual frameworks

### The literature themes

The first part of the thesis undertakes a systematic review of the relevant literature. First, it provides a context to the publishing industry, the nature of digital change and the creative sector. It then leads to the development of conceptual frameworks, network behaviour and collaboration theory, that will be used to examine the collaborations.

This review focuses on the following key themes:

1. Overview to **current publishing industry** focusing on the organisational structures in place and providing a review of the relevant elements of publishing theory
2. An examination of **publishing within the digital context**, examining both the effect of digital transformation on the industry and the changing theoretical frameworks for publishing that are emerging because of digital change
3. The positioning of publishing within **the wider creative industry** in order to make connections to an industry with which it is collaborating more widely
4. The exploration of **network theory** insofar as it relates to the way creative industries link to each other and the way creative projects come about; the literature here focuses in particular on the sort of networks that drive creativity and how they lead to organisational structures and organizational learning
5. Linked to this an exploration of what could be termed **collaboration theory**, as far as it exists, and what theories are applicable within the study of collaborative behaviour that can be applied to creative projects, with reference to the digital environment.

A summary of the themes that this research examines is depicted in figure 1.2.



**Figure 1.2 Summary of themes covered from the literature**

### **Context**

The first three themes outlined above form the publishing **context** for the study. The analysis of publishing industry, its current structures and digital developments provide the background in terms of how far publishing organisations may need to change; this seeks to establish how they currently accommodate collaborative innovation around digital product development to see if new approaches are emerging. Examining the context of the creative industries positions publishing as a participant in that wider field where the opportunities for digital development and creative collaboration can lie.

### **Conceptual frameworks**

The last two areas extend beyond publishing to provide a detailed review of the sorts of theories that can be applied when examining collaborations. As such they provide the **overarching theoretical frameworks** against which the publishing collaborations will be measured. Theories that emerge from the discussion of existing research will be used to test the collaborations and these have from two related arenas:

**Network theory** – which will be applied particularly when examining the way collaborations come together and the widening range of partners which lead to a level of creative energy – These theories will be used, therefore, to examine the forming stages of the collaboration.

and

**Collaboration theory** – this appears to be a loose term but it is useful to see how collaboration occurs, how collaborations behave and how outcomes are measured; this will set up framework with which to examine the case studies. These will be applied to the operating and outcomes stages of collaboration.

Related topics of organisational knowledge, learning and innovation form sub-themes that are also explored in the review; these are examined from within the context of network and collaboration theory. In particular one main theoretical framework will be used when examining the collaborations – a typology of strategic partnerships that has been developed by Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij (2014). This is useful as a way to characterise and test different sorts of collaborations and should therefore help distinguish between ‘older’ style collaborations and ‘new’ ones. Specifically, this thesis examines whether these digital publishing collaborations fit the characteristics Kaats and Opheij identify as *explorative* or *entrepreneurial* (Kaats and Opheij, 2014).

It should be noted that some of these theories under review are large in scope (organisational behaviour and network theory for instance) so boundaries will be laid out within which the research will be operating; this will be undertaken in the related chapters. The main interdisciplinary approach of this thesis focuses on publishing theory and business theory, but there is reference to aspects of wider network theory and related creativity and innovation theory that draw on sociological and economic theory. The overall aim is to reach



a synthesis of the literature from a multidisciplinary view point to set the scene for, and inform, an exploration of collaborative activity within the field of publishing.

### **1.5 Outline of the primary research.**

The thesis uses the secondary research, outlined above, to establish ways to test the formation and effectiveness of creative collaborations, and to examine change in relation to the organisational structure of the industry. The primary research will then explore these issues in relation to specific collaborations that have taken place.

#### **Survey**

The research takes place in two main stages. The first part is a survey with industry leaders that examines how far collaboration is happening in the industry, whether behaviour is changing to encompass new styles of collaboration and whether it is believed they are impacting the wider structural change taking place. The survey has two main objectives: the first to assess how far the collaborations undertaken now are indeed different in the eyes of the participants from previous collaborations. The second aspect is to assess how far structural change is regarded as critical by industry leaders in order to encourage, among other things, a growing necessity to collaborate in new ways. This survey is important for establishing a base line for the rest of the research particularly in relation to digital change, to test how far it is the digital environment that is leading to these changes in behaviour and structure.

#### **Case studies**

The second stage is the focus on four detailed case studies of collaborations and collaborative spaces which forms the main body of the research; this is in order to explore more specifically the way these collaborations are different by understanding how they operate, how successful they are and what makes them work effectively. Three case studies have been

identified to be examined in depth. In studying the case studies, the following list summarises the themes that are explored in relation to each case study:

### **Forming stages**

- 1) **Participants** in the collaboration (who they are, how wide ranging they are)
- 2) How the collaboration **forms** (what networks enable the collaboration to come together)
- 3) The **vision** behind the collaboration (whether it is led by one person, how key is this to the collaboration's success)

### **Operating stages**

- 4) The **behaviour** of the collaboration (modus operandi around decision making, meetings, roles and use of project management tools)
- 5) The **risk sharing** of the collaboration (as this reflects a move from transactional, supplier-based relationships)

### **Outcomes**

- 6) The **outcomes** of the collaboration and measurement of them (what is expected from it, are there different ambitions for them)
- 7) The **learning** from the collaboration and the **creative** experience within them.

By using these as measures for collaboration, it is hoped the research will illustrate how these collaborations can be viewed as operating in ways that are new to the industry.

Concurrently the research will examine the way organisations are responding to the need to develop new digital products, to see how far it recognises that there is potential in new collaborative activity. Where it does recognise it, the research will be examining ways

these organisations have changed themselves in order to facilitate and promote new-style collaborations. Therefore, a fourth case study has been identified that looks at the organisational response more closely. In this way the research will move on to consider how far publishing companies may need to change themselves, and may already be changing, in order to accommodate collaborative activity, thus answering the final question of the research around how best to structure a company to collaborate effectively.

## **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

After the introduction, a detailed explanation of the research paradigm and approach taken to qualitative enquiry is presented in chapter two to set the scene for the research framework and to explain the choice of the case study approach.

The rest of the thesis is divided into three parts. Part one looks at literature around the publishing context. Chapter three outlines the structure of the publishing industry as it currently stands. Chapter four examines the impact of digital technology on publishing; in this chapter the findings of the survey are presented to provide a base line on the nature of collaboration within publishing on which the rest of the thesis builds. Chapter five unpicks the relationship between publishing and the wider creative industries, the arena with which the industry is collaborating more widely; this links to the way the industry operates through the use of networks.

Part two then presents the frameworks that will be used to test the collaborations. Chapter six and seven lay out the field for network and collaboration theory respectively as relevant to creative projects and they outline the typologies for collaboration.

Part three presents the primary research as subsequent chapters cover the cases one by one. Each case has been chosen for particular characteristics which illustrate different approaches and outcomes from collaborative behaviour. Chapter eight examines a case for a

consumer game book that involved a number of different individual collaborators from different creative industries including a publisher, animator and musician. The case in Chapter nine provides an example of a collaboration between two main partners, a publishing house and an arts organisation on an education product. Chapter ten presents a case study of an academic online database where the publisher worked extensively with software developers partnered with competitor publishers. The last case examines a STM publisher who has created a working environment to encourage collaboration for internal and external projects. A final discussion chapter synthesises the findings of these cases; it will examine the shared characteristics across these cases; and it will reflect upon network and collaboration theory in relation to these findings. From this the research will be able to outline ideal forms for effective collaboration and present a view of the way of a publishing house can organise itself to enable it to collaborate and innovate effectively.

## **Chapter 2 Research Methodology**

### **2.1 Chapter overview**

This chapter will present the research design. The research is situated in a post-positivist framework and takes a qualitative and abductive approach. It adopts a case study methodology and focuses on four case studies. It draws on reflexive research theory (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). This chapter outlines the research process with attention paid to validity and reliability, acknowledging that qualitative research and interpretivist approaches can sometimes be seen as loose and unreliable. In order to defend the approach taken, in particular the small sample, this chapter takes a three-part approach as follows:

1. The first section examines the philosophical framework for the research. It will look at the research paradigm and the approach taken to theory development, recognising research as a social process. It includes an examination of the importance of reflection in the research process.
2. The second section focuses in on the specific methodology chosen for the research. A case study methodology, as outlined by Robert K. Yin (2013), forms the basis of the research and this approach will be explained and the case study design laid out. The focus of the research was on examining the way collaborations operate through the exploration of specific case studies. This section will outline the choice of case studies.
3. The remainder of the chapter will cover the specifics of data collection, looking at a range of methods used in the development of the case studies, including interviews

and content analysis. The presentation of the research methods adopted follows the approach taken by Meyer (2001) who recognises that case studies need to be presented with care to reinforce their validity.

This chapter will also include an outline of the approach to research ethics and acknowledges the limitations of the methodology and data collection methods chosen.

Many aspects of the research were checked against tests presented by research methods writers to ensure appropriateness and quality of the research design. It is important that tests of reliability and validity are in place for this type of research, so that theory development can be regarded as sound and rigorously tested. These tests are presented in the appendix 10 (p439).

Prior to the main research, an initial survey was undertaken to test the hypothesis that collaborations are changing in style due to the changes in the digital environment. This research will be outlined in chapter four.

## **2.2 The research paradigm and approach to theory development**

### **The research paradigm.**

The first section of this chapter outlines the research paradigm. Because of the multidisciplinary nature of the field under review, and the social context in which it is situated, it is necessary to examine the research design in some detail in order to ensure that it is appropriate.

### **Post-positivist approach**

The research undertakes to examine collaborative activity by looking at three specific digital product collaborations and at one company which is encouraging collaboration. The research centres on asking a range of people who are participating in those collaborations about their

views of the projects in which they are involved or the organisation in which they sit. It takes a qualitative approach and examines phenomena which are fluid and open to interpretation (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). As such this research is situated in a post-positivist framework (Creswell, 2007; Davies, 2008; Flick, 2008).

The research aims to explore how digital collaborations and collaborative activity feel to different participants. From this information the research attempts to identify characteristics that both reflect the ‘newness’ of these collaborations and the organisational aspects that make them workable at different levels, for different members of the collaboration. From this exploration it assesses where these collaborations fit within the typologies for collaboration as laid out by Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij (2014) and outlined in chapter seven (p199). It can then make sense of the processes and structural aspects that need to be in place to ensure these new collaborations work and achieve what they need to achieve.

The collaborations and collaborative environments under exploration tell stories that are dependent on the individual participants’ concepts both of collaboration in general and of specific collaborative situations. It asks them how they saw collaboration working and what they felt was effective about it. The effectiveness of a collaboration’s set up and organisation, therefore, is not fixed and definable, but instead emerges from the different views from the participants involved. Since each participant will have had a different role within the collaboration, each person’s view of the whole will be unlike another’s; this tracking of different participants involvement, in order to build a more complex and complete picture, has some relationship to Bruno Latour’s actor network theory (Latour, 2007). Interpretations, fundamental to a post-positivist framework, therefore, will be key aspects of the research as it explores the experience of different participants and attempts to build a rounded picture.

## **The role of the researcher and reflexivity**

The researcher's involvement is evident across the research, whether in the choice of questions or in the examination of the data. This can cause problems for the complete objectivity of the research. However, this can have benefits too: depth of analysis can be reached very quickly as it builds on an understanding of the context; and a reflective gloss can exist that can, at times, enable findings to be examined more deeply. For Matts Alvesson and Kaj Skoldberg (2009) reflexivity is central to the research process: the researcher's reflection and knowledge is a fruitful part of the analytical stages which can add to the texture of the research and the depth of findings. The researcher becomes a way to collect data and a medium through which that data passes (Creswell, 2007); accepting and understanding the implications of a researcher's role for any piece of research is important in terms of the qualitative approach. It reinforces that the research paradigm is post-positivist and interpretative. As Joseph Maxwell says of researchers, 'as observers and interpreters of the world, we are inextricably part of it' (Maxwell, 1992:41).

The researcher in this case not only has some prior-knowledge of the field but has also been a participant in it themselves so comes with a developed understanding of the behaviour of the industry. For Christine Meyer this sort of prior knowledge means researchers can be alert to points that emerge from the data, as well as inform the pre-interpretation, for example to generate codes (Meyer, 2001). In this way, the knowledge already held by the researcher of the cultural and business context of publishing can play a role in the collection and interpretation of the findings.

Therefore, the researcher's role is manifold, and can be seen at various stages:

- The researcher's understanding of context is important for collecting data effectively.

Alvesson and Skoldberg suggest a good understanding of the context should be



established by participant observation when conducting research; in this case the researcher's prior knowledge of the field leads to the same position.

- The researcher participates in the research itself – when conducting interviews or building case studies the researcher is actively interacting with the data as it is collected
- The researcher's interpretation of the data also makes them part of the research design – their sequencing, filtering and framing of the data is part of that process of refinement.

The reflexivity of the researcher is central at each of these stages and is integrated into the process of the research as it leads to theory development. Here again there is a link to actor network theory (Latour, 2007); the research recognises the extension of the researcher as an actor in the research, creating a continuous connection between the participants and the researcher through which analysis can emerge.

### **Why qualitative enquiry?**

The research conducted in this thesis is essentially qualitative. The survey involves some quantitative findings but broadly the research explores depth around interviews and narrative from individuals involved in collaborative activity. It is in this way that qualitative approaches are able to manage the 'pluralization of life worlds' (Flick, 2008) both at the level of the individual (and their understanding of their collaborative activity), and at the level of the collaboration as a whole (involving many individuals with different approaches to the same activity). Context is central to understanding the collaborative activity. As John Creswell states, qualitative research allows for 'complex, detailed understanding of the issues' and is necessary when 'we want to understand contexts or settings in which participants ... address a problem or issues' (2007:40). For the participants of this study the

context for their collaborations is central, as their collaborative activity is driven by the wider digital trends of the industry. However, the collaboration also forms a context in itself: the behaviour within the context of a particular collaboration is part of what is under scrutiny.

Qualitative enquiry is also appropriate as it can effectively enable an exploration into something temporary – both in terms of the individual experience and in terms of the whole collaboration (Flick, 2008). A further important and distinguishing feature of qualitative research is the explicit acknowledgement of the researcher: qualitative enquiry allows for reflexivity of the researcher and the researched as noted (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009; Flick, 2008; Latour, 2007).

Finally, a qualitative approach is appropriate as the subject under scrutiny provides only a handful of case studies. The examples of digital collaborations are few so it is difficult to undertake the sort of research which allows for widely generalizable approaches. While the number of cases is limited, nevertheless it is important to unpick the examples of current collaborations in order to review the opportunities in the future. As the phenomenon is growing (as the survey presented in chapter four identifies, p138) there is value in studying the examples that exist, limited in number though they are, to identify trends moving forward. In order to unpick these in some depth, qualitative enquiry generates probing and rich data; examining impacts at individual and organisational level will allow for a deeper understanding of the behaviour of collaborations. While the quantity of collaborations of this sort are limited, each one is extremely rich offering layers of qualitative data.

Further tests for the research have been used in order to confirm it reflects the characteristics of qualitative enquiry. These tests use Uwe Flick's list of four features of qualitative research features (2008:14) and they are summarised in appendix 10.1 (p439). Furthermore, it uses Creswell's tests to ensure the qualitative research conducted is good

quality (appendix 10.2 p439). The research encompasses these features effectively and reinforces that the qualitative approach is appropriate.

### **Deductive, inductive and abductive research choices**

Having established that this research is post-positivist and qualitative, this section looks more closely at the way theory will be developed from the research, including an exploration of the choice of an abductive approach over deductive and inductive approaches. It is the relationship between theory and research that is one of the differences between these approaches. The theory in this thesis emerges from the research rather than precedes it: in this sense a deductive approach, where a hypothesis is clearly laid down and tested, is not appropriate.

The research takes a more inductive approach, exploratory in emphasis, which it is hoped will allow the researcher to see what arises from the data and formulate a theory from that. However, an inductive approach, such as grounded theory, can also leave research open to accusations of too much generalisation around only a few cases (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). Additionally, inductive research needs to be kept as open as possible in order to see what is revealed by the ground up process (Glaser and Strauss, 2009). Therefore, it is difficult to be a researcher for this sort of research if they have been subsumed into the business of publishing at an earlier stage of their career (as in this case); while inductive approaches are more appropriate than deductive ones, this approach still encounters problems.

Furthermore, research design, at times, may need to adapt as it is in process. Theory testing or theory creation in inductive and deductive approaches can be regarded as too linear, or too systematic and pre-determined in structure (Blaikie, 2009). Abductive reasoning can allow flexibility as data emerges; it is a process in which 'theory is generated side by side with data collection and analysis, with the research moving back and forth in the field in

order to construct theoretically sound positions that accurately reflect the nature and range of the empirical evidence' (Davies, 2007:234). In this way the interpretation is continuous and fuels further exploration within the research design; the sense making process therefore is continuous and reactive.

For Creswell an emergent research design is a key part of the qualitative research process: 'the questions may change, the forms of data collection may shift and the individuals studied and sites visited may be modified' (2007:39). For this research it is clear different participants could emerge through the process of the research thus leading to further data collection so an iterative approach is recognised as essential. It is also possible that for smaller samples, such as in the case of this research, this flexible approach makes sense, given the limited number of the objects for the research. It could be wasteful of valuable sample if one adheres to just one linear process until the research is concluded, without adjusting it where problems or additional material emerges. It is important to get as much valuable data from the sample as possible through an iterative approach.

### **The abductive process**

While inductive approaches reject pre-conceptions, abductive approaches do not – instead an abductive approach allows for a 'source of inspiration, for the discovering of patterns that bring understanding.' (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009:4). The researcher's prior knowledge of the publishing industry can therefore be a help in theory development. An abductive approach avoids 'straitjackets' on research processes (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009:4). As such, these approaches are particularly suited to case study research: in it 'an (often surprising) single case is interpreted from hypothetical, overarching pattern.... The interpretation should then be strengthened by new observations (new cases)' (2009:4). With a focus on underlying patterns, abduction allows for the continuous interplay of theory and

empirical data to reach conclusions. An abductive approach, therefore, is more in tune with the possibilities of this research. As Norman Blaikie says, when designing social research what an abductive approach encourages is a situation where ‘data and theoretical ideas are played off against one other, in a developmental and creative process’ (2009:156).

One of the aspects of qualitative data is the potential for layers of interpretation; the slipperiness of data may need to be recognised in the philosophical approach to research, and abductive research can accommodate this. The interplay between research and theory becomes important: “abduction is a process by which the researcher assembles lay accounts of the phenomenon in question, with all their gaps and deficiencies, and, in an iterative manner, begins to construct his or her own account” (Blaikie, 2009:156). As Blaikie continues, this iterative approach is the process by which the researcher alternates ‘periods of immersion in the relevant social world and periods of withdrawal for reflection and analysis’ (2009:156.) This can then lead to adjustment of the research design as the data requires.

### **Notions of validity in qualitative research**

Abductive approaches provide a level of flexibility that ensures as much data as possible can be drawn from the data set. However, it is also important to ensure the qualitative research is carried out effectively to ensure the data obtained is valid and is used reliably. Validity is of concern in relation to positivist enquiry where theory development is very clearly delineated and structured as to be provable through positivistic frameworks (Huberman and Miles, 2002). For empirical and quantitative schools, validity is usually more clear-cut. It is the more interpretivist and subjective nature of the qualitative research that makes proving validity more challenging.

For this reason, there is a preoccupation among researchers with ways to prove qualitative research is valid (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009; Huberman and Miles, 2002;

Maxwell, 1992; Rapley, 2008). Tim Rapley (2009) goes further to question the terms 'validity' and 'reliability' in themselves as he feels they are somewhat out dated. He cites Norman Denzin when he says 'gone are the words 'theory', 'hypothesis', 'concept', 'indicate', 'coding scheme'...' (2009:128) as he unpicks what he sees as crisis in qualitative research: he views words like 'validity' and 'reliability' as positivist notions.

Notwithstanding this argument, many theorists have spent some time illustrating the way qualitative research, across various methodologies, can establish validity, to prove the theory developed can be viewed as a reasonable deduction from the data.

There are a variety of solutions that involve semi-formal tests for validity. This research has been tested against the five styles of validity proposed by Maxwell (1992), the details of which can be found in appendix 10.3 (p442). The presentation of the research finding takes his approach into account. It first outlines the case studies individually (descriptive and interpretative stages of validity (Maxwell, 1992:48)); it then offers cross comparison and more generalised emergent themes in the discussion chapter (chapter 12 p341) which resembles Maxwell's stage of 'theoretical validity' so that theories start to emerge or 'transcend' (Maxwell, 1992:50); and finally the conclusion in chapter 13 (presents a synthesis which is analogous to Maxwell's evaluative validity (Maxwell, 1992:50). Evaluative validity also links to the reflexive methodological approaches of Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) in terms of the involvement of the researcher to analyse and interpret the data effectively so as to be valid.

At a more fundamental level, research is about constructing conceptual frames; but conceptual frames can be 'notoriously various' (Huberman and Miles, 2002), developed in various ways in the researcher's mind; as such, issues of validity can therefore appear intangible. By charting the process of the research, researchers can show a clear path towards

theory that, in itself, creates validity, without the need for further tests and proofs. So, the research process itself means the research can be accepted as relevant and valid.

## **2.3 Case study research design**

### **Defining the cases**

The research has chosen to focus on creative digital collaborations. Various definitions of what collaborations emerge from the discussion of the literature in later chapters, but an initial definition is required in order to construct the methodology. The research focuses on collaborations that have been observed taking place in publishing and which are focused on developing new types of digital products. Collaboration in this sense involves a variety of people from organisations or as individuals, working towards a common goal (Kaats and Opheij: 2014); the collaborations studied are aiming to make a new type of digital book, app or website; and the experimental nature of their project leads to levels of creativity in the projects, and so the collaborations are defined as creative digital collaborations. This definition is used to select the three product cases (as outlined below).

There is a wider point about collaborations though that is also considered in this research. Collaboration can be defined as the connecting up of different people, who bring a variety of ideas and solutions to a problem. If this is the case, then the research should also look at the context in which collaborative activity takes place and the conditions that enable collaborations to come about; this is in order to understand how collaborative connections come about and examine the opportunities for innovation that they lead to. Therefore, the research also needs to consider the arena in which collaborative activity can take place, as well as individual collaborations; for this reason, a further case examines the organisational context for collaborations.

This understanding of collaboration serves as a starting point for taking a case study approach so that cases can be identified that fit these initial definitions of collaboration. Recognising that the research can be framed within a qualitative, abductive approach, and with tests in place to ensure validity around theory development, this section now examines more closely the choice of case study methodology.

### **The data requirements**

In order to assess the sort of data required, the overall research question was broken down first into five broad parts:

1. Is there an indication that new types of digital collaboration are being undertaken in the industry?
2. If so, how far is the changing digital environment one of the drivers of new collaborative activity?
3. Forming: how do collaborations come together and with what different sorts of companies/industries have publishers collaborated?
4. Operating: How do these collaborations work?
5. Outcomes: What are these collaborations aiming for as an outcome and how successful are they in achieving it?

There was one final question that brings these findings to bear on the wider industry:

- Are there ways in which publishing organisations can support and facilitate collaborative activity?

These questions together essentially explore organisational and strategic issues for collaborative activity.



A data requirements table was prepared in order to break these questions down further and provide a useful summary of what information would be needed (Saunders, 2009). This then was used to create an appropriate research design. The data requirements table can be found in the appendix one (p401).

From the data requirements it was identified that a survey was needed, in the first instance, to establish there was indeed a phenomenon that could be identified, beyond casual observation, around new styles of collaboration: this survey therefore aimed to answer question one and two. Then, it was necessary to unpick aspects of collaboration more closely in order to answer questions three, four and five. Research to describe and analyse what was going on within these collaborations in more detail was required in order to understand how their behaviour differed from past activity and then, how they might lead to impacts on publishing structure (question six).

### **The choice of case study approach**

The data requirements clearly reinforced that the most appropriate methodology to choose would be a case study-based methodology and Yin (2013) was used to frame the research design. As Christine Meyer states, citing Jean Hartley (1994), case studies are often used for organisational research ‘where new processes or behaviours are little understood’ (Meyer, 2001:330); Robert Yin concurs (2013:39) and Lucy Kung states that case studies help build an ‘understanding organisations from the perspective of those working in them, with a focus on how meaning is constructed out of events and phenomena’ (2008:122). The reasons case studies were regarded as the most useful approach can be summarised as follows:

- they offer a form of empirical enquiry that looks at contemporary phenomenon and its real-world context;
- they look in depth and can cope with complexity;

- they take a realist approach;
- they can accommodate relativist approach by ‘acknowledging multiple-realities having multiple meanings’ (Yin, 2013:17);
- they allow the opportunity to apply concepts to explore how they might be enacted within the case. In this case, a framework outlined by Kaats and Opheij for successful collaborations, will be used (2014).

The depth offered by case study research is particularly important (Creswell, 2007, Yin 2013). There are not many examples of digital collaborations as this phenomenon is new so it is important to describe how they work and then explore them in depth, to see if any patterns emerge. Ultimately, cases explore the how and why questions. Meyer concurs stating that case studies are useful because of the need to ‘explore sensitive, ill-defined concepts in depth, over time, taking into account the context’ (Meyer, 2001:349). This also reinforces the need to examine the relationship between the cases individually and the wider digital and structural context.

The relativist approach of case study methodology is also significant: the aim is to draw an all-round picture of a collaboration by examining it from the point of view of different parties to draw conclusions from the different views (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2013). For example, a case study method allows for comparative questions, such as how the vision was shared or how much the different partners felt they learned. It recognises that creating a multi-layered description of each case study is an important outcome for the research; this is a way to understand this phenomenon and its impact effectively.

One further strength of the case study approach is that it can accommodate the researcher’s own prior knowledge of the situation under scrutiny (Meyer, 2001). As noted earlier, this can be fruitful. Meyer suggests this is an important way to avoid presenting

description without meaning when undertaking case studies; researcher's knowledge can emerge from a good grounding in relevant theories but it can also encompass specific knowledge of the institutional conditions and ways of operating; Meyer suggests that while there are dangers if one is too embedded, it can be helpful to the successful interpretation of data and cites Evert Gummesson who says that researchers need to be able to balance 'using their preunderstanding, without being its slave' (Gummesson, cited by Meyer, 2001:331).

### **Theory development from case study work**

While this chapter has looked at theory development from a general qualitative perspective, theory development from case studies is specifically explored by Kathleen Eisenhardt who states that 'one strength of theory building from cases is its likelihood of generating novel theory' (1989:29). Eisenhardt suggest an eight-stage process to building theory from cases. These stages, and the way this research deals with them, are as follows:

- 1) Getting started (in terms of focus on the question, and a-priori constructs): in this case frameworks with which to understand collaborations will be established, which will then inform the variables explored in the case studies themselves.
- 2) Selecting cases effectively: the sampling is discussed below.
- 3) Crafting instruments and protocols: this includes planning data collection methods.
- 4) Entering the field: this reflects on the actual data collection, in this case predominantly through interviews.
- 5) Analysing data: the data analysis will be examined below.
- 6) Shaping hypotheses: by following the stages above theory can start to emerge.
- 7) Enfolding literature: which is a stage whereby findings are tested against existing literature

- 8) Researching closure (through theoretical saturation): this draws final conclusions from the stages of analysis.

By planning and executing a case study approach in this way Eisenhardt suggests theory drawn from the findings can be regarded as sound. At various stages she reinforces the iterative approach in order to develop thinking and get as much out of the data as possible as well as allowing for cross-case analysis and pattern searching. As she says 'a key feature of theory building case research is the freedom to make adjustments during the data collection process' (1989:16) so that emergent themes can be explored more carefully and allow a more thorough approach to help ensure theory development is accurate and reliable. One further test was undertaken to ensure good theory development using Eisenhardt's approach and this is outlined in appendix 10.5 (p445).

Christine Meyer argues that case studies can be seen to have an unclear status as the term is used variously for methodology, research strategy and data collection procedures; so 'researchers need to be very clear about their interpretation of the case study and the purpose of carrying out the study' (Meyer 2001:349). Drawing conclusions from the data therefore must be done with care but case studies still play an important role in theory development in her view. She cites Hartley (1994) as she examines what makes theory developed from case studies valid, even when drawn from a specific and limited number of qualitative cases: 'the detailed knowledge of the organisation, especially the knowledge about the processes underlying the behaviour and its context can help to specify the conditions under which behaviour can be expected to occur. In other words, the generalisation is about theoretical propositions not about populations' (Hartley (1994:225) cited in Meyer, 2001:347).

## **Case study process**

Case study research needs to be conducted with rigour (Creswell,2007; Yin, 2013). One of the strengths of the method is that it can be allow for the tailoring of the data collection but there is also a weakness where research is badly designed and so leads to poor case studies (Meyer, 2001:330). Case study methodologies do more than present a description and light analysis of a business case. It is by recognising the importance of process that case studies move on from being teaching tools or one-off experiments to becoming research methodologies (Yin, 2013:28); for case studies to be considered as a thorough academic process certain things need to be in place.

1. The researcher must reflect a clear understanding of what it can and cannot do;
2. the research design must be thought through;
3. data collection protocols must be in place and
4. detailed procedures for analysis and presentation adopted (Yin, 2013).

Meyer supports the need to be rigorous when designing the research so that it is not left open to criticism (Meyer, 2001). Consideration of these aspects of the research process in themselves ensure validity but Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) would go further to suggest that the thinking that goes on around the research is also part of its test for validity; ensuring there is space and energy to consider each aspect of the research, and to look at alternatives.

An important aspect of case study methodology is the need for it to involve mixed methods: aiming for more than one data set is important to start to build a more comprehensive picture according to Yin (2013). An additional question when designing case study research is how far one case can be useful. A case cannot be understood without context and one case, in one context, might it appear to make for a limited applicability. However, building on Maxwell's point about generalisability (1992), Creswell (2007) and

Yin (2013) both argue that a case study does not mean it has to be widely, externally generalizable to be worthy of researching. They argue that if one looks at data with care with the proper attention to detail, something of use can be gleaned from it and applied to other situations. Case studies therefore provide a useful way to gather rich data on particular phenomenon and ensure the requirements as outlined on the data requirements table are met.

## **2.4 Data collection**

### **Designing the case study approach**

Yin outlines the ‘craftwork’ of the case study approach (2013:27), which he regards as an important aspect of its validity. A particular danger with case studies is that the researcher can get distracted; in finding out a wide variety of detailed information through the in-depth exploration of the case may mean the research loses sight of the main questions. Planning the data collection carefully helps to avoid this. If designed with care the data collection provides a ‘logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences’ (Nachmias and Nachmias 1992 cited by Yin, 2013:28).

As Yin states, when preparing data collection, it is important to ensure that the criteria that will be used to judge the case are clear at the start (2013). The data requirements table ensures that the cases keep on track to answer the principal questions and research avoids going off at a tangent. In this case, the research is mostly exploratory in emphasis. Yin notes it is important that there is ‘constant interaction between theoretical issues being studied and the data collected’ (2013:70) reinforcing the iterative approach outlined earlier; this helps to ensure that any emergent themes are acknowledged as they arise and inform the next stages of data collection so the exploration can build towards knowledge creation. Yin has further tests for validity and reliability in case study methodologies to ensure they are appropriate and robust: these tests have been tabulated and can be found in appendix 10.4 (p444).

## Cases as units of analysis and the adaptive process

Using Creswell's terminology, the focus is on taking a *collective* case study approach – using several cases to illustrate the issue (Creswell: 2007). The case studies are the unit of analysis.

Yin lays out a typology for types of case study research as shown in table 2.1.

	<b>Single case</b>	<b>Multiple case</b>
<b>Holistic</b>	One organisation and one unit of analysis	<b>Several organisations, each with single unit of analysis</b>
<b>Embedded</b>	One organisation, looking at several different units of analysis	Several organisations, looking at several different units of analysis

**Table 2.1 A typology for case study methodology after Yin (2013)**

This research adopts the multi case, holistic (2013:50); this can be seen in bold in the table.

As there are to be four cases from publishing, they will form a multiple case design; each case has just one unit of analysis (i.e. the digital project or workspace) and so they are holistic. For Yin, a holistic case means that each case represents one organisation and examines one thing within that; it should be noted though that multiple research methods may be used to collect data and the research may involve different participants even while it examines one thing.

It is important that cases are carefully selected so that, whether they literally replicate each other, or offer theoretical replication, they can be connected in some way (Yin, 2013). In this research the cases are different (e.g. the publishers differ in size and come from different sectors etc.) and so are not literal replications; instead theoretical replication will be employed. It is important that the cases do still focus on their own logic (in other words, tell

their own story), rather than specifically seek to find repetition to describe the extent of a phenomena.

It is reasonable to expect convergent evidence from the different cases which can lead to spotting patterns; it makes sense that the cases selected can be connected in some way (Yin, 2013:59). With this in mind, the case studies in this research look at digital projects and all have collaborative emphases. Charting the connections through the analysis process and ensuring that a feedback loop exists between different cases will help theories emerge. This chimes in with the abductive approach described earlier. As such, the design adopted is adaptive, something that Yin reinforces: a case study's design can be 'modified by new information or discoveries during data collection' as long as one does so with caution (2013:65).

## **Sample**

In exploring an emerging phenomenon influenced by recent changes, finding a large sample from which to draw case studies is a challenge. There is not a large quantity of digital collaborations as publishing is still reasonably new to developing the sorts of complex digital products that require collaborative activity. Large database projects have existed for some time but they tend to be managed in-house. The difference with this sample is that the projects are all intended to experiment with digital formats in creative ways.

The fact there are not many examples to choose from is not necessarily a problem. The aim, as outlined in taking an exploratory and qualitative approach to the research, is to examine a small selection in depth. Meyer reinforces the importance of depth as opposed to representativeness and states 'qualitative sampling seeks information richness and selects cases purposefully rather than randomly' (Meyer, 2001:333). While this means that it is not primarily seeking to establish widely generalizable facts (particularly as the field in itself is



small) a detailed approach to specific individual cases can still yield interesting and important findings. Flick says ‘a smaller sample may focus on more depth: this strategy seeks to further permeate the field and its structure by concentrating on single examples or certain sectors in the field.’ (2008:124). For Alvesson and Skoldberg too, depth, rather than quantity, is ‘inspiration for the discovery of patterns that bring understanding’ (2009:4).

Given the small number of possible collaborations to explore there was no requirement to find several similar situations in order to identify all the features that they shared. Instead the aim was to explore different sorts of collaborations in order to see if any patterns emerged from the different types.

The criteria for identifying cases were as follows:

- 1) Newness – in some way the cases needed to reflect something new, whether in terms of new approach to content or engaging with new partners or new structures; the sample did not include, for example, large database projects which have been well established for some time (such as Westlaw or academic journal databases).
- 2) A range of different partners that reflect a range of participants from different backgrounds was a requirement
- 3) The participants were, in general, involved at the start or at least closely linked to the project while it was in set up and early stages mode – this was in order to examine the creative/visionary/ management aspects of the project (which would also inform the structural issues examined later); as such it meant that people who may have worked on the project in more functional roles such as teams of coders or copy editors were not explicitly questioned as they would not have much overview on the project.

- 4) They also had to be enduring in some way (some digital collaborations have been very quick to take place and finish, either purposefully or by accident, and the product now no longer exists making research into these more complex in terms of varying the data types collecting).
- 5) There was an additional requirement to vary the sectors the projects were from in order to build meaningfully on the survey research outlined in chapter four (p138).
- 6) A further consideration was that, as the digital collaborations selected were new, it was too early to determine whether the cases selected were going to be examples of successful collaborations or not. The idea was to examine what measures of success participants put in place.

Unlike gradual or theoretical sampling strategies of researchers like Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Flick, 2008:117), the criteria were fairly clear from the start of the project and these did not change. There was however an iterative process of analysis of the sample, 'whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them in order to develop his theory as it emerges' (Flick: 2008:118). This led, for example, to an adjustment of emphasis in questioning (though the questionnaires remained broadly the same, the number of questions was reduced).

The sample was drawn from the researcher's prior knowledge of the industry and links with industry participants in order to identify suitable cases according to the criteria stated. The case studies therefore were used judgement sampling (Collins, 2010) or purposive sampling (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2008; Maxwell, 1992; Yin, 2013); in other words, the sample was based on specific choices made by the researcher. Flick cites Patton when summarising purposive approaches, outlining a variety of reasons behind a sampling strategy:

in this case the sample was chosen ‘according to the intensity with which the interesting features, processes and experiences and so on are given or assumed in them’ (Flick, 2008:122).

There was however a convenience sampling element (Collins, 2010) in that it depended on the availability of individuals to participate: is as Flick says ‘the easiest to access under given conditions’ (2008:122). The initial search identified a variety of possible cases from discussions with industry participants: and of those cases, three did not go any further. The complexity was that in order to make the cases meaningful each one needed at least two participants to agree to participate. With the depth required it was decided three case studies specifically exploring collaborations would be sufficient: one from a trade sector, one from an educational sector and one from an academic sector.

In order to examine the way collaborations form and how learning happens across different collaborative partners a fourth case was identified. This focused on the data requirement to examine what is being done to facilitate digital collaborations internally and involved a work place change that was explicitly intended to foster collaborations. This final case was from the STM sector and focused on facilitating collaboration as a way to respond to the need to change structurally. For each case a sample of participants was then identified and approached as outlined below.

### **Screening Cases**

The screening of cases, to check suitability, followed Yin’s two-phase approach. First cases were identified and approached; not all were able to accommodate research, especially where participants and dispersed or moved on; for a few that were suggested, individual participants, while interested, proved difficult to pin down. Once cases had been identified

and participants actively engaged, there was a second stage to ensure a proper range of different companies was used.

Three cases selected that were centred on the development of a digital product through collaborative activity. The first was a consumer game book project retelling in digital form a fiction-based text; the second an education project between an educational publisher and an arts organisation; the third an online resource from academic publishers. The fourth case study focused on examining internal collaborative activity; while looking for case studies, a specific case emerged where an STM publisher was instituting a change. This programme was prompted by a recent business relocation. The programme therefore centred on workspace planning, although it did encompass other elements, such as remote working and the development of an intranet. The overarching theme of the change programme was to bring about more collaboration. For this reason, it was identified as an interesting fourth case as it could show how attitudes and approaches to internal collaboration might be changing.

To check this blend of cases would lead to data around the core themes of the research table 2.2 was devised to ensure the main topics would be covered; these topics were how projects formed, the range of partners, the behaviour of the collaboration once set up and the importance of structural features within the publishers.

Case study number And sector	TOPICS TO BE COVERED			
	Formation focus/network	Collaboration range of partners	Collaboration behaviour in detail	Focus on organisations/ structures
1 Consumer	y	y	y	
2 Education	y		y	
3 Academic	y	y		y
4 STM		y		y

## **Table 2.2 Themes mapped to the chosen case studies**

The cases used were chosen to reflect different aspects of the data requirements with the expectation that comparisons could be made between them in different ways. However, no case entirely overlapped with another in terms of the different themes they were likely to illustrate; it was felt that a small number of suitable cases meant this approach made sense for getting depth and breadth of types of cases, while the range of issues being examined could still be identified usefully across the total set.

### **Multiple forms of data collection**

Following Yin's four principles of data collection, the first critical aspect of case study research is to ensure that more than one data collection method is used (Meyer 2001; Yin, 2013). While Yin's other three principles focus on the collection process and management of data (which are covered later) this aspect of multiple data sources is important in terms of research design.

Multiple sources of evidence are critical to ensuring an approach to cases which is not one-sided but adds to the depth of understanding. This helps avoid bias as well as reinforcing the theory and concepts that emerge from it with stronger substantiation (Meyer 2001:336). It is important to ensure conclusions drawn from the data are robust; the use of multiple sources helps dilute any bias from researcher and participants. For Yin this ability to use more than one source of evidence is a major strength to this sort of research (as opposed to some other methods). Different data collection techniques have to be employed; some research theorists may feel it lacks purity but in Yin's view it adds to the quality of the research (2013:119). If different sorts of evidence converge (2013:121) then the research findings can be considered more valid; data triangulation of this sort adds depth. The table 2.3 below outlines the types of data collection undertaken for each case study.

<b>Case study number</b>	<b>Type of collaboration (sector and product)</b>	<b>Data collection 1</b>	<b>Data collection 2</b>
CASE 1	Small consumer app	Interviews: 4 (1 manager, 3 creatives)	Document analysis
CASE 2	Small education app	Interviews 4 (1 manager 1 consultant, 2 arts organisation)	Document analysis
CASE 3	Large academic web-based archive	Interviews 4 (2 managers, 2 consultants)	Document analysis
CASE 4	STM collaborative workplace	12 interviews across levels of the organisation	2 on-site observations

**Table 2.3 Outlining data collection methods used for each case**

In selecting the data it was also important to ensure the boundaries of the cases were considered not just to avoid collecting extraneous data but to ensure that the case itself was clearly distinguished from the context in which it was positioned – this was reasonably easy with the choice of collaboration as they were bounded in their design and activity (Yin 2013:34); for the exploration of the collaborative workspace this was bounded by time – selecting a period in which the workspace design was reasonably newly used and using two specific points in time to carry out the observations and interviews.

### **Data collection methods**

The data collection methods used were:

- interviews
- observations and
- document analysis.

The dominant data collection method was interviews; the document analysis and observations provided some additional data but the core findings emerged from the interviews.

## **Interviews**

The interviews were central to get a sense of how the collaboration was viewed by people involved: this was to ensure the all-round picture was built up. They formed the central aspect of all the case studies. For Latour (2007) interviewing actors and letting them speak for themselves and make their own interpretation of the events in which they participated is central to getting good data. Getting as close as possible to the phenomenon and following the actors through their experience of it (via their narrative) is important to allow the sense-making process to take place within the hands of the actors themselves.

It was also important to triangulate the participants' thinking about the collaboration in order to identify how it operated and to what experiences it led; it was interesting, for instance, to note whether assessments of success was mirrored by all participants. It was not possible to talk to everyone involved in each collaboration but even for cases that were smaller, it was important that the participants came from different organisation to ensure a contrast could still be drawn.

Two semi-structured interviews were designed. The first one was for those involved in the three digital collaborations. The second was one for those using collaborative spaces in the fourth case study; this questionnaire had an emphasis on how collaboration is valued within the organisation. As Flick notes, semi-structured approaches allow for comparative points but also, where relevant, allow for more open-ended exploration on themes that emerge (2008). Meyer also notes that a low degree of structure is in line with exploratory nature of the research (Meyer, 2001:338); longer interviews provide the sort of depth required to build strong case studies (Meyer, 2001). The questionnaires were adapted as the research

progressed to ensure time for participants was not wasted where it was clear they would not be in a position to comment; for this reason, a shorter questionnaire was designed for freelancers/consultants who would not be able to talk about the wider organisations involved.

## **Participants**

A number of participants needed to be selected within the case studies identified. The number in each case was small, partly due to the requirement to find people who had been close to the inception of the project. The small number of people who were involved at the start of each project proved to be a feature of these collaborations. The quantity of people was something that was examined to see if this reflected upon either risk limitation around experimentation (i.e. not tying up a lot of staff in a project that might fail) or a way achieve effectiveness (a small, decisive group of people might lead to better collaboration).

A limitation to judgement sampling is the fact that one can be biased when making choices. However, the obvious limit to the number of possible cases to use was already a barrier: the sample bias was to those who would participate.

For each case two to four participants were identified and approached. From there, where cases were larger, snowball sampling was used where one participant would recommend someone else as they described the collaboration. When someone was recommended to approach, that person still had to meet the criteria and those undertaking only specific functions were not included. So, for example, in case three which was a large academic online site, coders working at an offsite software developer were doing very specific work and did not get involved in the collaboration per se. Editorial assistants who may have done some contractual work also were not involved in the collaboration but were doing some incidental roles in terms of bringing it to fruition. In this sense people with these roles were not included.



Case four's prime focus was to give some more consideration to the structural aspects that companies are undertaking. This emerged from discussion that collaboration was one of the key themes for the change programme that focused on workspace redesigns; reorganising space was seen to be a way to encourage collaboration. Three companies have undergone work-space redesign recently but the case chosen was used as the senior team there specifically mentioned that collaboration was driving their redesign. A greater number of participants were interviewed in relation to this case in order to examine the use of the space and importance of collaboration across a wider cross section of the department and functions: as such it enabled more structural and organisational conclusions to be drawn.

### **The questionnaire design**

The questionnaire was carefully designed to ensure the criteria for successful collaborations identified by Kaats and Opheij (2014) were examined in the interviews. A mapping process was the first step to identify particular features of collaborations that Kaats and Opheij felt lay at the heart of any collaboration, characteristics by which the different sorts of collaborations could be identified. The questions, it was envisaged, would lead to the ability to identify whether the new style collaborations would fall within the explorative and entrepreneurial categories as established by Kaats and Opheij (2014). The characteristics of these two types of collaboration are summarised in table 2.4. Themes can be seen in these typologies, such as the need to be flexible (room to manoeuvre), having autonomy (exclusivity) as well as different approaches to outcomes.

Explorative	Entrepreneurial
-------------	-----------------

<p>Here the aim is to be matched with your partners, to develop knowledge through exchange of that knowledge and experience. Characteristics include:</p>	<p>Here there is the strategic need to collaborate to renew in order to grow. Characteristics include:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear rules of the game about eg exchanging info as that is what is wanted</li> <li>• no particular outcome but seeing what emerges</li> <li>• all are equals</li> <li>• not exclusively bound together</li> <li>• balanced contributions</li> <li>• create effective opportunities for interaction/learning</li> <li>• facilitating management style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promotes invention and development</li> <li>• full mutual commitment</li> <li>• clear procedures</li> <li>• energy – clear outcomes - new markets, products, new technologies</li> <li>• goal oriented management</li> <li>• room to manoeuvre</li> <li>• Exclusivity within their project</li> </ul>

**Table 2.4 Characteristics of two types of collaboration adapted from Kaats and Opheij (2014)**

Behaviours that could reflect the characteristics outlined in table 2.4 were then identified. For each of those behaviours, questions were then developed in order to be able to capture the behaviours that might reflect these features; a summary appears in table 2.5.

	Examples of identifying behaviours	Sorts of questions asked
Level of autonomy	How participants behave as individuals within the collaboration, independence to get on with their part	How was the collaboration structured what was people's individual roles

Level of interaction	how work together, how often meet, formal/informal, how decisions are made, problem solving; Doing justice to interests (ensure various visions are met, interest in each other, willingness to negotiate,	How did they meet/report back/make decisions
Centre of power	Hierarchies, how roles divided up, who makes decisions	Was there a hierarchy? Who owned the projects? Who made decisions?
Construct a new reality	Rhetoric of the collaboration, vision, engagement with intellectual goal of the collaborations, sensemaking (providing order and structure around project specifics and management strategies around eg roles, measurement) learning, creativity	Specific questions on creativity and learning Also, document analysis- how do they talk about it?
Wider organisation	How work with/report back to parent organisation, involvement of organisation, risk management, expectations	What is the arrangement with the different organisations? Ownership? Did they share risks and was this financial?
Outcomes	What outcomes were expected (beyond the product) and how is success measured where there is no product outcome	What was the outcome intended to be? Did it involve creativity and learning? Or anything else? how were they measured?
Shared ambition	How is vision developed at the group formation stage	What the vision was, how far they felt part of that?
Professional partnership	What is the organisational arrangement of the collaboration	How were decisions made? What structures were in place

Constructive group dynamics and relationships	Examining aspects of on-going behaviour, meetings, trust, shared leadership	How did things get done? Through meetings? Use of other project management tools?
Context in constant flux	This was established by the survey	

**Table 2.5 Themes from Kaats and Opheij (2014) mapped to observable collaboration behaviours**

This was then distilled through one final stage (as indicated by table 2.6) in order to reach the specific questions and these were supplemented by questions on collaborative activities that emerged from other collaborative theory readings, particularly in relation to creativity, learning and management.

Feature of creative collaborations	Sorts of questions
Quantity and range of participants	How many people, who were they
How met/how it came about	How were people engaged? Were networks involved (one person or a group)? Was there an individual bringing things together at the start up stage?
'Newness'	Was it different? How far had individual worked in this way before?
Vision	What the vision was (This was useful for comparing different participants) and how the vision emerged/was established?
Operational aspects	How were decisions made? How were things communicated (eg through meetings)? Where did they meet/spaces? Were there formal roles?
Outcomes	What was expected of the collaboration and how was it measured? How was risk shared?
Learning	Was learning part of the vision and how did it manifest itself

Creativity	Was creativity part of the vision and how did it manifest itself
Organisational aspects	Should this be done more? How can it be encouraged? Are there structural or skills issues that an organisation needs to bear in mind?

**Table 2.6 Outline question list developed from features of collaboration**

Appendix 2.1 (p405) provides an annotated example of one of the questionnaires to illustrate in more depth how the themes from Kaats and Opheij (2014) were mapped.

In order to create a structure for the questionnaire, to make it easier to navigate and provide logic for the interviewees (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2008; Kvale, 2008) the questions identified were then translated into a structure of three parts:

- 1) The formation stage;
- 2) The operation stage;
- 3) The outcomes with specific examination of learning and creativity as well as structural questions at the end.

Unlike the survey which used different approaches (see chapter four, p138), the questions styles were kept loose to encourage discussion (Flick; 2007; Kvale, 2008). Having run two pilot interviews, it was clear they were long and led to some repetition so a shorter interview was developed.

The interviews for the fourth case used a different questionnaire (appendix 2.2 p409) developed in a similar way. The structure covered two main themes:

- 1) The interviewees attitude to collaboration in general: this was in order to reflect on the messages about the importance of collaboration that the change programme emphasised

2) The interviewees use of the spaces themselves.

Other issues were allowed to emerge in the interviews (for example, use of remote spaces or intranet). A larger number of interviews were conducted for this final case study as it was important to talk to a variety of people in different roles in order to assess how far the collaborative message reached different functions and levels within the organisation.

### **Interview practicalities**

Each interview took place in the location of the participant in person or over the phone/ skype due the geographical spread of participants. This reflected remote working as part of the collaboration experience but was out of scope for this research. Each conversation was recorded with permission and transcripts were made. Rapley (2008) provided guidance on transcriptions.

### **Observations**

The observations in the case of the organisational case study four were undertaken to examine how collaboration was enacted; unlike the first three cases this was not focusing on a particular product, but about how groups used workspaces specifically intended to increase collaboration. This was in order to see how far the institution's aim to facilitate collaboration as part of a structural response was actually happening. Observations were conducted in case study four in order to assess whether the rhetoric of the individuals who had planned the collaborative spaces was clearly in evidence in the behaviour of the organisation.

Observations are able to bring more evidence to bear on insight into the interpersonal behaviour of individuals (Yin, 2013:106); observations in this case helped the research examine how far the spaces were used in collaborative ways while gaining some understanding of the context in which the case study operated.

The observations followed procedures laid down by Creswell (2007) and Angrosino (2007). The observations were non-participant observations. A chart for recording the observations was developed (Creswell, 2007) giving opportunities both for counting specific items (like number of people, length of meetings) as well as for noting behaviours of people in the spaces; these were the descriptive elements. Alongside this the researcher made reflective notes while on the spot. The observation forms and protocols can be found in appendix three (p417). The data to be collected was based on the themes that emerged around collaboration in general. For instance, to examine the style of collaborative activity, the way spaces were used in terms of formal (pre-planned meetings) and informal approaches (e.g. spontaneous discussions) were examined. The observations were designed to support the interviews. They were intended to understand whether what was being said in the interviews seemed to chime in with the actual use of the spaces. A little more detail on how this worked in the chosen space can be found in Chapter 11 (p308).

### **Document analysis**

For the three product-based case studies, document analysis, using evidence on the internet, was employed in order to capture the organisational view of the collaboration, focusing at the launch and for on-going how the collaborative product is viewed. This helps augment evidence from other sources as documents provide information is stable (Yin, 2013). There were a limited number of documents specifically available on these cases; but, although not many documents will be available, the sample will be complete.

Specifically, the documents chosen were intended to examine the discourse around the collaboration within the marketing, PR and review information at launch. The aim was to examine how far each organization has a public view about the importance, centrality and newness of the collaborative aspect of the project. Current marketing information was also

considered to see whether the collaboration was still mentioned, reflecting the conscious approach to the collaboration across the different companies.

The process of examining data using document analysis was informed by Rapley (2008), Flick (2008), Krippendorf (2004) and Rose (2007). A data set was planned (Rapley's archive (2008), outlining the documents that were to be collected for the cases. Two types of document were identified that would be found on the web: documentation that had been available at launch and was still findable, and current marketing documentation. The former was intended to examining articulation of the product itself (how it is presented/what it is/current branding) and the collaboration (e.g. aspects of ownership, shared vision, how partners are described etc.); the latter looked at whether the collaboration itself was mentioned, and if so how it was expressed (e.g. was it a central feature of the initial marketing for the product).

The search for documents took place on one specific occasion and the search basis was as follows:

- For review websites – search terms by title of product and variation of the title (no date limit)
- For launch/ PR search terms: title of product and variations of title. (Use date of launch to limit search.)
- For current marketing literature: title and description of the product if currently available.

Once documents were identified, themes that had been used throughout the rest of the research were followed through into the document analysis. These were quantitative counts in terms of mentions, but an overall flavour of the product description was taken into account in order to assess how central to the description of the product the nature of the collaboration



was. This was relevant, in particular, for the launch PR material, but might also appear in some contexts within the on-going product marketing (in terms of mentioning range of partners for instance). Appendix eight (p436) lists the aspects counted in the documents.

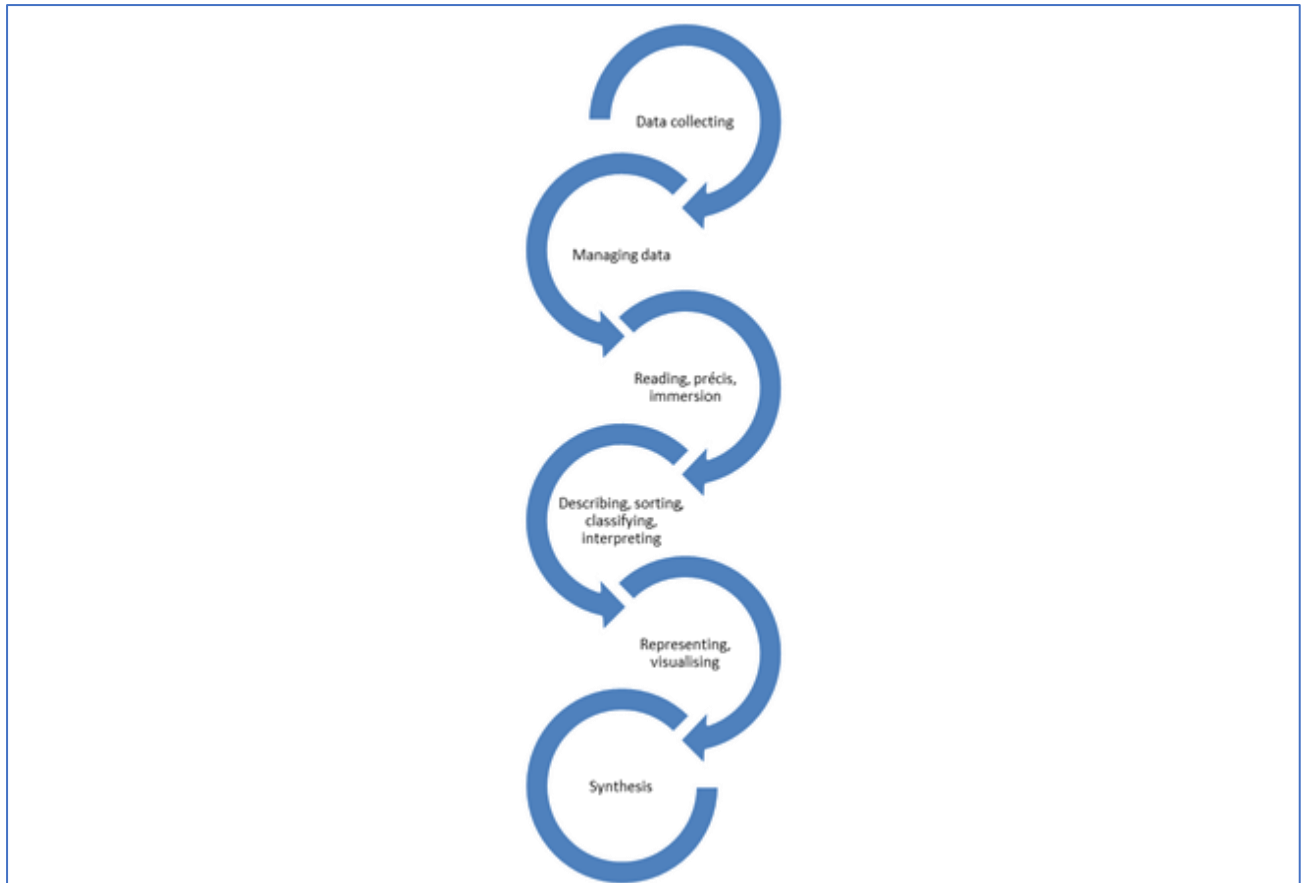
## **Ethics**

For each data type appropriate ethical consideration were taken into account. Consent forms were prepared for each interview and signed off. An example of the consent form is in the appendices (appendix four (p423)). The cases and participants were kept anonymous.

For the observations the initial contact was with the manager of the unit explaining the purpose of the research to gain their agreement for the observations as well as the interviews. There was a pre-meeting on site with the manager and liaison with assistant to set up times. Protocols announcing that observations would be taking place were followed prior to the visit and then during the visit: notices were prepared and posted up visibly in all sites (for these documents see appendix three p417).

## **Data analysis**

Having a defined analytical approach is central to being able to ensure findings are robust and valid as well as sound in terms of theory development (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2008; Rapley, 2008). This research has been influenced by Creswell's analysis spiral which reflects the on-going refinement and interlocking of the processes as the cases are worked for details (2007). The iterative approach that has been outlined throughout this chapter is embodied in the spiral he uses; the figure 2.1 adapts his stages into a diagram and shows how the stages of refinement and organisation of data lead to synthesis.



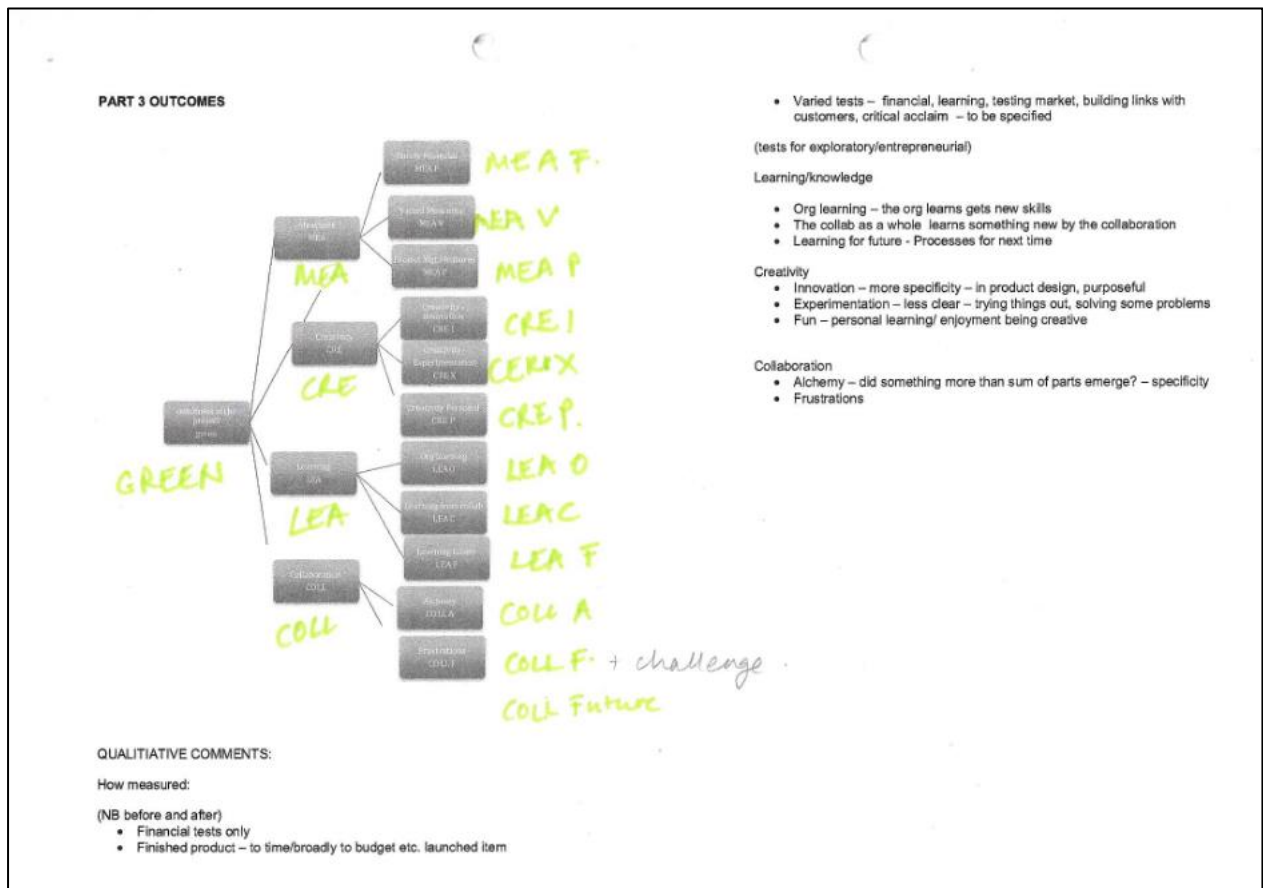
**Figure 2.1 Analytical Spiral adapted from Creswell (2007)**

The cases were therefore built up individually first, combining the different data sets to develop a description about each case. The key themes within each case were examined in isolation, using the filtering and refining stages that are represented by the stages in the spiral.

### **Coding /categories for the product cases**

This research uses Flick's thematic coding to define codes (2007) and developed a coding schedule following Saunders (2009:494). The first three product cases used a coding tree. Short descriptions of each case led to the generation of thematic domains and categories case by case; these could then be cross checked against the themes that emerged in the other cases (Flick, 2007). The coding schedule used the themes that emerged from the literature review

and the structure of the interviews already mimicked these themes. *In vivo* codes, emerging from the individual interviewees' expressions (Flick, 2007:309), were also used as particular themes resonated across the case studies. Three colour coded coding charts were developed according to the structure of the questionnaires outlined above: the coding charts were for Formation, Operation and Outcomes. The coding trees are in the appendices (appendix five p427) but a sample of one can be seen in figure 2.2.



**Figure 2.2 Example of one of the coding trees**

Kathleen Eisenhart suggests that when analysing case studies ‘the construct, its definition and measurement often emerge from the analysis process itself rather than apriori’ (1989:20) and this concurs with the iterative approach described by Yin (2013). Once the

case descriptions were established, focus then moved onto explanation building and pattern matching in making a cross-case synthesis.

Cross-case comparison then was undertaken. As Yin says, one of the key stages is to play with data to look for ‘patterns insights and concepts that seem promising’ (2013:166) and for him the repeated cycles of working through the data mimics Creswell’s’ approach (2007). By filtering and sifting in this way one is adopting a ground up approach (though it is not full grounded theory). As a central proposition is not being examined but rather an exploratory approach taken, this research focused on developing a case description for each case first and then made cross-case comparisons afterwards. Data from each case were gathered around themes and connections and discrepancies examined. (Yin 2013:166). Looking at the data in divergent ways says Eisenhardt (1989) is important when searching for cross-case patterns. She suggests various ways to do this and these were adopted in this case; while she is more commonly dealing with a quantity of cases, rather than in-depth cases, the principles remained. The following list adapts her process for examining the different data within and between cases:

- 1) Looking similarities across the cases– sifting comments from the different interviews between cases into different categories using the coding tree – and seeing which cases seemed to be linked, by what, and which elements differed.
- 2) Explicitly comparing cases looking for differences
- 3) Comparing answers within a case study between different participants.

This is intended to provide a structured and diverse lens on the data, making findings trustworthy. Cases that disconfirm a relationship can provide an opportunity to refine and extend the theory. Eisenhardt (1989) raises some provisos: theories can end up too complex,

especially if based on small amount of cases, and, in that latter case, can become too idiosyncratic if describing only very unusual specific phenomenon. Similarly, interpretation can be faulty unless data is properly refined so it is important to ensure data has been considered from every angle. In order to avoid this the researcher employed different approaches; Saunter's coding tree (2009) and Eisendhart's criteria (1989) were used to ensure data was considered from different angles.

### **Qualitative data analysis software**

For the fourth case a different approach to data analysis was taken. Because there was a larger number of interviews, and the questions asked differed from the other three cases, it was felt appropriate to use qualitative data analysis software. NVivo 10 was used which offers sophisticated coding abilities and easy way to cross-link themes and statements from the interview.

The interview transcripts were prepared and run into NVivo. Following a reading of the transcripts, a set of codes was developed specifically for the interviews. This can be found in the appendix seven (p435). More detail on the variables used in specifically for this case, and an outline of the application of NVivo for the analysis can be found in chapter 11 (p308). While the quantity of interviews was not very large (NVivo is a much more powerful tool than was required in this instance), nevertheless using software for this part of the research proved a quick way to make effective links and ensure coding was thorough and consistent across many transcripts; it was particularly useful as data could easily carry multiple codes at once so the processed data was particularly rich.

### **Aspects of interpretation and interaction with data**

Once data has been coded and compared, the researcher undertakes further interaction with the data. The importance of reflection has arisen throughout the chapter. One of the issues

that Alvesson and Skoldberg's Reflexive Methodology (2009) addresses is that of inference in terms of the way data is interpreted. While general issues of validity were covered earlier it is useful here to recognise that a reflective approach acknowledges the complex relationships of 'knowledge production and the various contexts of such processes as well as the involvement of the knowledge producer' (2009:8). This process of reflection and interaction with the data is about ensuring every angle is consistently and comprehensively considered; it means there must be a heightened awareness to being mis-led through ambiguity and unconscious bias: by undertaking careful process of self-conscious reflection a researcher avoids these pitfalls, as far as possible (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009:272). The process of interpretation for this research was also assessed using Alvesson and Skoldberg's tests for reliable interpretation and are presented in appendix 10.6 (p446).

Meyer too reinforces the importance of becoming familiar with the data and the ensuing reflection; while it is important for the researcher to be 'open-minded and receptive to new and surprising data' (Meyer, 2001:344), they need to test the analysis continuously through problem-oriented questions and ensure interpretations made in the case studies can be traced by other researchers. She continues to show that internal validity is achieved by avoiding ambiguity and contradictions, and filling in details; for her this is the advantage of qualitative research as rich data provides the opportunity to explore respondents carefully and ensure connections in the data are strong (Meyer, 2001:347).

### **Theory development, creativity and writing up**

When drawing final insights from data creativity is important. For Eisenhardt creativity is important as 'creative insight often arises from the juxtaposition of contradictory or paradoxical evidence.' (1989:29). Alvesson and Skoldberg suggest that the research approach then makes 'higher demands in terms of familiarity with a wider range of literature and

viewpoints, as well as in terms of intellectual flexibility, receptiveness and creativity. It also stimulates coherence and thoughtfulness in the production of empirical material.’ (2013:305.) In this way, they argue, it can lead to a richness, well-appointed for qualitative research. This research aims to make sure the researcher is able to have ‘creative inspired interaction with the empirical material’ (2013:306).

Clive Seale (2002) says that the craft-like approach to research is important but it can be merged with a postmodern ‘playfulness’ (2002:99) and some elements of flexibility are important for improving quality; imposing methodological standards are necessary but only ‘if it is done relatively open and permissive way, that preserves the enterprise of qualitative research as a creative and exploratory enterprise.’ (2002:108).

The writing up process is also one of interpretation and some creativity is required in acknowledging a style of writing that is appropriate to different sorts of audience. Writing up is regarded as an important ongoing aspect of the refinement of data (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Yin 2013,). Taking audience into account is important and the act of communication in the report is itself key to its transferring knowledge that has been created through the research (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2013:179). Creativity provides opportunities to understand and synthesise the data effectively.

## **Limitations**

There are several limitations to the data. Limitations exist primarily within the small number of cases possible to examine in the first place as new creative digital collaborations are not undertaken extensively. The choice of cases is therefore limited, though it is hoped the research has managed to find a good variety through selection procedures outlined.

Another limitation is in the accessibility of the participants for the cases chosen. It is possible interviewing more participants for each collaboration would have been valuable to

build a more complete picture of each case; it might be that a participant, that could have been important, was missing. However, it was felt a suitable range was found for each case and there was enough breadth in the roles of the participants to reflect appropriately on the case study. In addition, the commentary from the participants might reflect underlying bias or frustrations that then do not reflect an accurate picture of the collaboration. This further reinforced the requirement to undertake the analysis strategy with care when interpreting data.

Some themes emerged at a stage where it was too late to revisit extensively. For instance, some participants discussed the way digital projects come together from a much more technical standpoint; this did appear to elicit interesting data on the different approaches of publishers and digital developers but that emerged after the publisher interviews had happened, so could not then be revisited with them. It was felt that this was, in any case, beyond the scope of this research. Similarly, more discussion about specifics of the products that emerged could have been valuable: for instance, examining the boundaries between games and digital books. However, that was also deemed beyond the scope of the research, which was focused on the collaboration rather than the product.

The products were not chosen based on whether they were successful or not. Participants were asked to suggest what they believed were measures of success and also asked whether they believed the measures were met. However, due to the length of time the research took, it has become apparent that the cases were all successful to some extent because they are all still products are available. Not all digital products do survive. There have been notable product closures (e.g. Black Crown from Random House). While it would have been useful to consider collaboration for those that failed in order to compare them with those that succeeded, it was difficult to predict ahead the progress of the products in order to choose a suitable mixture of successes and failures. The findings could be interpreted as



successful ways to conduct a collaboration in order to develop a successful product but that would be inconclusive without comparison to collaborations that may have led to a failed product. The research, however, throughout was more focused on the participants views of successful collaboration, and their measures of success were as often about the collaboration itself and the quality of the product as on the success of the product in the marketplace.

For the fourth case study, the research was undertaken reasonably close to the implementation of the change programme. It cannot therefore assess the long-term effects of the collaboration spaces nor whether any actual new creative digital product collaborations emerged from it.

Throughout the chapter there has been focus on ensuring limitations have been taken into account and the research is tested for robustness at each stage and checked for reliability and validity.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter outlines in some detail the research methodology in order to reflect on the research design options available and the choices made to produce sound research that could lead to theory development. Because qualitative research can be regarded as problematic the chapter has examined what makes qualitative research robust and high quality (Meyer, 2001). The case study approach, while with some limitations, was felt to be flexible enough to allow for a range of data collection methods depending on the case. The abductive ethos was also important for allowing a level of agility in responding to emergent research themes and throughout the chapter the role of the reflexive researcher in the research process was also acknowledged. Two areas of methodology will be discussed later within the body of the thesis: the preliminary research survey as that is most appropriately explained with the

findings in chapter four and the specific coding used within NVivo which will be presented with the relevant case study in chapter 11 (p308).

# **PART ONE: CONTEXTS - PUBLISHING STRUCTURES, DIGITAL CHALLENGES AND THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

## **Chapter 3 The structure of the Publishing industry**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the current structure of the publishing industry, looking at the way it has evolved and how it is organised today. It also outlines publishing theory in order to examine the structures and hierarchies that can be found within the industry. By doing this, the thesis lays out a starting point for the research in order, first, to overlay the impact of the digital environment on publishing industry and, second, to assess whether these structures might then need to change in order to facilitate increased digital collaboration.

Business structures and working systems in publishing have developed over a long period, centred on the production of books and journals. These products have moved successfully into digital environments, but publishing innovation in the past has centred on finding and developing new content; the digital collaborations under scrutiny in the thesis are more focused on developing new sorts of formats that use different digital technologies, such as a game book or an interactive educational text.

This chapter will show that the structure of a mainstream publishing business has developed certain ways of operating, which have evolved over time; this structure sits at the heart of what book publishing is and how it works today. Publishing theory and concepts of risk for new product development also reflect on the way publishing structures have evolved. In this way this chapter seeks to establish what could be regarded as a ‘traditional’ picture of publishing, both in practical terms of how publishing houses are actually structured, and in theoretical terms in the way important theorists describe the field of publishing in terms of its organisation. This sets up an opposition with what can then be regarded as ‘new’ ways of

working in terms of digital change, product development and collaborative activity. The traditional structures and workflows currently in place appear challenged by the impact of digital technologies and related competition; publishing theory is also developing as it takes into consideration digital innovation. Therefore, new ways of working may be required that will mean the ‘traditional’ structures of publishing will need to adapt in some way.

This chapter takes a three-part approach: it starts by describing briefly the evolution of the publishing business to reflect on the legacy of well-established production systems. It continues to outline the current structures and workflows across a variety of sectors. It then moves on to examine the overarching theories that underpin publishing, reflecting on the socio-economic approach they take. This establishes the context of publishing businesses, shows how theories around publishing are emerging and so sets the scene by which the impact of digital publishing can then be examined in chapter four.

### **3.2 Brief historical context of publishing structures**

#### **Early publishing structures – the centrality of the printer entrepreneur**

The development of a commercially viable printing press by Gutenberg in the fifteenth century was a significant driver in the evolution of the publishing industry. Prior to that the creation and copying of manuscripts by monastic orders and subsequent systems in place at university sites to upscale copying (the ‘pecia’) might, to some extent, be compared to a publishing enterprise (Standage, 2014) but modern publishing essentially evolved with the development of the printing press and its subsequent rapid diffusion across Europe (Eisenstein, 1980). The opportunity to manufacture printed titles to an increasingly connected Europe meant that the means of production and the ability to reach markets, two key aspects of publishing activity, would lead to the growth of a publishing industry (Feather, 2005).

A variety of factors drove the development of the book trade over the next two centuries after the development of the press (Eisenstein, 1980; Feather, 2005; Love, 2013; McCleery, 2019; Manguel, 1997).

1. Individual importers developed a market for printed books alongside their paper imports (using already established distribution mechanisms).
2. Patrons such as large monasteries or universities, who wanted to produce their works in print form or who wanted specific works printed, set up printers and undertook some book production (as they had done pre-printing press days).
3. Even before the printing press an area around St Paul's churchyard was synonymous with book publishing. It was used as a store place for books and materials and, besides, was a developing market place to go and hear about the news and events, so presenting a rich gathering of a potential book buyers. Printers, continuing the tradition, set up shop there; their title pages outlined where they were to be found around the churchyard (Stanev, 2016) and they developed a proactive approach to developing their business in a competitive environment. They were, however, subject to government control over what could be printed.
4. As with the printers in St. Paul's churchyard, printers in local areas also would set up presses, select titles to publish and print them, taking the risk of the production costs upon themselves with the view to selling out the run.
5. The socio-economic climate evolving during the period of relative stability during the Tudors was also significant. A stable nation led to an increasing interest and opportunity for exploration and scientific advances; ideas developed that needed to be disseminated. A growing educated class, an early developing middle class, and an increasing literacy was also important. In addition, rapidly developing religious and

political movements needed to spread their views, and had a body of followers anxious to assimilate and continue actively to distribute these new ideas in book form.

This led to a market for producers and consumers that was critical to driving the growth of the industry at this stage. Some printers took an entrepreneurial attitude to their work, taking on a more involved approach to the texts they were publishing through editing and book design, partly in order to develop competitive edge (Darnton, 1982; Manguel, 1997; McCleery, 2019); for instance Aldus as a master-printer took the format and typography of the book into a new direction in the early sixteenth Century.

At this stage printers and publishers were essentially the same (Darnton, 1982; Eisenstein, 1980; McCleery, 2019). The Worshipful Company of Stationers was a guild in London that encompassed the full range of roles involved in every aspect of the book trade (including printers, illuminators, scribes, paper makers and binders etc). Authors would present their works to printers who would make the decision whether to publish these works. They mostly based their choices on commercial imperatives, given they needed to cover the costs of the printing both in terms of materials and time. The printers therefore were responsible for then promoting and selling their titles (Bhaskar, 2013, 2019; Darnton, 1982). Printers mostly paid the authors once for their work (if they paid them at all) and from then all profits made from the sale of the printed copies were theirs. The authors therefore tended to have to need some patronage in order to make a living from writing. The structure therefore in place at this time was centralised around the printer who, as an entrepreneur, undertook all the expected roles of a publisher, from producer, marketer and distributor of the content; they were also the person who took on all the risk. (Darnton, 1982; Feather, 2005; Love, 2013).

## **Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries - the emergence of the publisher**

Publishing evolved continuously over the next few centuries in a variety of ways. Important developments included:

- developments in intellectual property improving author rights;
- the rise in the standing of the author;
- the development of the circulating libraries;
- the increase in global trade and speed of distribution;
- continuing upward trajectory in terms of literacy rates and the growth in leisure.

However, books were still reasonably expensive to print and to buy, which meant that those who undertook publishing activity, whether printers or booksellers, were still often entrepreneurs who would invest money with the hope of making profit. Jacob Tonson, for example, took an entrepreneurial approach to copyright and author development; he set up publishing projects to issue the collected works of Shakespeare, having bought the copyright of the fourth folios; and he worked closely with authors such as Dryden, earning money for them both through publishing ventures (Bhaskar, 2019).

However, people like Tonson were individuals who saw an opportunity to make a business out of publishing activity. It was not until the nineteenth century that more formal structures of publishing familiar today begin to take shape. The industry developed rapidly through the century but it was after the second decade of the nineteenth century the book trade turned into a recognizably modern industry (Feather, 2005). The role of the bookseller diverged from the role of the publisher at this point. Several issues impacted on this critical divide. Driving change in the industry throughout the century was the continuous rise of the mass market (Altick, 1998; Feather, 2005). Socio-economic conditions through the century, despite some political setbacks, continued to be stable enough to ensure there was

growing wealth in the country. This was driven by the industrial revolution, continued global expansion of an empire and a growing urbanisation; this in turn led to increasing levels of literacy, which impacted even the poorest elements of society when elementary education was compulsory in the 1870s. There was a growing a middle class which started to have more leisure time to read for education and entertainment, a trend which continued to spread through the working classes. Ideologies and activism around concepts like abstinence, religious evangelism and self-improvement also helped to drive producers and consumers to make and/or require more reading material. With a ready and growing market, the opportunities for rapid expansion in the industry were considerable. This both put pressure on existing print-publisher structures and allowed for new participants to emerge. Ultimately, this led to a growing need to professionalise rapidly, in order to expand effectively (Altick, 2008; Feather, 2005).

At the start of the nineteenth century printing was still an expensive business. Each element of the process from purchasing paper and ink to distributing effectively and finding ready markets required entrepreneurial approaches to ensure they maximised on commercial success given legal and economic restrictions such as taxes. Business models developed that would support the funding of print runs. The triple decker hardbacks of novels by authors such as Walter Scott were sold first to collectors and libraries allowing cheaper editions that came afterwards to be produced for the general reader (Feather, 2005). In this way publishers could present content in different formats in order to access different segments of the market: publishers like Chapman and Hall continuously optimised copyrights they held, by printing different editions of (for instance) *The Pickwick Papers* in cheaper versions throughout the century, repackaging content as new markets emerged. The importance of developing relationships with authors, which gained impetus once author's rights were more firmly established in the eighteenth century, also led to the need for publishers to work on behalf of



the author and develop long term relationships, built around contracts that reflected the potential of the author's work (Bhaskar, 2019; McCleery, 2019).

As the nineteenth century unfolded, and driven in part by the need to supply market demand, technological developments followed increasingly rapidly to mechanise further the print and production processes; these included developments in paper manufacture, typesetting and printing machines. This allowed products to be produced more cheaply and at greater speed (Feather, 2005; McCleery, 2019). Investing in these technologies was expensive, whether as a printer or as a publisher paying for a print run. A less obvious but nevertheless a significant development, arising from the growing need to fund an industrial revolution to keep up momentum, was the growth of the financial industry that was required to support new business activity. Publishers could borrow capital and benefit from economies of scale in printing in an effort to support hopefully profitable bestsellers (Feather, 2005). Publishers were required to operate more professionally as a business when accessing new funding. This partly led to the development of more formal roles and functions; publishers began to recognise they could consolidate their activity around areas of specialisation and drive more profit from their publishing activity.

### **Twentieth Century company structures and organisational behaviours**

In the nineteenth century a variety of newer roles emerged in an ad hoc way, such as editors who focused on developing lists, or readers and advisers that helped publishers with selection of authors and projects (Feather, 2005). As the twentieth century unfolded, many of these sorts of roles became established across the industry (Thompson, 2012). However, the development of the current structure for publishing also owes much to the development of business and organisation theory across all business activity. As business organisations evolved following the industrialisation across Europe and America in the late nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries, management thinkers emerged over the turn of the century promulgating a variety of theories and approaches to business growth. Henri Fayol considered theories of management and organisation around divisions of work (Wren et al., 2002); he took a scientific approach to management whereby divisions of work were clearly recognised and planned for; different functions were defined (e.g. undertaking different part of the production process) and staff would be developed to focus on one function. Staff should have a clear place and role in an organisation; clearly demarcated lines of power with managers and workers positioned in vertical management hierarchies as a way to organise a business (Wren et al., 2002).

Frederick Taylor developed the theory of scientific management focusing on industrialised efficiency, productivity and the nature of organised work (Bilton, 2006; Greco, 2019; Taylor, 1911); his ideas continued to contribute to a recognition of the centrality of the management hierarchies and the importance of workflows; he proposed that industries need to keep refining production systems for mass production, and to standardise good practice. Max Weber, another influential theorist of industrial practice, developed the bureaucratic model as a way to focus on efficient methods of systematising human activity in hierarchical organisations (Weber, 1978); specialisation of functions, clear processes of delegation and formal rules for each activity aid the effectiveness of an organisation and maximise productivity. Henry Ford and his organisation of mass production lines was also highly influential. For many of these theorists, documentation and knowledge sharing was central and their focus was towards a rational organisation of businesses to promote efficiency.

These were systems of management that responded to the needs of a market-driven capitalist society to speed up production and processes. From these, a pattern of capitalist business emerged and with it an organisational structure and behaviour. Workflows were developed across industries with a focus on divisions of labour that would ensure efficient

production. These systems were applicable across many industries and adopted by them. Publishing too followed these patterns of industry with workers specialising in different aspects of book production from editing, design, production, printing and sales; management hierarchies evolved in a similar way to the management structures of other industries, with vertical organisations led by managers and different sub-functions formalised with clear roles, processes for doing their work and rules for decision making.

Later in the twentieth century further management thinkers emerged who were also very influential in considering business structures. Peter Drucker (1959) presented ways of understanding business by examining aspects of productivity; his conceptualisation of the nature of knowledge workers was applicable to the relatively flexible structure of publishing together with its focus on talented, creative people as key to its working practice (Bilton, 2006; Greco, 2019). Alongside this emerged the concept of the supply chain and its alignment of key business processes from suppliers to end users (Oliver, 2003); observing and measuring processes could lead to improvement so advancing and refining supply (Drucker, 1959). For publishers there was continual enhancement to the way books were selected, prepared, produced and distributed throughout the twentieth century (Nash, 2010). Michael Porter was influential with regard to developing the concept of the value chain in relation to strategy and competition; at each stage of workflow something is being added by the company which increases its value (Greco, 2019). In publishing houses this can be seen in the refinement of the production of books throughout the century; signing, producing, marketing and distributing books has been streamlined as all stages in the process have been optimised (Greco, 2019). The value chain concept in publishing will be examined in more depth later in the chapter.

In considering organisational structures Charles Handy developed the idea of the shamrock organisation which reflected the distinction between different sorts of workers and

which encompassed recognition of the role of freelance, contract-based workers (Bilton, 2006; Handy, 2012; Kung, 2008; Porter: 1980). This had particular relevance for creative businesses such as publishers which often use external suppliers and creative people for particular parts of their activity at particular times (Bilton, 2006; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011); Handy recognises that there may be different sorts of workers that have some autonomy and have different motivations and styles of working, but are connected as one organisation. These thinkers continued to shape the way businesses in general were structured through the twentieth century (Greco, 2019); it led to a business hierarchy aligned around functions that can be recognised across many industries that produce things, including publishing specifically.

### **Developments in publishing in the Twentieth Century**

While a general pattern for business organisation and management was developing, there were also some specific ways in which publishing evolved. The growing professionalization of the industry led to the development of the role of the literary agent (Thompson, 2012), which grew in response to the needs both of the publisher and the author; authors became more aware of their rights and wanted to have more control over certain publishing decisions; therefore the literary agent was one way to ensure they were effectively represented to publishers. Meanwhile, publishers were struggling to undertake all aspects of their role effectively, because of the increasing size of the market; literary agents became helpful talent scouts for publishers, working with authors to hone the material. This became even more prevalent during the middle of the twentieth century, for trade markets, particularly driven by the need to find new publishable works quickly in order to keep competitive (Thompson, 2012).

The continuing reliance on older nineteenth century titles (the back list of publisher's inventories) created the impetus to try and find new authors in the first part of the twentieth century, which was arguably beginning to stagnate somewhat following the nineteenth century modes of publishing (Feather, 2005). However, new dynamics in the industry emerged by the 1930s with companies like Tauchnitz and Albatross, and then, more comprehensively, by Allen Lane when he established Penguin. This changed the business model by which publishers had often worked, publishing hardbacks and selling the rights to paperback houses later who would print cheaper editions. Penguin took an entrepreneurial approach, taking a risk on the business model; Lane developed a paperback-only list of varied and thought-provoking titles across subjects to curate a series of books, having selected and bought paperback rights to the titles. He also looked in new ways at sales outlets and developed a design aesthetic that reflected a coherent and curated list, and would be recognisable. This combination of elements was important in encouraging innovation in the publishing industry, looking at new ways of publishing and marketing. Developments in illustrated book publishing and the rise of book packagers are other examples that reflect different sorts of innovations in the industry.

A further significant development shaping the industrial structures of publishing today was in the consolidation within the industry that took place in the late 1980s, partly in response to recession, partly due to increasing competition as a result of the globalisation (Hemmungs Wirten, 2007; McCleery, 2019; Steiner, 2018). This happened in the UK alongside a revolution in the retail space that led to new pricing strategies with the breaking of the net book agreement. The net book agreement was a fixed price agreement whereby publishers agreed and fixed the price at which books would be sold to the public. It had operated for much of the twentieth century, evolving out the need to avoid heavy discounting practices and support booksellers at the very start of century (Feather, 2005). Once it was

dissolved (soon after Dillons broke the agreement in 1991), book prices were no longer fixed and prices could be reduced by sellers. Notwithstanding a developing professionalisation, many publishing companies were small and run by individuals, personalities who could spot a great book but who might not always have a strong control of the costs of their business and who might be operating close to the edge in terms of cashflow (Athill, 2001; Thompson, 2012). These companies could not survive a significant downturn following a recession. Companies consolidated around a few big conglomerates as larger companies bought up smaller imprints (Hemmungs Wirten, 2007; Steiner, 2018). Some publishers who owned warehouses or printers sold these so they could concentrate on the business of publishing. Vertical integration began to take place more rapidly as hardback and paperback companies merged, the paperback arm, where profits could be maximised on cheap high-volume sales, helping support the hardback arm, who looked for and nurtured talent. As the literary agent role continued to develop, their demand for large advances for their authors meant that publishers could only feasibly bid for new authors if they were able to maximise on the paperback side of the deal.

One result of this can be seen as the increasing focus on market and marketing in order to sell as much as possible to make profit to support high advances (Thompson, 2012). While understanding the market in which one operates is essential, there have been misgivings about the emphasis on marketing and promoting titles, focusing on gaining best sellers, to the detriment of editorial quality control and variety in new signing. This something John Thompson explores when he examines what he calls the five myths of publishing (2012). He reflects that this may mean that publishing is becoming more homogenous in approach, as ‘me-too’ publishing (2012:10). Often large publishers, driven by the commercial demands of their parent companies, play safe with their signings (Davies, 2004). The need to have books that bring commercial success means publishers focus on

what they can see works well and continue to publish more titles of that sort. In addition, publishers spend a lot of money to promote titles to help them become best sellers. This also has led to an emphasis on the marketing and sales aspects of the business, possibly to the detriment of the editorial side (Thompson, 2012). This strategy can be seen to limit publishing of titles that might be important to publish, but which might not draw a large market. While Thompson shows that, to some extent, these myths are myths, and not necessarily fully borne out when examined more closely, they are reflective of some underlying trends in what shapes the business today (Thompson, 2012).

Examining the evolution of the structures of publishing reveals how long it has taken for them to develop and also shows how they continue to change and evolve. It is possible that some structures in publishing business, such as the print production workflow, can be difficult to change and adapt because they are so highly developed; as such they may be impacting on the ability for the publisher to respond to new challenges. The way publishing houses are organised has evolved over centuries and so some of their ways of working have been established for a long time. But traditional workflows may need to change as publishers adapt to new digital environments (where, for instance, less printing may be required).

On the other hand, publishing can and does change and evolve; for example, the Penguin paperbacks represent innovations around format and distribution; the introduction of XML-first workflows provides flexible ways to publish material digitally. As publishing responds to the digital environment it may need to find further approaches to innovation in order to keep adapting. The case studies in this research are focused on digital collaborations and this reflects that publishers are clearly as willing to experiment with new formats as they have been in the past. The research will explore whether collaboration is one of the ways publishers can continue to evolve. Managing the development of digital publishing is something that will be examined more closely in chapter four. The next section looks more

closely at the current structure of the traditional publishing business in order to consider how far these structures may need to become more flexible in order to undertake effective collaboration when developing digital products.

### 3.3 Current structures of publishing

#### Functional organisation of contemporary publishing businesses

The current structures within the publishing industry tend to reflect the organisation of a traditional production-based business. It is organised around departments that take on different functions for this production. Figure 3.1 reflects the sort of organisation chart for a generic publishing business that would be reasonably recognisable across the industry, and as such reflect what might be regarded as ‘traditional publishing’. The main different functions of a publishing house can be seen on the chart.

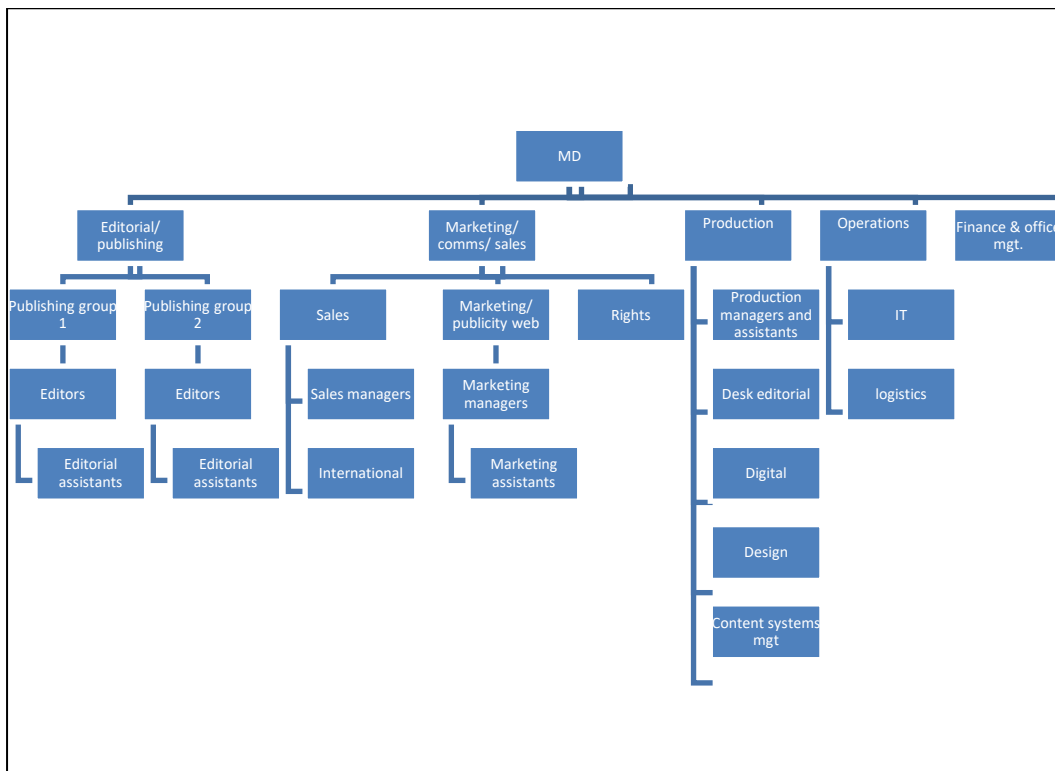
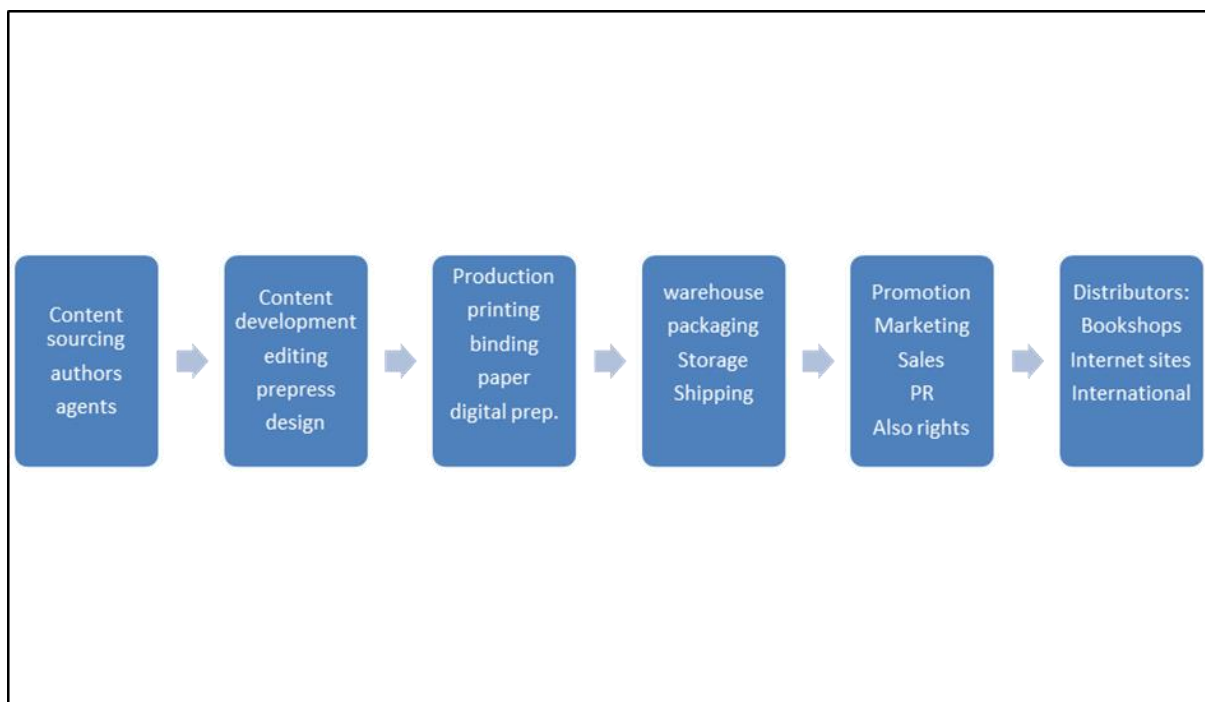


Figure 3.1 Generic organisational chart for a publishing business



Publishing is generally one of the departments, possibly split out into groups or imprints; this often encompasses editorial in terms of commissioning or acquiring books and, in many ways, this is similar to a research and development (R&D) department or product design department of another business; it is the revenue driver for the business, developing new products by seeking out talented authors and signing up new content. Editorial, production and design departments (editorial in terms of desk editorial, copy-editing and text management) can be seen as the manufacturing part of the business. Marketing, PR and sales, as with any commercial enterprise, reflect the arms of the business focused driving sales. Publishers also have finance, IT, HR and operations (often including relationships with suppliers and warehouses) (Negus, 2002). These departments will cooperate in the development of an individual book or list, but also will tend to have their own imperatives to follow. This structure mimics the traditional workflow of a publishing house as outlined in figure 3.2; each stage in the process for the production of a book is overseen by a different department.



**Figure 3.2 Traditional workflow of a publishing house**

It can lead to a more siloed approach to publishing. Production, for instance, will be explicitly tasked with cost control for the company, while publishing and editorial will focus on building revenues through the new signings (new business) targets.

This structure focuses around functions (Baverstock, 2015; Darnton, 2010; Hall, 2019; Ray Murray and Squires, 2013). It suggests the organisation of a business around specific roles reflecting the management thinking of the twentieth century; each part of the structure has highly developed expertise and participants refine and hone the part of the process for which they are responsible. This structure has for many years allowed smooth working of publishing operations: publishers take risks in terms of deciding which new content they feel will be successful which they put into the workflow. All other aspects of the system work in highly developed ways to ensure the smooth production of that content in published form.

Development of new products in publishing has often been focused on commissioning new titles by finding talent in new authors. The product itself, a book or journal, has not changed very much, even in electronic form. What is of interest to this research is that in the digital environment these product forms are changing rapidly. A highly developed system for sourcing and nurturing new talent in terms of authors may not necessarily be enough when new forms of book also need be explored. This research will examine ways to experiment and develop new product types, not new content. If publishing and commissioning editors are seen to be the research and development part of the business, it is possible they need to focus further on new formats as part of this role. The question then is how far is the ‘traditional’ structure suited to the successful development of new digital products? New digital formats however can be complex to develop. Methods for ways to experiment with new digital forms

may need to be considered more carefully. This research examines whether collaboration is one way to achieve this. It is for this reason that the collaborations that are examined are those looking a new sorts of digital products not just digital versions of print books.

Undertaking collaborative activity may be one way to build further experience in digital development but the organisation also needs to be structured in a way to ensure collaborative activity can be successful. It is possible the current, well established and efficient workflow for publishing books limits some of the activity that may be necessary for effective digital experimentation. The research will examine whether this organisational structure is flexible enough to accommodate new sorts of collaborative activity where digital product development is concerned.

### **Publishing sectors**

So far publishing has been discussed in a general sense but there are some differences between the way different sectors operate (Baverstock, 2015; Healy, 2011). As an example, the specialist sectors will more proactively commission titles, building on market research; this market has specific requirements, well understood by publishers and the market also has clear expectations, understands the value of the content when they use it and has direct relationships with publishers (Thompson, 2005). The trade sector will more often acquire books via literary agents and will spend more money on marketing titles creatively in order to draw in an interested market and set up a title as a potential best seller catching a trend (Thompson, 2010).

Structurally however, both specialist and trade sectors are set up with a similar range of departments (editorial, production, marketing etc.). The focus of the thesis is whether this central structure may need to change in light of collaborative activity. As such then the differences between sectors does not necessarily need to distort the overall findings. Where

collaboration takes place it may be about a specific product or a wider service for a market depending on sector; but it is expected the process of the collaboration will have recognisable characteristics across any sector (or indeed any industry) and it is those characteristics that are the focus of the study, particularly in relation to whether new characteristics are emerging. As will be seen in the next chapter, the digital shift is playing out across all sectors. While for each sector the way it is changing will be different, and some necessarily moving more quickly than others towards digital transformation, the fact that it is changing and leading to new collaborations can be seen across all publishing sectors. The research will test whether each sector views collaboration as critical to it operating effectively in a changing environment; it will examine examples from each sector and it will also see how far these different sectors feel the need to change structures in order to operate effectively.

### **Publishing as a content industry**

In considering how to accommodate the differences between sectors for this research, it may be useful to acknowledge the changing terminologies used in publishing. While once ‘book’ or ‘journal’ might be the term used to typify the publishing products of the industry, ‘content’ is now more frequently referred to (Bhaskar, 2013) and as such covers a range of different content types that can be structured in different ways depending on the market. As shall be seen in chapter four, it is partly the development of digital technologies that has led to this change in terminology – content in digital form becomes fluid in terms of format and content management systems become frameworks for managing, shaping and distributing content effectively (Bhaskar, 2013).

This view is also driven by those researching creative industries more widely with ‘content industries’ seen to represent any industry that creates products where the value is the content itself – whether artworks, film, music or written text (Simon, and Bogdanowicz,

2012). It can, when one uses ‘content’ as the collective term, become easier to discuss concepts that are related to the industry as a whole; concepts such as aggregation and curation, scarcity and abundance can apply to all sorts of content (Shatzkin, 2009). Additionally, commentators talk about the business of publishing being about the business of ‘reading’ (Lloyd, 2009) or story telling (Rankin, 2013). ‘Content’ therefore crosses sectors and types of material effectively, even if it can sound somewhat sterile as a term. This then helps the exploration of publishing theory which can encompass all publishing sectors.

### **3.4 Publishing Theory**

The focus of the chapter so far has been on how publishing businesses have evolved and what they currently look like. However, several theorists have explored ways to consider publishing from a theoretical point of view that is relevant to the research. Publishing theory explores an understanding of what publishing is, and therefore also helps to explain how the structure that it has currently, has come about. These theories have emerged from different disciplines from business to sociology and cultural studies. While there are many ways to consider and understand publishing, including, in particular, the socio-cultural concepts of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993) and of symbolic value (Thompson, 2010), there are two concepts that take the structure of publishing explicitly into account: the value chain and the communications circuit.

#### **Value chain**

The concept of the value chain, as mentioned above, (see p89) is a well-established framework for understanding business activity and is a key element in understanding both the processes of publishing and the current structure it has adopted.

The value chain, emerging from Porter’s theory about competitive advantage (1985) as applied to publishing, outlines the stages in the progress of a book from author to reader.

At each stage the publisher adds something to the end product (Hall, 2019; Thompson, 2012); for example it may be the textual work that refines the writing, the design of pages to maximise on clarity of the content, marketing focus to attract and reach markets or author branding to increase awareness of backlists. As a standard production line, the process is in many ways linear, and, although some activities will happen concurrently, the process has a beginning (the raw content), and an end (the final output) – directed to the market via intermediaries with whom the publishers have well established links. In general, the individual components of the value chain reflect the various functions involved.

John B. Thompson unpicks the various elements closely in *Merchants of Culture* exploring exactly what value is added at each stage from content acquisition – moving beyond the function to the benefit it brings (2012). Themes of quality and the nature of value emerge from his survey, themes that become more nuanced when considered in light of a more democratized publishing environment with the onset of digital production and products. He explores in particular the activities of the sales and marketing functions not just in and promoting to the market but finding new audiences and building new markets (2012). He considers a simple definition of publishing as the making a book *available* to the public in relation to the marketing function and extends it to the concept of making it *known* to the public. Michael Bhaskar would argue that the whole process of publishing is about making it known to the public; this occurs not just as a result of the marketing and sales aspect but from all the earlier stages of sourcing, shaping and structuring content, stages where choices are made to ensure the content can be effectively made known to the public (2013).

One particular aspect of this is the importance of protecting the value chain. By framing the input into the chain as intellectual property it, in many ways, intensifies what it is the publisher has hold of at the start of the process. By adding value at each stage the publisher is protecting the intellectual property (of theirs or the authors), making it ‘more’

unique, more usable and accessible (through anything from design or distribution); the notion of protection is perhaps more of an issue in a digital age where trying to protect content becomes a challenge (whether from piracy or from re-mixing etc.); with the ethos of an internet that allows for sharing and exchange along principle of open access this overt protection of intellectual property can be controversial (Naughton, 2012).

The value chain is adapting and being broken down in various ways by digital change (Ray Murray and Squires, 2013; Steiner, 2018; Thompson, 2012). Not all elements of the value chain are required; digital books do not need brick and mortar bookshops, for instance. Many outputs are possible with digital formats, and the start and end points of a project are less clear as content can be under continuous development (for instance, real time updating of legal products or online open access peer review systems mean continuous writing is going on). This will be examined more closely in the next chapter.

Even with digital change however, the value chain is very useful as a framework in which to understand the process of publishing, as it breaks down the activities publishers undertake; it also makes it a flexible way to identify points where value is created and understand how to improve on those, as well as to recognise where elements are changing or will need to be adapted in light of digital change. It usefully highlights other aspects of publishing activity that can also form part of the value, so that the business models (such as the relationship between hardbacks and paperbacks) themselves can be a reason for added value. This means that new ways for works to be published such as through self-publishing websites, crowdfunded works or models for open access can be regarded as aspects of the value chain.

This framework often dominates concepts of publishing, describing as it does the essential functions of the publishing process. It is useful for this research as it connects

publishing to business and organisational theory; it provides a theoretical framework for understanding how digital change is impacting on publishing at each of the different stages in the value chain which will be examined in more closely in the next chapter. The research will need to consider how the value chain approach to publishing structure may need to adapt to different sorts of digital project development. Though, by focusing on a business approach it does not necessarily reach into the more fundamental aspects of what publishing is and what it does for us as a society.

### **The communications circuit.**

While the value chain builds on traditional business and management theory there are other frameworks that emerge from other disciplines – such as the historical and cultural approach of Robert Darnton (1982). With a book historian's lens, he steps back to see what lies fundamentally at the heart of the publishing process and he has promulgated the concept of the communications circuit (1982).

Robert Darnton develops the communications circuit (1982) as a way to look for the fundamental elements of the production of books from author to publisher and via bookseller to reader; he uses this as a way to tie different disciplinary approaches together (including literary theory and book history). There are elements in common with the value chain in that there is an understanding that some stages take place at the publisher; he takes the circuit wider however, to include, for example, suppliers and booksellers, partly because he is encompassing historical as well as contemporary book publishing. But, significantly, the reader is included in the circuit and this is what makes the circuit more compelling as a representation of book communication: 'It runs full cycle. It transmits messages, transforming them en route as they pass from thought to writing to printed characters and back to thought again' (Darnton, [1982] 2010:180). So, in that sense, it is much more abstract



than the value chain and, while he has used this for book history, this has been used very effectively to examine publishing as a form of communication more widely (Ray Murray and Squires, 2013).

Robert Darnton develops this, as he explains, to move away from the loose combinations of interdisciplinary approaches that he was encountering in book history. For Darnton the communications circuit is the unifying feature that brings various disciplines together which can otherwise seem fragmented; ‘the parts do not take on their full significance unless they are related to the whole’ ([1982] 2010:179). As David Finklestein and Alistair McCleery put it, it is a way of ‘conceiving the production of texts as a multifaceted enterprise encompassing social, economic, political and intellectual conditions’ (2006:12). Using this framework alongside the more business-oriented value chain can therefore make sense as the one overarches the other: the communication circuit explains why publishing is done, while the value chain explores how. Both are structures that reflect the fact that publishing is about bringing content to an audience; if digital change leads to new forms of content for new audiences, the communications circuit and the value chain both need to be considered to see how these structures could be adapted to encompass new types of product development. This adaptation is examined more closely in the next chapter.

### **3.5 Concepts of risk and new product development in publishing**

The concepts of the value chain and communication circuit offer approaches to understand the structure of publishing as a whole process. This research is concerned with the structure of publishing and whether it needs to adapt to new forms of product development in light of digital change. So, in order to consider innovation in publishing, there is one further theoretical approach to publishing that needs to be examined. The notion of risk in publishing

and the approach the industry has new product development is of importance when thinking about how publishers undertake experimentation.

The way publishers view and manage risk is considered by organisational theorists such as Paul Hirsch (1972) and Lewis Coser (1975). This is unpicked in relation to the way publishers sign up and market new books and wait to see which ones will succeed. Hirsch identifies critical problems in the system that can affect the way publishing produces and competes today. As he states, the need for publishers to get their products to the market and the barriers they have overcome to achieve this affects the risk management patterns they adopt. For instance, overproduction of titles can be regarded as a way of managing the risk: it is expected that only some titles will make it through to become best sellers out of all those that are signed up and so an expectation of failure is built into the system. The Pareto rule (Jenkins, 2006; Thompson, 2012) applied to publishing would indicate that publishers make 80% of revenues from 20% of books; this leads to the requirement to produce a number of books on the expectation some will make it while others do not. Hirsch summarises 'under these conditions it apparently is more efficient to produce many 'failures' for each success than sponsor fewer items.' (1972:504).

Lewis Coser similarly reflects on the principles around which publishing is organised: he regards it as operating like a large business but following craft industry practices (1975) where individualised decisions on what to publish appear to be prevalent; getting the balance between commercial stability and product experimentation has led to certain practices centred on managing risk (overproduction) and developing network behaviours (to identify new talent). He states, 'in an industry faced with a high degree of market insecurity and unpredictability, and where capital investment for each book is relatively low, it appears a rational organisational response to follow a shotgun principle, scattering many shots in the hope that at least a few hit the targets' (1975:21). While he states that this behaviour is idiosyncratic, it

is possible that this approach to new product risk is in fact more bureaucratic is embedded in the behaviour and workflow of the organisation as well as the commercial structures of the profit and loss account. Keith Negus points to the fact that the systems used to manage cultural production in creative industries are embedded: 'symbolic material is constructed as a result of very well-established routines that require little effort or sourcing' (2002:510). Systems that are entrenched, while they run very smoothly, may not be equipped to deal with change effectively. These systems are Coser's 'rational organisational response' (1975:21). Working practices that are institutionalised can cause problems and allow for little flexibility in taking risks in new ways.

Lucy Kung reiterates this problem of overproduction as she identifies one of the central systemic issues for publishers: she recognises that the strategy to overpublish is a 'response to weakening demand and uncertainty about public taste' (2008:33). As she says 'it is seductively inexpensive to produce a book' (2008:33) given oversupply of content and cheap production costs (though she recognises the hidden costs such as marketing and sales are high). This system around failure is built into the publisher's attitude to risk and represented within the value chain (in terms of the ability to overproduce cheaply).

Digital development also recognises that products may fail, but the approach to development is more iterative; the cost basis of experimenting with new digital products is different and so the approach to risk needs to be different. One of the questions of the research is how far the current approach to new product development, even though it has a specific approach to risk and failure, is sustainable when considering digital innovation. New systems by which to experiment and measure failure may be required.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the evolution and current structure of the publishing industry in order to understand what ‘traditional’ structures for publishing might be. It has also introduced two main theoretical concepts that relate the business and organisational nature of publishing: the value chain and the communications circuit. This sets the scene, both in practical terms and in theoretical terms, for an understanding of existing organisational and business structures. Additionally, an examination of theories of risk throws light on the industry’s approach to bringing content to market. The research then asks how far these structures support or restrict publisher’s ability to adapt to new digital challenges in relation to new product development. Can these structures support certain types collaboration and experimentation, and do publishers need to consider new approaches to bringing creative products to the market?

It appears that the current structure of the publishing industry has been designed around the format of the book, the creative element being in the content. However, one form of media supersedes another (Finkelstein and McCleery, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Naughton, 2012; Standage, 2012). While this chapter outlines the current ‘traditional’ structure, the next considers the impact the digital environment has had on the industry and the effect it has on both the practical and theoretical aspects of publishing summarised here.

## **Chapter 4 The digital context for publishing**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the impact the emerging digital environment has had on the traditional structure of the publishing industry outlined in the previous chapter, both at an organisational and theoretical level. Developments in digitally-based technologies have led to significant changes across the media industries (Simon and Bogdanowicz, 2012). As Lucy Kung says of the emergence of digital technologies, ‘the scope, velocity and convoluted nature of environmental change has had a massive impact on content strategies’ (2008:215).

The ability to transfer content into a digital format renders it flexible, useable and shareable (subject to digital rights management), making it very different from the fixed format of the printed book (Kasdorf, 2003; Phillips, 2014; Thompson, 2005). This affects many aspects of content businesses from authoring and production to distribution and marketing. Many of the activities of publishing have already been transformed by digital and are less problematic: digital printing, for instance, has been prevalent for many years as has the transfer of print books into epub formats (Thompson, 2005, Phillips, 2014). However, other aspects of digital transformation pose more challenges, such as the development of new digital products that do not take formats that mimic books. Different ways of developing and producing digital products are emerging and this is leading to new ways of working. This chapter will examine some of the main aspects of digital change that have affected publishing; it will then explore the way the industry is adapting as it accommodates new digital activity both in terms of theoretical approaches and industry comment. In doing this it aims to illustrate the important digital drivers behind the need to form new types of collaborations for the development of new digital products.

As the impact of digital change on publishing is relatively recent there is not a large body of dedicated digital publishing theory. Throughout the thesis the research has to draw together thinking from different disciplines to shed light on its current structure and behaviour. To do this the chapter takes a four-part approach to explore the effects of digital change. First, it outlines the context of digital change and some of the main concepts emerging around disintermediation and changing consumer behaviour. Secondly it explores current theory for digital publishing and looks at the way some theorists are calling for newer theoretical approaches to be developed in light of digital change. Thirdly it offers views from practitioners and industry commentators to see how their experience relates to the theoretical concepts.

Finally, to draw a contemporary picture of the industry as it faces digital challenges, the last part of the chapter will present primary research that was undertaken in the form of a survey with industry leaders. This research will establish the starting point for the main body of the thesis; in examining the need to develop digital projects successfully, the survey asks how far collaboration plays a part. It sets the scene for the subsequent case studies that look more closely at specific collaborations, testing whether collaborations are changing in style, how they appear to operate and, if they are successful, what makes them so.

## **4.2 Overview of digital change and emergent themes for content and media industries**

Before embarking on an examination of digital publishing theory it is useful to have an overview to the digital changes that have taken place. The effects of digital technology on content, production, marketing and price are many; as John Maxwell says: ‘technology is often assessed in terms of outputs but it is also important to attend to the transformations it brings about’ (2019:328). Technology allows easy and quick dissemination across the internet so distribution structures change; it allows content to be manipulated in different

ways that can change the manner in which it is consumed; it leads to new methods of workflow that bring speed and flexibility to production (Bhaskar, 2013; Kasdorf, 2003; Maxwell, 2019; Phillips, 2014; Thompson, 2005,). In addition, new methods of digital marketing can be used to promote new-style digital products, as well as print products, while digital analytics can inform marketing practice (Baverstock, 2015). New business models can be introduced as pricing mechanisms can be adapted easily for markets with different purchasing patterns, and indeed this can help develop new markets (Dosdoce.com, 2015; Simon and de Prato, 2012; Steiner, 2018; Tian and Martin, 2011). These developments affect all media industries that can transfer content into digital formats, including music, films and books (Kung, 2008). One report states ‘The media and content industries.... are among the industries that have been first and heavily hit by digital shift’ (Simon and Bogdanowicz, 2012:2). It has led to a significant shift in the traditional models of production and consumption, and so to a major restructuring ‘in the context of dramatic changes in demand patterns’ (2012:2).

The book publishing industry is one of the subsets of the media and content industries that has been affected in the ways outlined above (Bhaskar, 2019; Maxwell, 2019; Steiner, 2018). The traditional value chain, as introduced in the previous chapter, is affected along its length, from manuscript to distribution. Because digital technology is a driver for a lot of the changes going on in publishing today it has led to questions about the future for publishing in a digital age (Bhaskar, 2013; Gallagher, 2014; Hetherington, 2014; Michaels, 2015; Nash, 2010; Phillips, 2009; Phillips, 2014; Steiner, 2018; Thompson, 2005). Issues around copyright and intellectual property also arise, given the ease with which digital products can be disseminated, shared, reused and adapted (Healy, 2011; Hetherington, 2014; Jefferies and Kember, 2019; Jones and Benson, 2016; Nash, 2010; Naughton, 2012; Phillips, 2009). There is also a question about how to define books in a digital age: ebooks can be very similar to

print books; however, there are other digital products across a range of publishing sectors that are very different from traditional books; for example, publishers are now producing games and internet language learning sites, databases and workflow materials; these digital products are stretching the idea of the book (Weedon et al., 2014). It is these newer forms of digital products that are the focus of this research.

There are a range of wider challenges beyond the immediate value chain facing the industry as well, including the increased competition from technology players outside the sector and changing consumer behaviours (Steiner, 2018). While the industry has been adapting to the digital environment in terms of the sorts of products it makes, there has also been a significant change in the competitive environment in which it operates. New players from beyond the traditional publishing boundaries are starting to occupy publishing spaces. These players range from global technology corporations to small start-ups; the large companies like Apple, Google and Amazon come with financial and technological resources beyond the capacity of even large publishing companies (Steiner, 2018); small companies come with lean and agile approaches that also pose threats to the legacy-bound publishers (Simon and Bogdanowicz, 2012). The large technology companies control access to digital market places through their devices and software, and, as new intermediaries, they can put pressure on publishers who want to reach their own consumer base. At the other end of the scale, small producers are also having an effect: barriers to entering the market are reduced; the cheapness of digital production and ease of using social media for marketing mean self-publishers can launch books and develop direct relationships with readers without needing professional publishers (Baverstock, 2015). Fan fiction and other authoring sites can create alternative spaces for writers and readers to congregate (Jenkins, 2008).



## **Content Abundance and the digital consumer**

A further challenge posed by the digital environment, is the changing consumer (Healy, 2011). This is, in part, the result of content abundance as so much content is available online and connectivity means consumers can move seamlessly around content on the internet.

Michael Bhaskar states that publishing ‘faces a collective problem: that same superabundance applies to all forms of media’ (2019:104) so that publishers are competing in a much wider field than in the past. The digitally literate consumer expects less controls, seeks direct access (rather than needing to go through a gatekeeper) and is in sympathy with the democratic ethos of the internet where content is shareable and free (Healy, 2011; Naughton, 2012). This sort of consumer wants to participate more and avoid layers that separate them from the products or culture they want to consume (Jenkins, 2008). The concept of the publisher as cultural gatekeeper (Bourdieu and Johnson, 1993) is unnecessary: publishers have, in the past, created artificial constructs that impose rules and controls on a market through managing supply as they select content and bring it to readers; as scarcity of content is no longer an issue, given the abundance available, consumers feel entitled and enabled to demand what they want (Jenkins, 2008). Theorists and commentators see that the new consumer is at the heart of new approaches to publishing (Lloyd, 2008; O’Leary, 2011).

Theories around understanding the digital consumer look further than the fact consumers may be using different devices or accessing them in different places; they focus on the digital context in which consumers exist and participate. Creating content is made easy and information is simple to store, present, distribute and broadcast (Naughton 2012). While the internet is full of content, searching through it is a problem (O’Leary 2011; Naughton, 2012; Pariser, 2011). Understanding the context of the consumer, at the point they want content, therefore, is important in creating that content to be found at the right time in the right format. Here, the service approach to publishing, suggested by John Thompson (2005),

emerges as a way to provide solutions to the consumer's search; this falls in line with comments not only from theorists like Thompson but also from commentators from within the industry. The digital world is changing the consumer: as Michael Healy says: they will want products that allow them access to content immediately and flexibly in ways they can use without restrictions – 'any content, any time, on any device in any format.' (2011:15) Consumers are more connected, migratory, active and public (Jenkins, 2009:19); this is reflected in the flexibility to transfer between different media and devices; what they consume is not medium specific.

The other critical aspect of the issue of abundance is that the internet has made it possible to create content with very little cost so publishers can be bypassed. Additionally, the ethos of the internet, owing much to the open source software movement, focuses on concepts of freedom, sharing and collective intelligence: ideas have to be free to connect and become creative possibilities (Leadbeater, 2009; Naughton, 2012; Shirky, 2008). This philosophy of sharing and distributing knowledge freely, combined with ease and low cost of doing so, has led consumers to expect that a lot of information should be free: publishers in some ways have become the scapegoats for consumers who see them as restricting access to content by charging for it and controlling it by artificial mechanisms such as copyright (Leadbeater 2009; Naughton, 2012). What consumers previously valued, such as physicality and ownership, is changing and context, as suggested in different ways by Michael Bhaskar and Brian O'Leary may be part of this unconscious re-evaluation; this change of orientation is important to capture as publishers need to observe the way consumers recalibrate the way they judge content.

However, the internet as a source of content can also provide a productive space for creative ideas to form: for Jenkins the new media environment leads to 'the freer flow of ideas and content' (2008:18). Good ideas want to 'connect, fuse and recombine' (Johnson

cited by Naughton 2012:239) and ‘a creative society needs lots of unattached ideas and an environment in which they are able to encounter others’ (2008:238). The publisher and the consumer can both engage in this new productivity. Digital therefore challenges the need for controls that are used to help protect creators and publishers; but at the same time digital promotes the sharing and learning that publishers and creators understand and appreciate.

### **Convergence and blurred roles**

Participation is also growing in importance for consumers (Jenkins, 2008; Kung, 2008). The digital environment is blurring roles between the various elements of the value chain, not just among the publishing activities in the middle part of the chain but for those at either end: the author and reader. This is one form of digital convergence. The author can connect much more directly to the reader and self-publishing has become easy and is no longer regarded as a vanity project (Baverstock and Steinitz, 2013). Digital technology enables digital products to reach readers in different ways; digital workflows enable small or new entrepreneurial operations also to set up a manageable operations for their products on whatever scale; the back office is easy to manage and slot into wider systems for retail and distribution with electronic inventory and sales data for example; digital marketing allows publishers or self-publishers to talk directly to markets and distribute to them (Thompson, 2005). Once the actual digital product itself can be made, the barriers to entry for would-be publishers are immediately lowered as the other activities slot into place.

There are degrees of involvement for writers and readers along the value chain. As more people, who are not necessarily traditional publishers, get involved, so the functions of publishing can be reinvented, bypassed or simplified. This can lead to the development of a publishing operation that takes only some of the traditional functions of a publisher and builds a business around those; so, for instance, a company may focus on market and adding

value, only using what is needed, and stripping the rest away. Low barriers to entry allow for more risk taking around new ideas or models; as Jenkins says this allows amateurs to experiment (Jenkins, 2008). Self-publishers can buy in services while authors, even well-known ones, can become hybrid producers, using publishers in some cases, or DIY in others (Baverstock and Steinitz, 2013). Agents are starting to publish their own works; book packagers can offer marketing services; crowd funding sites can vet and carry out editorial work; Amazon can develop a self-publishing arm and set up its own bookshops; customers can provide user-generated content via social media; as Healy says, ‘some of the traditional functions of publishing are being usurped by other individuals and organisations’ (2011:8). In this way, producers are also the consumers as they are producing the content they themselves are consuming (Ray Murray and Squires (2013).

For large operations like global journal providers, scale for investment is still important, but even in these organisations traditional roles are changing; O’Leary points out (2011) ‘marketers have become publishers; publishers are marketing arms, new entrants are a bit of both. Customers have become alternatively competitors, partners and suppliers’ (2011: 212). For O’Leary (2011) and Healy (2011) this is leading to a blurring of boundaries between different functions in publishing and this reflects a convergence that can be seen in the wider context of digital consumerism.

From a producer point of view, technology allows customisation and individualisation, consistent with the demands of the consumer; publishers can sell content in multiple ways using technology to deliver content as suited to the consumer, adapted to them at their point of need (Jenkins, 2008, Healy, 2011). Underpinning this is collaboration; Jenkins (2008), Ray Murray and Squires (2013) and Leadbeater (2009) all see the importance of collaborative activity as a key component for developing new ideas around digital opportunities. Collaboration is a way to be in touch with an audience and letting them

participate, but it also reflects ways to operate between businesses too: this is the ‘collaborative partnership approaches’ of Ray Murray and Squires (2013), now possible due to digital technologies.

### **Converged media and the book**

While the roles and activities of producer and consumer merge, of additional concern for the more traditional publishers is Jenkins’ consideration of the nature of converged media (2008). This encompasses anything from modding and mashups to fan fiction and transmedia storytelling where content shifts across media, across multiple platforms. It is produced and consumed in new ways; tying in with sharing and reuse, content crosses boundaries so that no one format is finite and definable. A book app can easily incorporate film and game elements. Additional content not specifically printed can also be considered as part of a book as in Bhaskar’s paracontent (2011) or Darnton’s book pyramid (2010). Transmedia story telling brings different sorts of media to play different roles within a single story (Jenkins, 2008); but unlike a book app, each media element remains distinct in the eyes of consumers and they will not necessarily consumer all formats, making each experience of the story different for each person.

These are just some examples of the blurring lines for books. Alexis Weedon et al explore this further (2014) reflecting that content can be reused and adapted, discussing the concept of a cross media adaptation. As they explore this, they acknowledge that this leads to a debate about how far a book is still a book when in digital format, and the implication of open-endedness this holds. While the book as a cultural concept does not depend on its physicality, this is a debated point, given the importance of limitation for a cultural frame of reference, and the nature of limitation is very clear in a physical book (Westin, 2013). In this case, it is suggestive that a container approach (O’Leary, 2011) plays a part in defining a

book. This can also be translated into Bhaskar's frames (Bhaskar, 2013) as long as understanding of context is acknowledged. This becomes a practical point for publishers looking to develop new products, especially in the consumer area, where they are making use of the convergence of media.

While investigating ways to work on converged products, publishers can be looking for opportunities to collaborate more widely and develop relationships with other sorts of media producers. These sorts of projects are becoming test beds for new digital practices and this is something the research will go onto explore. They reflect the necessary experimentation with format that publishers need to undertake as the consumer is changing with the digital environment. It is important to realise that technology has always impacted the industry, whether through the invention of the printing press or 19th Century industrialisation; as Maxwell states: 'it is helpful to remember that publishing has always been a technological endeavour' (2019:343). The question in this thesis is less about whether publishing will respond to the digital impacts, and more about how it will do it.

### **4.3 Publishing theory in light of digital change**

The changing digital environment and the emerging digital consumer has impacted publishing activity as the previous section shows. It has also led to the revaluation of publishing theory. Chapter three introduced central constructs of publishing theory that focus on the organisation of publishing structure. This section looks at the way theories around digital development are emerging and how existing theory is being reassessed through a digital lens, given the digital context outlined.

#### **Thompson's four stages of digital development in publishing**

John Thompson outlines, in *Books in the Digital Age* (2005), a four-part evolution of the way digital technology has impacted the publishing industry. This serves as a good starting point

when assessing specific effects of digital technologies on publishing. He shows that technology has been affecting the industry for some time. While many commentators have explored the issues around the production of digital products (Healy, 2011; Michaels, 2015; Nash, 2010; Phillips, 2009, 2014) the earlier stages in the development of digital technologies are not always considered. In the literature there is often an emphasis on the development of digital consumer titles, which was dependent on the development of effective e-readers, e-reading software, tablets and apps; but this can distract from fact that, in specialist areas of publishing, the technology to produce digital products has been used for far longer. Because Thompson focuses on these specialist areas, he is able to go further back, starting with the development of back office systems that enable, for instance, bibliographic data to be produced, stored and transferred; these, he regards, as the first stage of digitization of publishing. The plethora of related systems dates back to the early 90s and includes accounting and royalty systems, as well as stock control and order processing systems. These systems, in themselves, had an important impact within the related distribution and retail industries, first in physical and then online form.

The second development identified by Thompson is that of the content management systems that, while only exploited more recently by consumer books, have been important in managing and storing content for many years in the specialist markets (2005). Setting up effective content management systems involved first refining the production processes to introduce more speed and efficiency. This includes aspects of production, such as the use of digital files to set and deliver page layouts, which changed the publisher's relationship with typesetters and print suppliers. Similarly, the ability to use desk top publishing systems or to correct straight to screen changed the relationship with designers and editors; and the ability to store and print quickly from digital files also altered the production process, while databases became key to holding and updating large data sets such as reference works.

Workflow adjustments have made considerable impact in allowing publishing to produce many sorts of products from one data set, preparing and storing the content in a format that can then be rendered in many ways (Rech, 2012; Tian and Martin, 2011, 2013). These are aspects of this critical stage in the development of digital publishing.

Thompson views the third stage as the development of marketing and services. E-commerce-linked websites to promote and sell products introduced a more direct relationship with customers; this trend is becoming a more critical consideration for current publishers seeking to establish a link that will either bypass or, at least, exist in parallel to the new downstream intermediaries. Other aspects of this stage, include marketing via the social web, providing opportunities for more targeted approaches to consumers as well as ways to capture data for marketing analytics. Providing support for customers, particularly on specialist products, is also important together with the opportunity to get much more granular market information. For Thompson, this leads to an unprecedented connectivity for publishers with their market, potentially turning them into ‘service organisations, embedded in networks of communication’ (Thompson, 2005:315). This concept of publishing feels insightful given the date when Thompson is writing; recognising the service aspect of their business and the importance of networks, is something that publishers might not have been as aware of in 2005 as they may be today, and these issues may emerge further in the primary research.

The fourth stage is the point at which Thompson introduces the concept of digital products in terms of content delivery (2005). He is focused on the specialist education markets in his analysis of the industry and these markets have moved on considerably since his 2005 study but there is a recognition that, while the digital product is evolving in itself, the four stages reflect a transformation: that every aspect of the publishing process has been impacted from input of manuscript to output of product.



## **The digital product and changing value chain**

John Thompson focuses mostly on the mainstream publishing (rather than self-publishing and other opportunities for direct publishing outlined above) but two things are of particular interest when he introduces the fourth digital products/outputs stage. First that this is a contiguous stage in aspects of digitisation; it is not the pinnacle to which the others stages were leading. Each level brings its own important developments to the industry and they continue concurrently to impact in different ways; the system is not linear and the digital product is not final outcome of digital transformation; this is important as the definition of the book as used by Thompson is technologically neutral (2005), so digital impacts print as much as digital output.

Secondly, Thompson develops his concept, based on his research, of a market-led product. The digital product is not just an expected outcome of the technology: i.e. that because it is possible to make a digital book, so digital books are made; instead, it is something that is defined by the market. Digital technologies allow products to be customised to the market, but, as he suggests, it is the market that needs to shape them in the first place: the flexibility of the technology allows the publisher to start with the market demands then work to use technology effectively to create the product. A product-led approach will involve decisions based on market research, but there is still an assumption about what products are possible, in terms of product design, costs and economies of scale. With technology a wider variety of product design, for lower quantity and cost, becomes manageable so it is much more possible that it used to be to start with understanding market demand before any product concepts are developed. Richard Nash summarises this at a macro level when he cites Potter and Ellenberg in a Wired article: ‘The 20th Century was about sorting out supply...the 21st is going to be about sorting out demand’ (Nash, 2010:116).

For Thompson this is about seeing ‘technology in context’ (2010:317) and he assesses demand in terms of added value. For specialist markets this makes sense; accessibility, ubiquity, up-to-datedness, searchability all are valuable for markets that also understand the value of special content (Healy, 2011; Hetherington, 2014). This issue of the changing value chain, refocused around market, is important as it represents a way of assessing digital change. Taking an updated view of the education sector, Xuemei Tian and Bill Martin tease out these value propositions further with their emergent value chain for higher education publishing (2011). They highlight possibilities with digital products such as course-specific customisation, additional multimedia materials and e-learning options where publishers are shared stakeholders with educational institutions in learning management systems (LMS). Tian and Martin draw this into a comparison between old and new value (or as one might say analogue and digital value) (2011, 2013).

However, these particular value chain models of Thompson’s and Tian and Martin’s are not as easily applicable to the consumer market, though the ‘service’ concept is being applied by industry leaders redefining their market (Lloyd, 2008; Nawotka, 2013).

Thompson starts to introduce the vision where the market can lead the content: publishers effectively tap in to their networks to create products. For Thompson ‘content and context are crucial’ (2005:318): publishers need to understand content use in different contexts in order to shape content and value it appropriately. This is also an approach O’Leary outlines where publishers need to move away from concepts of containers, where product format defines the product, towards context, where products form is defined by what the market needs (2011).

### **Redefining the communications circuit.**

While Thompson provides a solid starting point for assessing digital impacts in his book of 2005, he focuses on specialist markets. Some more recent literature examines the digital impacts on the generic value chain as a whole, building on the publishing organisation theory outlined in the previous chapter. Thompson identifies more impacts in his analysis of the trade sector in *Merchants of Culture* (Thompson, 2012) and reintroduces his four-part model with updated elements to include the growth of Kindle for instance; he also explores some more specific elements such as digital rights management, digital sampling, pricing and piracy. Thompson extends the framework to unpick further the issue of value, adjusted for the trade market; in this sector, the consumer view of value is tied to the physicality of the book and the move to digital formats causes reassessment of pricing. This differs from the specialist sectors where value of content in itself (as opposed to its format) appears to be more accepted by the market broadly because of their need to have the information.

A more holistic reassessment of the value chain in light of digital impact is the model outlined by Padmini Ray Murray and Claire Squires (2013). They take Darnton's framework for publishing (Darnton, [1982] 2002), as outlined in chapter three, and review each stage in relation to the impact of digitisation, thus building a new communications circuit. As the authors state, the shift to digital technologies has 'resulted in new business models that challenge the prevailing hierarchies of cultural gatekeeping' (2013:4) and at each stage, therefore, the value chain is altering. While they look closely at digital publishing in terms of digital outputs and digital-enabled activity (such as print on demand and social media promotion), it is noticeable that their evaluation, in fact, makes sense as a holistic approach to an industry concerned with both print and digital formats.

Padmini Ray Murray and Claire Squires reassess the circuit in terms of both publishing companies and self-publishers; they purposefully encompass both large- and

small-scale publishing, and introduce companies with more ‘disruptive’ practices, as they aim to create a meaningful and adaptable framework for publishing as it is changing. They chart each stage of the value chain and the digital impact on it starting with the author and going to the reader; they re-evaluate the stages that content progresses through, whether as a publisher in the more traditional sense or through alternative methods. Thus, by reviewing the nature of the author, changing roles of the publisher, the different agencies involved in servicing the industry and the readers themselves and their influencers, they create an overall concept of publishing that draws in more of the wider stimuli created by digital technology such as the changing consumer. In other words, while acknowledging some of the specific changes (such as new workflows or self-publishing technologies), the re-evaluation recognises the wider socio-economic impacts of digital change and relates them to publishing.

Padmini Ray Murray and Claire Squires also recognise in their survey the shift in ‘power’ to the consumer; they acknowledge that control is moving away from the publishers as consumers change behaviour, thus linking to the service concepts of Thompson, 2005 (2013). They see that change is happening not only in the publishing industry’s relationship to its market, but also happening in the readjustment of working relations with other publishing industry participants (such as suppliers). They raise the issue of collaboration in their research: they identify ‘collaborative partnership approaches’ (2013:10) in their case studies which are made possible by the networks publishers are building to develop ideas, share knowledge, make new products and connect services. This can be linked to the ‘economy of favours’ (Thompson, 2010:156) and resonates with the broader concepts of a sharing and collaborative economy (Rifkin, 2014). This leads Ray Murray and Squires to characterise an ecosystem, ‘a complex ecology’, (2013:10), for publishing which is recognisable in the ecosystems of network behaviour as observed by Grabher (2004) to be

discussed later in chapter six (p178). Publishing theory is acknowledging that new connecting behaviours are emerging, driven by digital change.

### **Ecosystems and the disrupted value chain**

Ecosystems in publishing resonates with the fluidity of the digital communications circuit. The concept of an ecosystem for content industries is summarised by John Naughton (2012) drawing on Marshall McLuhan: ‘a community of organisations, publishers, authors, end users and audiences along with their environment that function together as a unit’ (2012:114). Implicit in Naughton’s summary is the expectation that things will evolve and develop organically.

Jean-Paul Simon and Guiditta De Prato (2012) also describe publishing in terms of ecosystems as they unpick the issues faced by the book publishing industry; while written some years ago their discussion around digital change is still resonant. They see the industry taking different approaches to digital change as strategies are diverging; some new ‘pure (digital) players’ are serving niche communities while others are aiming at vertical integration. Larger traditional publishers are attempting to deal with legacy cost structures in a way that does not disturb their large, existing marketplaces too much during transition. Publishers recognise a changing relationship between different parts of the value chain: they observe that there is ‘loss, creation and transfer of value [along the chain] and industry restructuring’ (2012:72). The development of digital products, even though it is still a smaller market than for print, is disruptive; as Simon and de Prato suggest ‘as [digital] is at the core of concerns of all actors in the book world, it disrupts the whole book ecosystem’ (2012:71). This highlights the interconnectedness of aspects of the industry along a traditional value chain, and the way these relationships are having to readjust around digital transformation. The old ecosystem, then, is declining but as Ray Murray and Squires show,

new ones are emerging (2013). It is the exploration of emergent ecosystems that is one of the foci of this thesis.

### **The need for new theories of publishing.**

Thus far the reappraisal of publishing theory has focused on specific aspects of publishing that have been directly affected by digital. However, there is also literature that looks more conceptually at publishing, now that digital technology has impacted on it so much: digital has been the catalyst to re-examine what it is that publishing does. Commentators like Michael Bhaskar (2013) see technology more as a stimulus for redefining what publishing is at an abstract level, since technology can replace some of the work publishers do and other players, such as technology giants, can supplant the role of publishers easily. Publishing as a disseminating medium has perhaps relied, as a defining feature, upon the fact that it has been the *only* way to disseminate much of science, culture, stories and narrative, and education over the last few centuries. Digital technology takes the core of this definition away as barriers to entry are suddenly low and alternative methods of disseminating material are available. Bhaskar argues this has never been the only defining feature of publishing and that it is time to clearly articulate what publishing is about and what it is for: 'Lacking definition leaves publishers horribly exposed to the whims of history and technology' (2013:4).

While it is digital technology that has inspired Bhaskar to examine publishing, his model aims to be a format-neutral approach, as his definition needs to work for either print or digital outcomes; the aim is to move away from the format in order to find a definition of publishing (2013). Publishing, he argues, changes and adapts as the central work of what it does continues to be required, whatever format is used. He develops a framing, filtering and amplification model that shows that publishers as intermediaries play a significant role in developing content and shaping it effectively for their market; these aspects allow them to

choose appropriate models for publishing. He is perhaps overly anxious to ensure publishers retain a clear intermediary role; his model does not necessarily emphasise as much as it might the more direct relationship publishers can have as ‘service/solutions’ providers for their customers (readers or authors); the themes of relationships that emerged with Thompson (2012).

Michael Bhaskar presents a compelling interpretation of the real work publishers have always done and one that chimes also with digital outputs as print ones; he reinforces this with case studies over centuries of publishing, making connections around different innovations and showing how the industry reinvents itself effectively, while keeping these core elements of filtering and amplification in view (2013 and 2019). As an overarching framework, it negotiates the various functions within publishing effectively; traditional or non-traditional approaches can recognise this framework as one that makes sense of their operations. It also moves away from some of the terminology that has been associated with publishing theory such as ‘gatekeeping’ to bring it more up to date and avoid certain aspects of negativity that are associated with these terms.

### **Containers and contexts**

Brian O’Leary also considers an overarching theory of publishing in light of digital developments and new consumption. For him, the central model that publishing has implicitly adopted poses a problem (O’Leary, 2011); the ‘container’ approach is his term for the inherent model of publishing that is dependent on the physical nature of the product. The container in which the content lies dominates the minds of consumers so much that, in the move to digital, content loses considerable resonance, and therefore value, for the customer. Therefore, consumers and publishers unconsciously collude to believe that the content itself does not exist without the container, the container being its defining feature. For Bhaskar the

container concept still has some value but he feels needs redefining, which he does as he develops his idea of the 'frame' (a more flexible notion than O'Leary's container). However, O'Leary argues that it is the focus on the container that is causing problems as the industry transfers to digital formats. Content appears to lose value in the web for consumers as the 'container' is missing, the part the consumers feel the publishers do; to some, therefore, it seems publishers are now doing less. O'Leary's focus is to reach a redefinition of content in the new digital environment that makes sense for publishers competing with other producers.

It is clear content should not start out defined by the container but traditional workflows are designed around containers; in other words, if a paper back is to be produced it follows certain production processes and the content quickly gets locked up in that one output. Instead, content needs to be able to be rendered in various formats so it must be held in a raw, flexible state from which a paperback can be produced where required, where context makes sense. Technologically this is happening through XML-first workflows for instance but planning for outputs needs knowledge of the market. For Bhaskar part of the issue is to choose a model sympathetic to the filters and amplification requirements of the market: unlike O'Leary he does not believe that publishers accept the container as the starting point for publishing choices; rather it is the limits of production that have limited the container/frame choices. Now, however, digital opportunities allow publishers to open up their thinking of the container; it is not counter intuitive to the needs of the market to think in terms of frames (Bhaskar, 2013).

Brian O'Leary, however, takes this further as he feels that, notwithstanding XML-first workflows, publishers will often still have containers in mind, and still start with a container as their first concept of a project; in this mind-set they become vulnerable. He argues that the technology still drives the outcome for publishers rather than being put to work in providing solutions as needed. New entrants start with context and create the technology behind it and



fill it with the appropriate content. His view, therefore is that the context, where content is accessed and used, is the central consideration, a theme which started to emerge in Thompson (Thompson, 2005) and which is more fully developed by O’Leary. Publishers can understand the market in terms of the content itself but O’Leary’s approach suggests that they still think of delivering that content in the form of pre-defined ‘containers. Readers do not look for the format; ‘more often they search for an answer, a solution, a spark that turns into an interest and perhaps a purchase’ (2011:214).

Unlike Bhaskar, who is more focused on establishing theory, O’Leary is more concerned with a practical outcome from his writing, leading publishers to rethink their approach and move towards more of a service approach. In this he may be somewhat misrepresenting publishers and discarding the concept of the container may be missing some of the point of publishing, but the consideration of the consumer is certainly an emerging theme. What is important for the purposes of this research is that the digital creative projects under scrutiny reflect a different approach to product development; they are not relying on old ‘containers’ but are precisely about experimenting with format based on new markets and consumers.

### **Innovating business models**

Containers and contexts essentially link to the business models publishing uses; digital transformation leads theorists to reflect on the publishing business models used thus far. Publishing’s relatively fixed business model based on print production is giving way to a wide range of innovative and exploratory approaches (Healy, 2011; Hetherington, 2014; Nash, 2010). For Ray Murray and Squires (2013) what is noticeable about these new business models is how to make them sustainable; can concepts for crowdfunding, for instance, be developed to produce long term publishing models rather than transitory experiments?

The change in business models is not just about the way a publishing house funds its projects; it is also about the way the supply chain is changing in response to the purchasing behaviour of consumers (Kung, 2008). As Simon and de Prato say: ‘it is important to take into account the evolution of the patterns of consumption,’ (2012:64) relating this not just to readers using technology in new ways to access services, but also to producers who can use technology for self-publishing. Michael Healy and David Hetherington both point out that in the consumer market place understanding the way consumer’s want to purchase is critical (Healy, 2011; Hetherington, 2014). As Hetherington states the hardback, print first model will have to change; this legacy business model, which really emerged in the Victorian period and remained critical in the development of paper back markets in the 20th Century (Feather, 2005) is becoming outdated very rapidly. Healy, meanwhile, assesses the needs of a consumer who is always online, ‘routinely connected to one another by communities of interest’ (2011:14), used to no restrictions and who easily walks away when they are not satisfied. For them the legacy business model has no place. Hetherington adds that different attitudes to ownership also influences the consumer; subscription models, for instance, are built around access rather than the need to own the actual content. Tian and Martin also consider this issue (2011) and the proliferation of business models can be seen in a report which outlines over 20 different and new variations of business models (Dosdoce.com, 2015).

While the emphasis here is on consumer markets, change is obviously taking place across other markets. Tian and Martin, in their summary of digital product and support services on offer from higher educational publishers, recognise the shift towards a more embedded role for publishers within educational institutions (Tian and Martin, 2013). The white paper by consultants Schilling on educational publishing (Schilling, 2013) outline new service concepts around selling the educational journey. Wiley’s chief executive Stephen

Smith notes sustainability is key rather than legacy: the need to replace holes from print revenues is not the issue so much as the need to find consistent growth in a changing market place (Nawotka, 2013).

Taking a more generic approach to ebooks (i.e. not specific to any sector), Tian and Martin explore the influencing factors on ebook business models (Tian and Martin, 2011) looking at external forces such as competition, market demand and globalisation, all of which impact on the development of business models. They present business model diagrams for the case studies they use, much like the more generic and flexible one of Ray Murray and Squires (2013). In these models it is noticeable that each publishing house has its own approach, and its own take on a standard value chain; it is Tian and Martin's view that a company's individual design provides their customers (either authors or readers) with a unique blend of added value elements. Every publishing house in the past will have imposed their own individual stamp on any standard value chain by the way it managed it, in order to create a series of unique selling points. However, the current flexibility of approach, combined with the increasing emphasis on, suggests a reinvention and customisation of value chains is taking place. Here Tian and Martin also emphasise the importance of partnerships through the case studies they present. Publishers need to understand the way markets are changing: companies that do well are those that 'know their audience and their authors' (2011:240).

### **Definitions of creativity**

Creativity is a further theoretical concept that is important for publishing. In assessing nature of change in collaborations, particularly given the impact of digital development, creativity is likely to be central. The imperative to bring new ideas to digital challenges suggest that the importance of creative thinking will emerge through the research and it will give rise to participants discussing creativity in relation to their activities, both in the survey and in the

case studies. Creativity may be regarded as one of the features that distinguishes new-style collaborations from more traditional ones. Additionally, as the research examines the position of publishing within the creative sector it is also important to consider what creativity means in that context.

There are many definitions of creativity; as Bilton notes it is a term that is overused (2006:xiv). Some focus more on the creative genius and on the individual's own personality and talent; others take a more social psychological approach focusing on the importance of contextualising creativity (Amabile, 1988; 1996; 2012). Some research focuses on socio-economic approaches, recognising its centrality for economic development, while others examine processes and structures that support creative thinking in organisations (Bilton, 2006).

For the purposes of this research there are three main ways in which creativity as a theoretical notion will be used. The first is around productive projects and product design (Amabile, 2012; Bilton, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Kung, 2016). An individual project is creative in its inventiveness and its uniqueness. Creativity here reflects that something new has been developed. For publishing the creative product is usually the book, ebook, journal or ejournal; a particular feature of publishing (and other similar industries such as music) is that the creative product combines individual talent (the author) and the creative activity of the publisher. A publisher will generally understand creativity as it relates to the creative outcome, and so it will be expected that publishers will reference creativity in relation to the new digital products they are developing; this links to the definition of digital creative collaboration as outlined in 2.3.

The second aspect of creativity is as a feature of the creative sector. Creativity vested in a product leads to it having commercial value, a particular notion that relates to wider

definitions of the creative industries. While many other industries would see themselves as creating new products, this is so central to the work of creative sector that creativity is a central commodity for their industry; turning ideas into assets is a defining feature (Howkins, 2001). The creative industries require a constant and on-going supply of new creative products (Caves, 2003, Kung 2016; Hesmondalgh, 2013), which leads to specific and unique approaches to the way they operate. Additionally, it is particularly difficult to predict what will be successful in an arena where commercial value can be subjective. Bilton notes that creative processes are managed in a particular way which leads to unique practices in these sectors (2006:20). This aspect of creativity is especially resonant with publishers; the value chain reflects where their creativity can add value to a product to make it more commercially attractive; the way they organise their workflow and book supply chain is set up to manage risk effectively given unpredictable markets and changing tastes.

The third approach to creativity in the research refers to where it is used more generally, not about a creative product but about creative thinking across all functions of a business (Bilton, 2006, Kung 2016). Creativity is important for many industries beyond the creative sector bringing new ideas to problems and exploring different ways to approach challenges in order to be innovative and competitive. Publishers may not generally consider this aspect of creativity, as they may be more focused on creative product design but recognition of the importance of creativity in problem solving, particularly in a challenging digital environment, may arise from the research. In the survey this concept of creativity may emerge more explicitly as participants involved in the research may well be looking at creative solutions to the wider digital challenges they face within their collaborations.

In conducting the research, the terms ‘creative’ and ‘creativity’ are left open to interpretation by the participants with the likelihood that they will use the term in one of these three ways. It is possible that, while there is a level of creativity vested in day to day

publishing activity, the term is only really used where participants see something over and above their usual creativity taking place, both in product development and in wider creative thinking. Creativity may potentially be more resonant to participants in particular circumstances, whether it is a higher level of inventiveness around the product design or an approach to an unusual and challenging digital problem that requires creativity to solve it. In researching digital collaborations, it is probable that the collaborative activities may lead to a greater perception and articulation of creativity by the participants of the survey and the case studies, because of the unusualness of the projects, and which may be reflective of their view of the project's level of success.

#### **4.4 Digital change and the publishing practitioner**

It can be seen that the digital environment has had considerable impact on publishing in a variety of ways. Themes emerging thus far are centred on the transition to digital production and disruption to traditional value chains; the changing consumer who participates and requires access; blurred roles and converged products, particularly in the recognition that new product forms are evolving; and the importance of collaboration for publisher and consumer. What this has led to are theoretical developments around an adjusted value chain and new publishing ecosystems; evolving concepts around frames, containers and contexts; new concepts of publishing around market-led service provision; and changing business models.

Theorists such as Michael Bhaskar, Xuemei Tian and Bill Martin recognise challenges such as these for publishing but also see significant opportunities for creative, flexible and innovative thinking about publishing. The importance of partnerships and collaborations in particular for publishers is emphasised by several theorists including

Bhaskar (2013), Ray Murray and Squires (2013) and Thompson (2005; 2012). These themes will weave through the subsequent research and inform the questions asked in the next stage.

However, there may be a difference between what theorists observe and what industry participants experience. Having explored interpretations of publishing theory in relation to digital change and considered the wider context of a digital consumer, this section now looks at the way the industry itself has assessed the opportunities and challenges of the digital environment, reviewing articles and commentary from those working within the industry.

There has been much comment from people within the industry revealing an increasing concern for a reinvention of publishing. This commentary has become quieter in recent years: while there was an increased amount of discussion immediately following the development of digital readers and smart personal devices from around 2008 to 2014, this has subsequently reduced, possibly following a stabilisation in the consumer market around ebooks. However, the commentary has some relevance still, as it resonates with the theoretical considerations outlined above. By considering the responses from publishing commentators of the recent past, the aim is to move towards an understanding of the current situation for publishers.

### **New concepts of reading and publishing**

Some commentators re-examine publishing by stripping it back to bare essentials thus enabling them to clear away certain legacy issues around print production; they focus on what publishing is essentially doing, not about the formats it uses. Sara Lloyd, for instance, explains that publishers need to ‘understand and know and connect to their readers far, far better’ (Jones, 2013). In this way a reader-centred discourse is developing among industry participants. Lloyd also quotes Michael Calder saying: ‘It’s still a book business and it needs to become a reader business’ (Lloyd 2009) while for Stephen Page of Faber it ‘A business

about reading and writing' (2011) and Michael Healy a 'Reader-centred business' (2011). For some this leads further to a reinvention of a publishing company as a whole, as a media and cultural enterprise rather than a publisher of books; in this way the reader is more generally a consumer; for Tom Wheldon at PRH the aim is to be a 'cultural and entertainment powerhouse' (Shaffi, 2014).

For non-trade publishers the discourse is slightly different: the transfer of content to the digital environment has been happening for longer and the specialist consumer is more knowledgeable about the value of the content itself and the use of it via digital products. These sectors have traditionally been closer to their specialist markets. But focusing on their consumers and the way they access and use their information remains important. The shift from product to market as outlined by Richard Nash (2010) and Brian O'Leary (2011) is more important and the service/solutions terminology appears to be becoming more prevalent. Stephen Smith at Wiley, for instance, says that he sees his company as one that is 'a global provider of knowledge and knowledge-enabled services designed to improve outcomes in research, professional practice and education' (Nawotka, 2013). The service concept is becoming more embedded and strap lines for companies like Pearson (the world's learning company) and Elsevier (an information analytics business) regularly involve the concept of services and solutions provision.

Nevertheless, despite this rethinking, the industry has been slow to move according to some commentators. Lloyd states that: 'they need to ready themselves sooner or later for a fight to the death' (Lloyd, 2009) with fellow competitors and existing partners as 'non-traditional competitors are devouring the space'. Richard Nash comments that the initial reaction has been a short-term approach: corporate publishing management's goal is clearly to minimise disruption in the short term' (2010:115). In his view the discussions about



pricing, discounting and agency methods of selling show that senior managers want to keep control of immediate profits rather than plan for the future.

### **Innovations in publishing**

Despite these criticisms, the industry is responding to market change and not avoiding risks and experimentation. This may not be quite of the scale that Lloyd and Nash require but innovation in digital publishing has, in some cases, been ahead of the market, with examples of new ideas coming too early for a consumer that is only beginning to change. John Makinson in 2011 reported on the effects of the Stephen Fry releases in various digital forms, reflecting that the market was not in actuality ready for all these products (the print version still outstripping the other digital versions) but stating that in Penguin the ‘appetite for experimentation was undiminished’ (Reuters, 2011). Publishers have been quick to explore new business models, such as creative commons approach taken by Bloomsbury academic or digital-only imprints for genre-based areas such as romance which have now been running for some years. Joint ventures such as the e-retail book club site Anobii were ultimately sold off to mainstream web retailers while other new ideas, like Authonomy, a Harper Collins reader-writer community site, offering an innovative approach to content acquisition dwindled. Projects like Black Crown at Random House had good reviews, were successful creatively, but challenging to support and financially unprofitable so ultimately had to close (Shaffi, 2014).

These experiments reflect on an industry understanding the need to move and try things out. There are, within industry events, regular calls for the industry to learn how to experiment effectively; for instance Nash said: ‘Fail fast and fail cheap’ while author Neil Gaiman stated at the same event: ‘The model for tomorrow is try everything, make mistakes, fail, fail better’ (Jones 2013). For Smith too at Wiley, the need to free up resources to invest

in innovation is critical (Nawotka, 2013). The industry recognises that experimentation is necessary.

Other issues emerge for commentators. For example, there is an understanding of the need to create a sustainable approach to publishing in relation to the new digital environment; approaches have to look beyond replacing the print with digital revenues and understand the continuing demands of a changing business environment (Nawotka 2013). Many professionals recognize that new skills are required. Some of this is to ensure the development of production-based skills of coding and digital technological expertise. It also means developing experience in consumer insight, capturing and using data to understand and engage audiences. Anderson sees ‘publishing as a data game’ (2013) and there is a growing importance in using data analytics to make informed decisions about audience and to influence search behaviour.

Meanwhile collaboration is regarded as an essential element to understanding diversity of output, or converged approaches to storytelling. Stephanie Gauld, Digital publisher of Egmont, comments that collaborations with games developers are increasing in number: ways to collaborate are changing as sharing knowledge, communicating continuously and recognizing different areas of expertise is critical (Piesing, 2014, a); however the games developer side reveals that they see the problems working with people on steep learning curves around gaming, so collaborations like these are very challenging (Piesing, 2014, b). Meeting new partners and learning new approaches to business and content development is becoming more central to the activity of publishers.

#### **4.5 The Extent of digital impact now**

Commentators, therefore, reinforce what the theorists say about the changing digital environment for publishing. Both theorists and practitioners appear to agree that the industry

needs to respond and adjust to digital change; it needs to take up opportunities, as well as managing disruption, by being flexible, experimental and sustainable; collaborations and partnerships are put forward as important ways in which to do this.

However, industry commentators have become less vociferous in recent years. This may be because the digital environment has settled down, publishers have developed effective and sustainable systems, or that some impacts have been less severe than originally anticipated. It is, therefore, important for this research to understand how the industry views its prospects now. The digital issues faced are not all equal in their impact and some assessment is required to unpick how the industry feels today and how far digital transformation remains central for industry participants.

### **Researching current industry responses and research design**

This final part the chapter presents a piece of primary research undertaken for two main reasons. Firstly, the research aims to understand current concerns within the industry about the impact of digital, to test how far it continues to be a challenge for industry leaders. Secondly, an assessment of the current situation with regard to digital change is required in order provide context for the main body of the research into collaboration, specifically in relation to whether approaches to collaboration are changing. This thesis takes the hypothesis that new forms of collaboration are taking place, due to the impact of digital change. The literature around publishing theory and the professional commentary appear to reinforce this is happening. Therefore, the initial research stage presented in this chapter is intended to test if this observation is true. It focuses on developing the themes outlined by the theorists and commentators above, in order to layout the context in which the subsequent, more detailed research into collaborations can take place.

This initial stage of primary research is designed to establish two main things:

1. That the digital environment is indeed having an impact on the behaviour and organisation of the industry
2. Where this phenomenon is proved to be true, that collaboration is playing a role in this

By establishing these points, the research should then be able answer the first two research sub questions outlined in the introduction:

- Is there an indication that new types of digital collaboration are being undertaken in the industry?
- If so, how far is the changing digital environment one of the drivers of new collaborative activity?

In order to do this a survey was developed. This provides a baseline for the research by testing the amount of digital change the industry perceived to be going on. It seeks to understand how far publishers have established a way to work within a continuously changing environment, with an adaptive modus operandi, while also looking at any new strategies they are introducing. The research methodology for the survey is presented here as the research methodology chapter focuses on the main body of the research.

### **Establishing measures for judging change**

In attempting to understand the nature of digital change, there is some requirement to understand the status quo before the period of digital change and to know about the operations of old collaborations for comparison. However this causes difficulty; for instance digital change has no clear start point, to use as a standard by which to measure change; there is no research into ‘old’-style collaborations in publishing in order to compare new collaborations and test difference; research in retrospect would not be especially effective or easy to undertake. However, seeking responses from the industry itself allows these issues to

be explored by seeing how deeply the industry itself feels the change, and how far they consider their current behaviour as 'new'. The strategic implications of change and the effect of the emerging themes on organisational behaviour and on new activities are of particular interest; this informed the sample (as outlined below).

Studying those actors within the industry and their own understanding of their position draws something from Bruno Latour (2007) as well as more reflective research methodologies that seek to allow participants' voice (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009) as outlined in chapter two (p37). The reflection of the participants becomes an important indicator of the nature of change when asked comparative questions; questions about current actions corroborate the more reflective questions, revealing how far participant actions have subsequently changed.

### **Data collection**

This initial piece of research focused on using a survey to explore the area and see what would emerge; it was not intended to develop theory but to understand the context in which further research could be conducted and bring more granularity to the nature of change as perceived by those within the industry. In this way the survey was exploratory, attempting to provide an accurate view of the current situation, and not intended to provide conclusive evidence of a shift.

### **Questionnaire design.**

A simple questionnaire drew together a range of questions divided into three sections: the nature of digital change in the industry, the responses of the organisation and aspects of collaboration and partnership. This was linked to the themes in the data requirements table as presented in appendix one (p401) to ensure an effective range of questions was asked that will answer the overarching research questions (Saunders et al., 2009). A range of question

types was used, many of which were quantitative, but there were some questions with free text boxes in order to inspire further elaboration for participants over key areas. In many cases Likert-style questions were posed in order to draw out opinions. However, the questionnaire was designed to ensure maximum participation as the sample included busy senior people (Flick, 2009).

After first establishing whether participants believed digital change is significant, the questions aimed to test the nature of change in the following ways:

- Speed of change
- Expectation of more change
- Change themes that are of most concern

This section of the questionnaire used the themes that emerged in the earlier part of the chapter (e.g. business models, changing consumer, copyright issues, importance of content) to ask participants directly how far these concerned them; ranking levels of concern provided some point of comparison between the different themes, assessing relative importance.

The second part of the questionnaire focused on looking at actual activity undertaken, suggesting a list of activities that have been reported on in the literature for participants to consider and rank; the survey also asked how far structural change might be required to address these changes. In this way the research tested how far digital change is leading to new behaviours and may require structural change. This part also tests the link between digital change and collaboration.

The final part of the questionnaire focused on collaborations, testing the phenomenon only so far as to establish parameters for further research: this meant focusing on testing how

far participants regarded collaborations as different in approach in relation to the following criteria:

- Quantity
- Frequency
- Range of partners
- Reasons for engagement
- Different in terms of their structure and operation

These criteria were developed from Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij's categorisation of different strategic partnerships (2014) in order to find out whether participants viewed collaborations as different (and so 'new'), leaving more detailed examination of these criteria to the later research. A draft of the survey ready to be input to *Opinio* can be found in appendix 2.3 (p411).

### **Sample**

A non-randomised sample was necessary to ensure the survey reached the appropriate people. Participants needed to have been in the industry for a while in order to be in a position to have experienced a broadly pre-digital environment so they would notice and consider how far change had taken place. They also needed to be in senior positions because of the nature of the strategic overview they have.

While it is to be expected the various publishing sectors are at different stages in the development of their digital businesses, the survey looked at strategic insights across the industry space so needed to garner views from all sectors. Given change is regarded as continuous, a view reinforced by the outcomes of the survey, so the specific moment of change anyone is in was not, therefore, an issue: they may have only just started to change or have already developed quite sophisticated digital products. The questions dealt with general

issues at a strategic level so they could be answered effectively without alluding to any particular stage in the development of digital businesses any one sector might be in.

A direct, personal approach was used to ensure no dilution of the sample. Individual invitations were sent out focusing on ensuring a representative range of job titles from Managing Directors/Chief Executives, Digital Directors and Operations Directors across the full range of the industry. Thirty invitations were sent out. The expected response target was 20; this was low due to the limited size of the full sample and the total response was 22.

The data reflects the range of roles and companies as can be seen from table 4.1 which indicates the job titles, and table 4.2 which illustrates the different sectors represented – both reflecting the target balance. In addition, there was a range in size of company from small organisation to large corporate: Size of companies included 11 large companies (501+ employees) and the other 11 were from a range of sizes below 501 employees, including small business (up to 20 employees). It should be noted that while the sample was quite small, the total population was also relatively small. The total number of publishing companies in the UK is not large: one of the most recent estimates of number of companies was recorded in 2016 with 2,255 publishers registered for VAT, of which 60 had more than 20 employees (The UK Book Industry in Statistics 2016). While it is important to recognise small publishing companies may be very advanced in developing digital products, this research is focused on larger companies that are well established and who are facing digital transformation; thus, the number of responses achieved here reflects a good number of key players in the market.



General MD/CEO/Director	Digital Director	Business operations Director
16	4	2

**Table 4.1 Number of responses by job title**

Academic/Science Medical Technical (STM)	Trade	Education
9	7	6

**Table 4.2 Number of responses by sector**

### **Practicalities of data collection and analysis**

Research ethics were applied as well as appropriate data protection measures. While the survey was unlikely to cause any direct harm to individuals, the research was put forward to an ethics committee as consent to mention specific participants, subject to their agreement, was required. The participants were asked if they could be named or remain anonymous; the majority were happy to be named. Disclosure was felt important to indicate the seniority of participants and the nature of their comments as opinion leaders was also a significant aspect of this stage of the research. Opinio was used to organise and run the survey. Specific companies who were able to be named included Profile, Hodder Education, Sage, Taylor and Francis, Octopus, Bloomsbury, Macmillan, Thames and Hudson, CUP. Other STM, professional and consumer publishers also responded.

The results were analysed using thematic coding (Flick, 2009, Creswell, 2007). A sample of the coding tree is included in appendix 5.1 (p427). These codes developed as the research grew, starting with codes based on criteria specifically to test the null hypothesis

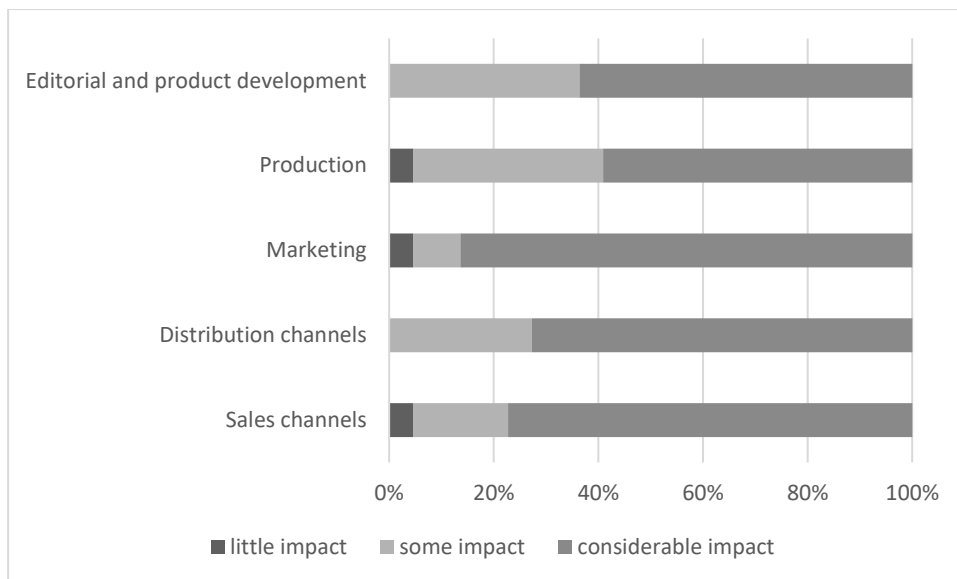
around digital change; then wider themes as outlined above were included. Further themes were then added in the way of *in vivo* codes, as an iterative process: themes emerged from the participants themselves (such as ‘skills’). The participants’ own words surfaced too (e.g. ‘evolution’); these sorts of words were avoided in the text of the questions, so as not to offer leading questions, but in arising from the participants unprompted, were adopted within the coding tree; they fuel some of the key concepts and add emotive weight to the position the participants have of their industry.

## **Findings**

### *Current attitudes to digital change*

The attitude to change and the prospect of further change that emerges from the research reinforces the views from both the commentators and theorists outlined above: digital change is transforming the industry. The survey shows that change is regarded as something deep rooted and suggests that while structures have adjusted, to some extent, to manage this change, much more reorganisation will be necessary; the research implies that a complete revision of the industry may be necessary, so reflecting on the thinking of theorists like Michael Bhaskar (2013) and commentators like Brian O’Leary (2011); not only that, it is already in progress.

The nature of change is explored from two trajectories: first from a functional point of view, the second from a thematic, issues-based approach. Unpicking this, the survey looks at which areas were seen to be impacted the most – sales, distribution and marketing being seen to be somewhat more impacted than production and editorial/NPD (figure 4.1).

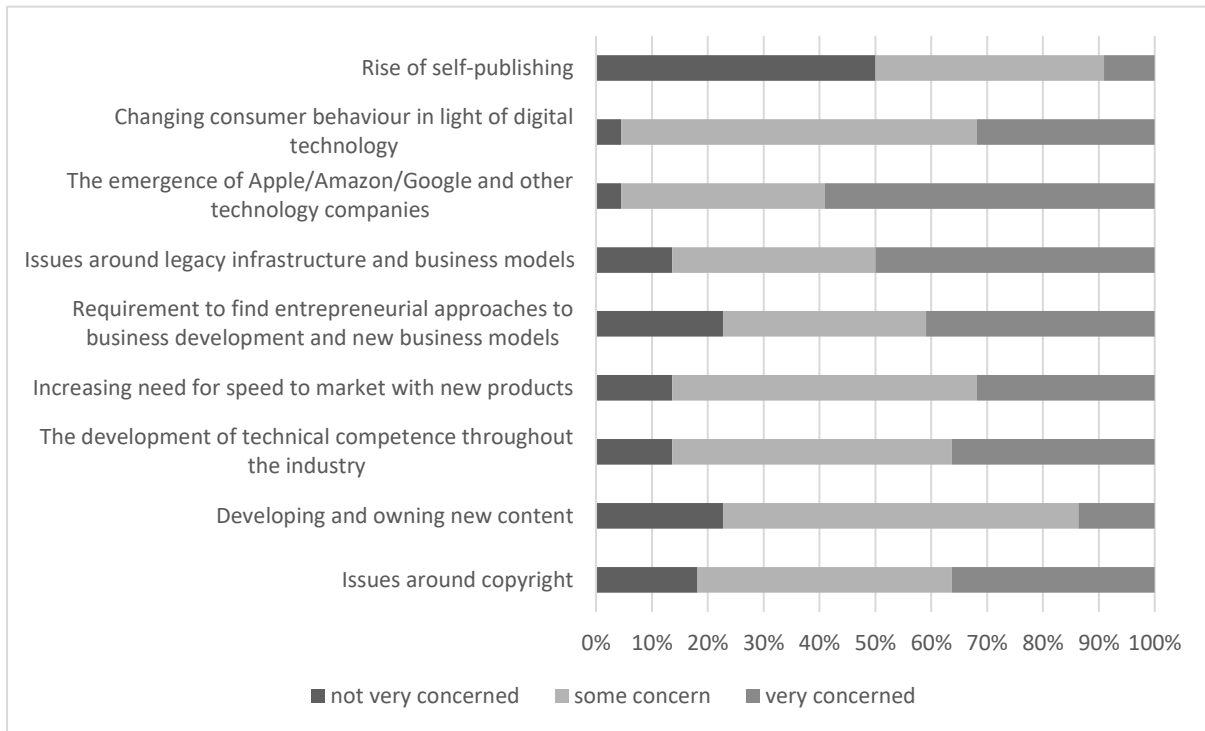


**Figure 4.1 The relative level of impact of digital change on function by number of respondents**

Only a small difference between impacted functions is reflected here, but it is interesting that digital change in production is not seen as having as much of an impact as marketing. One might speculate that digital innovation in this area been in place for much longer (Thompson, 2005) so is regarded as less ‘new’; the research shows participants do not feel nervous of this aspect of their business but are rather confident they are doing everything right from this regard. Consumer-facing areas of sales and marketing are seen to be more under the spotlight; this chimed with the theorists and commentator’s views of continuing change and uncertain understanding of the new digital consumer.

In looking at this from an issues, rather than a functional, point of view the participants then were asked to rate various themes (as had emerged from the theoretical context and industry commentators) in terms of the level of concern about them; some are specific to sectors (e.g. around education) but most are raised without any particular bias to one sector in the answers (figure 4.2). All are issues that at least some of the participants

regard as being of concern to some degree; this reinforced that the themes identified are appropriate.



**Figure 4.2 The expressed level of concern around different digital issues by number of respondents**

Areas of ‘some concern’ (where 50% or more of participants fell into this band) are content development strategies, speed necessary to develop new products and changing consumer behaviour. The issues where the larger number of participants sat in the band ‘of more concern’ are legacy (at this stage referring both to infrastructure and business models) as well as the growth and dominance of global technology companies in the sector. Issues that elicit a more spread result were those of copyright (in terms of ownership), entrepreneurial approaches to business and level of technical competence in the industry, a skills issue that resurfaces later; these seem to reflect that different companies have different concerns, possibly depending on their sector, so would require more exploration. No results are

conclusively within one bracket; the one with the least overall concern is self-publishing (results reflective of some of the sectors possibly).

It is important to note that these responses reflect the seniority of the people; they are looking at the industry with a broad-brush approach. They are also looking across the activities of publishing and not specifically at digital product development. The challenges faced by people who might be tackling a specific set of problems around, for instance, content development is less likely to surface in this survey. With this in mind, when reading the results under 'some concern', it is more useful compare and contrast them to the results that attract the more emphatic response of 'very concerned', rather than seeing any results as reflective of someone grappling intensely with these individual issues at ground level. This helps to take into account the broader view of a strategy person.

Additional issues raised in the free text section included Open Access (OA), Digital Rights Management (DRM) and piracy which come up for the academic and educational markets. The only issue to surface regularly across the free text sections is skills shortages for digital skills (despite the more mixed response in the statistics); this comes up for several respondents across the sectors. The nature of change is commented upon by many, the following quote reflecting the wider responses: 'We are moving from a product-oriented business to a service-based business working with many partners (JG, Bloomsbury). This draws upon the thinking around the way the industry is changing in its conception of itself, as illustrated by the commentators above and predicted by Thompson (2005).

Asked whether this would lead to more structural change, 80% of responders answer yes. Issues driving this, that emerged in the free text sections are the need to restructure, including globalisation and rationalisation of the industry, creating own distribution channels, changing readers and relationships with them, and new business models. The nature of

change required is considered in relation to other industries responding to digital change in the following comment: ‘The institutional conservatism of publishing, which is a result of its narrow social demographic in terms of employees, does seem to me to mean that change in publishing may be harder to effect than in other industries’, (NR, CUP).

An interesting point emerges from this part of the survey that permeates subsequent statements: at heart, the industry is the same whatever the sector. This leads a few to comment that the amount of change could be exaggerated, that at the heart of the industry things stay the same – i.e. the commissioning, creating and production of good content remained unchanged, it was the packaging that was changing. So, change emerges as a matter of degree: many phases like ‘accelerated evolution’, ‘responsive action’, ‘more flexible about delivering content’ ‘early stage in ongoing changes’, ‘further shift’ still dominate.

The issues most frequently raised throughout the survey focus on skills, with comments on the need to develop a wider range of competences, not just technical but analytical. There is a related issue of diversity within the sort of people employed and this theme plays a part in concepts of collaboration as will be seen later in the thesis.

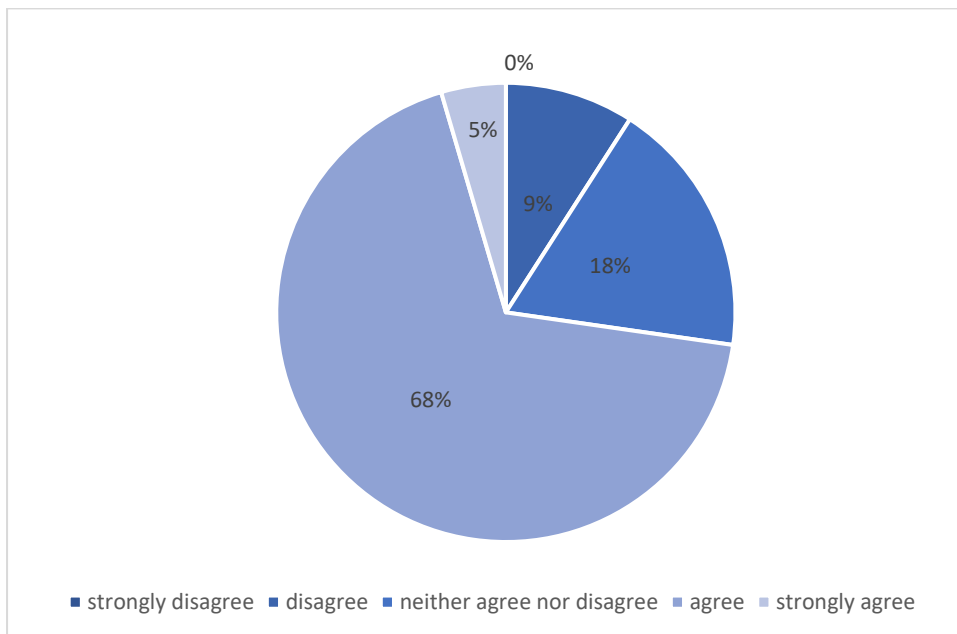
Legacy issues emerge in terms of systems and processes. These are infused with a sense of needing to be innovative, at an organisational level, not just at the product development end. This is of interest as it suggests that the industry is thinking about structural change.

### *Continuous change and changing behaviours*

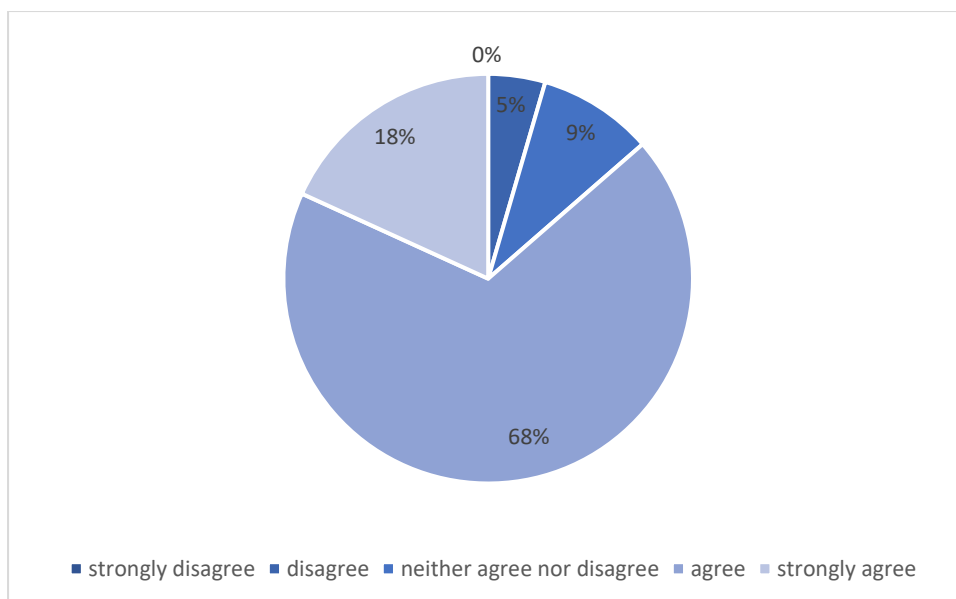
To get a more precise sense of what the participants view as key to the change, and their view of its degree, they were asked a series of questions or statements where they rated how far they agreed or disagreed. This revealed that 19 of the respondents agree or strongly agree that

the industry is only at the start of this change; and 15 feel the industry has only just begun to explore the opportunities that digital provides (this being of interest even for the industries arguably more developed in their digital product base, such as STM).

Though many feel there has already been a lot of restructuring in the industry (as shown by figure 4.3), the respondents agree that publishing is still only at the cusp of change (as shown by figure 4.4); this is an interesting point given how far the industry has already moved, using Thompson’s scale (Thompson, 2005) or the digital publishing communications circuit (Ray Murray and Squires, 2013) as measures.



**Figure 4.3 Level of agreement with the concept that there has been a lot of restructuring in the industry**



**Figure 4.4 Level of agreement with the concept that the publishing industry is only at the beginning of change**

To test whether they felt there was one main transformative stage, and gauge whether they felt that change is now par for the course, they were asked if they felt things would settle down after a period of consolidation. While six agree to some degree, 13 disagree, so the industry is broadly accepting change will continue, a point corroborated later.

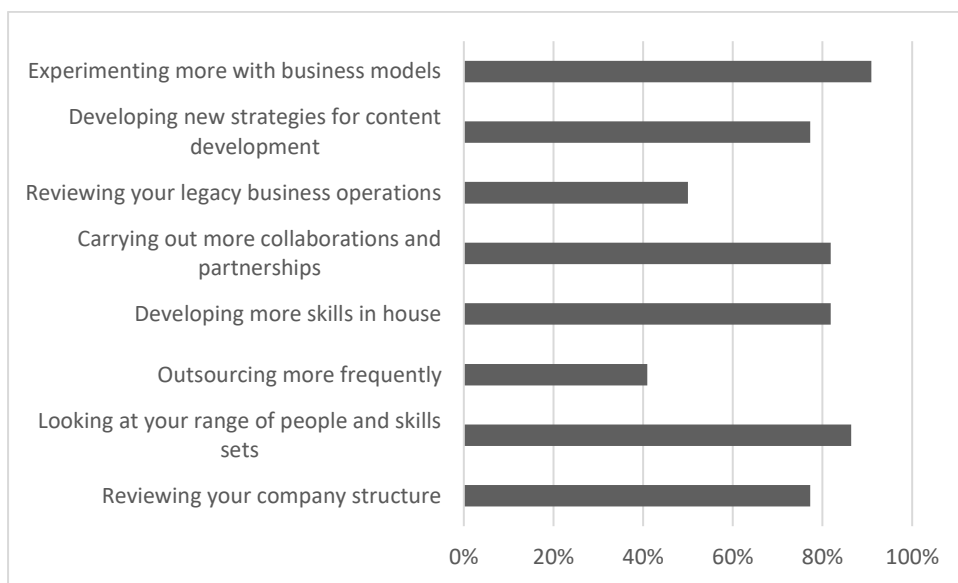
Sixteen agree or strongly agree (85%) that the arena is becoming busier with entrepreneurs and pioneers trying out new things in terms of products and business models. In an attempt to test the response to being part of the wider creative industries there was a question that was asked about the need to develop new approaches to content with new partners. Sixteen agree or strongly agree, while no one positively disagrees that new sorts of partners are needed. Ultimately structures that allow organisations to be flexible are considered important, with all respondents agreeing on this point. This last point is one that will be interesting to explore more deeply and is of interest to the next stage of the research.

In light of the need to be adaptable, and looking more specifically at company responses to enable them to do this, the survey asked if respondents felt they would have to



change their ways of working. As all but one agrees, the industry clearly feels that change will be necessary.

To start to get to the root of the organisational and structural issues they were then asked to elaborate upon which sorts of strategic organisational activities they are looking at doing in response to change.



**Figure 4.5 Different strategic approaches being taken by publishing (by number of respondents)**

As figure 4.5 shows, 77% or more respondents are doing the following:

- Reviewing company structure
- Looking at skills sets
- Carrying out more collaborations and partnerships
- Developing new strategies for content development

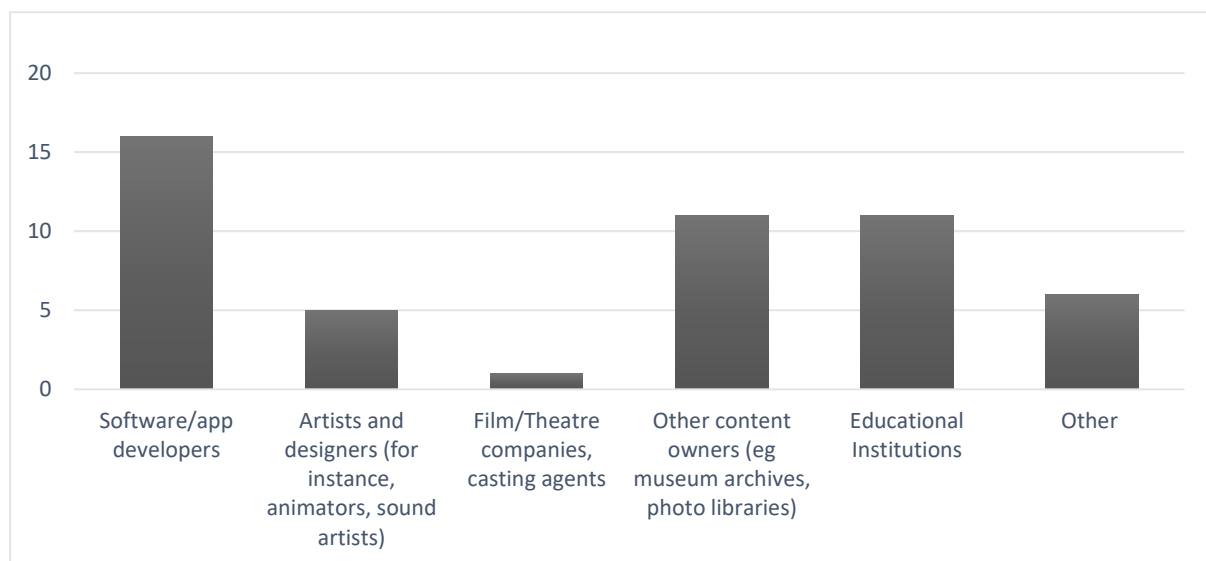
Developing more in-house skills is also included here and this is interesting as the question about freelancing and outsourcing more (an alternative response perhaps to becoming flexible) has a lower response of 40%. Also lower on the list is reviewing legacy business operations. Most striking is that 90% of respondents are looking at their business models: this is obviously seen to be critical going forward, and possibly the one area where publishers felt less in control and so more concerned.

One of the areas of least concern is that of content development. This aspect recurs throughout the survey: first it surfaces in the degree to which content is felt to be an issue overall; then it arises in terms of content development as a particular activity in need of some transformation. As a function it is seen to have had least impact in comparison with other areas. This is not to say that companies are not developing new strategies for content development, which does emerge from the survey; but it seems it is less significant or less worrying than other changes that are being introduced. This suggests a level of confidence about the content aspect: while it is regarded as an issue it is not one of major concern, possibly because publishers feel they know what to do and have clear direction when it comes to this aspect of their work. Also, in terms of the specific company response, while developing new content strategies is important, other issues feature more frequently, such as trying to tackle a skills shortage.

Content, then, appears to be the area about which the industry feels more assured in its approach, due to its expertise: as one respondent says, content is ‘the heart of what the industry does – commissioning and producing good content is no different from what it has ever been.’ (SC, Hodder). This seems to contradict the commentators’ views that publishing needs to reinvent itself, but is more likely a reflection of level of emphasis: the outward facing nature of the business needs to re-orientate but the central aspect of being creators and managers of content is unchanging.

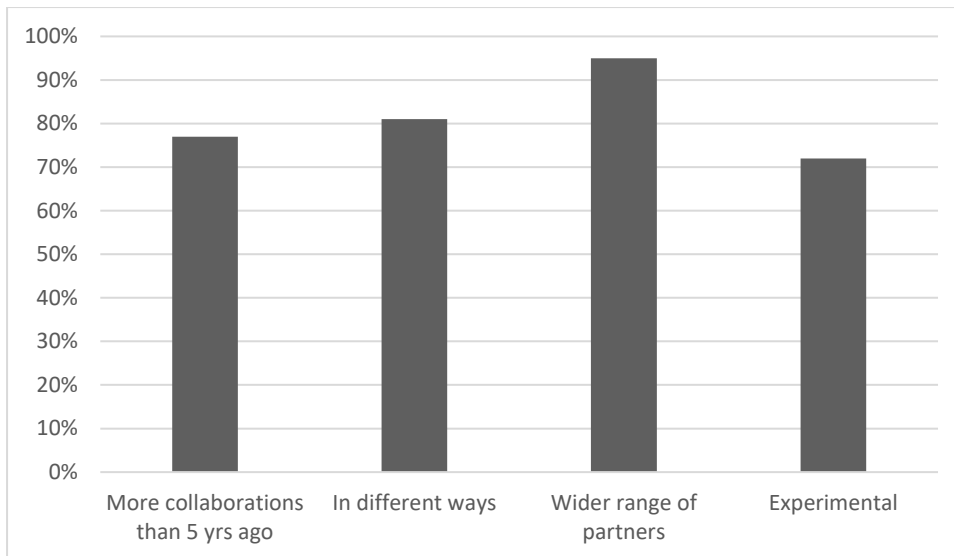
## Collaboration

When asked what companies were doing in light of digital change, 81% of responses said they are actively working more widely with partners and collaborators. The final part of the research reinforced this. To ensure collaborations are distinct from relationships that would exist normally, such as with suppliers like typesetters, they were first characterised as to whether they were for new products and new business ideas or not. Then the range of collaborators was explored to see how diverse it was, as shown in figure 4.6. The list of partners acknowledged by publishers includes educational organisations, content owners like archives, creative industries like designers and animators, and software developers – the latter being most frequent. More specific creative industries such as film/theatre are less frequent. The variety of partners, however, was noticeable.



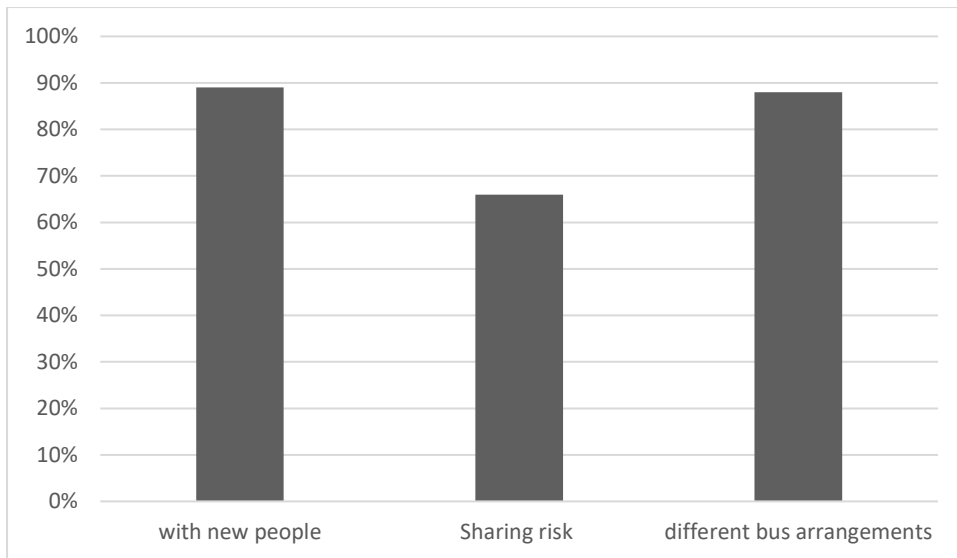
**Figure 4.6 Range of partners involved in collaboration (by number of respondents)**

Overall, the survey results definitively point to increasing activity in the area of collaboration across all variables tested as shown in figure 4.7.



**Figure 4.7 Percentage of respondents undertaking collaborations as identified by variables of quantity, range and style**

Seventy-three per cent of respondents are involved in more collaborations than previously and 95% are working with a wider range of collaborators. Seventy-two per cent said they are working on collaborations which are experimental /exploratory with 77% of them agreeing that they are doing more of this than five years ago. Eighty-one per cent regard their current collaborative relationships as different from previous relationships; for those that answered these are characterised as being different because they are with new people (89% agreed); are sharing risk with them (66%) and operate with different business arrangements (88%) as shown by figure 4.8.



**Figure 4.8 Percentage of respondents who identified their relationships as different, by characteristic**

In the free text area some interesting comments arose on the way they choose partners to work with: one participant says ‘Partners chosen significantly because of cultural fit and alignment – i.e. do we work quickly and effectively together, so we trust each other?’ (AN, Nelson Croom Ltd) while another notes: ‘what is interesting to me is different types of collaboration e.g. between formerly competing ...suppliers to create global networks to service publisher need’ (NR, CUP)

Perhaps more significantly there are comments that look at the way the collaboration is changing the end product; for example one participant says: ‘we are getting much more input on the end product from third party suppliers’ (AJ, Taylor and Francis). Here participants in the collaboration are having more impact on the resulting product; the collaboration is becoming a more transformative process for the creative outcome. From this part of the survey it is clear that collaborations were perceived to be new and leading to new things – but synergy between partners is critical to these new relationships.

#### **4.6 Conclusion: Creative digital collaboration – a way forward**

This chapter first laid out the theoretical context for the issues of digital change in order to develop themes for the subsequent research. Themes such as the changing consumer, content abundance and converged products are having a clear impact on the publishing industry. The comprehensive challenge of digital for media industries is summarised by Lucy Kung as she notes that the industry operates in a highly uncertain environment where ‘industry boundaries are unclear, business models are evolving, consumer preferences are not well known and competition can come from hitherto unknown players (Kung, 2008:89). Applying this to the recent commentators in the industry further developed the themes to inform the survey. The survey then reinforced much of the theoretical approaches to digital change and looked more closely at the issue of collaboration.

This preliminary stage of the research has led to a more granular understanding of where publishing leaders perceive the changes to be – both in terms of the functions within publishing and the issues it faces. Overall, the consistency of response is of interest, despite different sectors. The respondents were key people in high level roles across the industry. They appear to share a vision for publishing in a digital age and recognize the requirements to shape a business effectively for this. Their vision centres on working with others to collaborate on new projects, learn new skills and take up opportunities to restructure in order to respond to digital developments in the future; and they see that they must continue to focus on the core strength of creating and managing content. This suggests a dynamism across the industry to take action in light of change, and to keep innovating in different ways.

Collaboration emerged in the first part of the survey as one of the responses of the industry to the digital environment. The later part of the survey started to delve into this further, beginning to categorise a new type of collaboration that could lead to new content approaches and which is distinct from older style transactional collaborations. These findings

act as a precursor to the need to change structurally around the activity of collaboration. In this part of the research it was surprisingly conclusive that collaboration is seen to sit at the heart of responses to digital change; more collaborations are being undertaken, with a wider range of partners.

Interesting points emerge from the survey about the way the creativity is shared between collaborators. The drive for creativity in innovation leads to the requirement to work with partners in particular ways, sharing work practices, trusting each other and developing new ideas together. These requirements can determine the choice of partners as publishers look for people they can work with effectively. The survey suggested too that, once collaborative partners are connected, the behaviour of the partnership is also important as it impacts speed of operation and levels of risk taking for innovation. Understanding how these collaborations operate will be an important aspect of the research going forward.

The publishing industry does not work in isolation but forms part of a set of creative industries that operate in similar ways. The survey showed that publishers are looking to make connections with wider range of partners, including other parts of the creative sector. Some of the characteristics of these industries reflect a particular way of working that, in effect, facilitates connectivity, creativity and collaboration. Publishers have partnered with different parts of these industries before, on a more transactional basis, where for instance, they buy in content or brand projects. But it appears these industries could provide opportunities to do more. It is this link to the wider creative industries and the way they collaborate that is explored next in the thesis.

## **5 Chapter 5 Publishing in the context of the wider creative industries**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to examine the position of publishing within the wider arena of the creative industries. From the survey research presented in the previous chapter, it is clear that publishers are changing their approach to collaboration: new sorts of projects require a wider range of collaborators and new partners are being identified from the creative industries. The survey suggests that publishers seem to recognise that they have allies in the wider industry as the participants admit that they are collaborating with a wider range of organisations. This is different from the way publishing currently contributes to wider industries, in the form of content development that flows into other creative sectors such as TV, film and theatre through book adaptations and marketing (Frontier Economics, 2018). While this will continue, publishers are also likely to be developing different sorts of relationships with these creative sectors that are less transactional (such as selling rights to book content) and more embedded as joint partners. As the partners of the future may come from establishing connections with these industries, it is important to understand how publishing fits within this context; this will help set the scene for the research as it examines how publishers collaborate with these new partners.

This chapter first outlines definitions and characteristics of the creative industries and explores the different ways publishing is positioned within these industries. In most definitions of creative industries, publishing already has a place alongside other creative activities (from film making and fine art to heritage services and advertising), though the exact position can differ in the models used. It then examines more closely the shared characteristics between these different industries as well as comparing the issues that they all face. This is important in order to examine what drives collaboration within creative sector. The suggestion is that these industries share many characteristics which makes collaboration



between them both logical and possible. The final part of the chapter examines the organisational structures of these sorts of industries and way creativity is managed within them, particularly in light of managing growth and change. If collaboration can lead to growth, it is important to recognise that some management structures support collaborative activity more than others.

This chapter's exploration of creative industries aims to show that, in order to develop new digital products and formats, publishers will need to develop relationships with new partners. New-style collaborations may lead to innovation and experimentation, and through recognising their shared characteristics partners can develop effective ways to work together. This chapter concludes that nurturing creativity and encouraging collaboration can be important management strategies for creative businesses.

## **5.2 Defining the creative industries**

The concept of the creative industries emerged from an economic policy in the UK in 1998 as a way to summarise a group of industries that were regarded as an important area of growth for the country (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1998). It built on the notion of cultural industries but was framed to focus on the economic potential of these industries: they represent creative and media sectors that can create, monetise and potentially export products and services, stimulating wealth through jobs and skills development. The definitions of the creative industries and the cultural industries vary, but the latter more usually centred on arenas of cultural production such as art and books, theatre and museums (Bilton, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2013). The creative industries, however, can include media and service businesses such as advertising, which tend not to be included in groupings of cultural industries.

A related concept is the creative economy developed by Howkins (2001) who drew the link between the economic potential of these industries and their creative output more clearly (Bilton, 2006; Howkins, 2001). Howkins was seeking to reflect upon the national potential to develop a particular group of industries as an economic driver for the country; in some way or other creative industries have value to the economy; while they may deliver other kinds of value too (such as cultural wealth or social capital) it is the potential for these industries to help economic growth that was of particular importance (Howkins, 2001).

These industries include a variety of sectors ranging from very individualistic production of art, in the form of fine art, to global service providers such as major advertising corporations; it can include industries as diverse as world heritage sites and tourism to product design and fashion. Trying to find suitable all-encompassing definitions, therefore, can prove challenging. There are different ways of categorising creative industries, but they are not always satisfactory in accommodating both the cultural and commercial imperatives (or paradoxes) that are at the root of many creative industries (Banks and O'Connor, 2009; DeFillippi et al., 2007; Flew, 2013; Hesmondalgh, 2013). Some of these models are explicitly about economic policy. The others that are more academic in origin and they attempt to align the nature of creative value and the cultural importance of these industries. It is difficult to draw links between very different industries as they encompass so many things from local crafts to global gaming conglomerates; but attempts to model the industries are focused on trying to show that connections should be made in order to ensure these industries can be supported as a group, and also connect to and support each other (Banks and O'Connor, 2009; DeFillippi et al., 2007). For further detail on four central models identified by Flew (2013) see appendix twelve (p454).

Publishing has a place in all these models, although with varying degrees of centrality. It is, at times, seen to be more on the periphery as a disseminating business

(Throbsy, 2008), while it is more central in WIPO models because of the importance of intellectual property to the industry (2015). To what extent publishing sees itself as closely aligned with other creative industries is questionable and these models tend to oversimplify (Bilton, 2006). Additionally, publishing needs to consider its relationship to the wider cultural economy more explicitly (Marsden, 2017). Positioning publishing in this wider context may allow greater recognition of the opportunities for collaboration.

### **5.3 Characteristics of creative industries**

A more useful way to consider publishing's relationship with the wider creative sector is to look at the characteristics it shares with other parts of the sector. Understanding these characteristics can be useful as they show how collaboration across the sector is possible and necessary. This may lead to a better understanding of the behaviour of these industries and the opportunities and challenges of collaboration between them.

For the purposes of this chapter these characteristics have been broken down into categories which will then be examined to show the way publishing fits these debates. These issues, which have emerged from the review of the literature, and can be summarised as follows:

- Issues around value, cultural production and symbolic texts
- Distinctive market behaviours
- Work/experience of labour/working conditions, including network behaviour
- Management and organisational practices

#### **Value of cultural texts**

The first characteristic that is reflected across many sectors of the creative industries is the way cultural products are valued. The concept of value is open for debate in itself; the value

to society of the aesthetic sensitivity and the societal commentary vested in cultural texts is important to consider, as is the operation of value and its fluctuation within the unique structural behaviour of the field of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993). When considering who has the ability to say something has artistic merit (artist, critic, audience etc.), the gatekeeper (Bourdieu, 1993, Hirsch, 1972) emerges as a term, reflecting the need to select and curate the best of our cultural texts (Bhaskar, 2016, Hesmondhalgh, 2013); the ‘gatekeeper’ is a term that has become more problematic since the rise of the internet (Naughton, 2012) given its implication of restriction. The gatekeeper perhaps segues into Michael Bhaskar’s concept of curation as a way to think about discovering quality amid abundance (2016) while John B. Thompson’s symbolic value (2012) recognises that cultural value and economic value may be different. Who decides on value remains, therefore, a consideration for any creative industry producing what might be regarded as a cultural text.

Building on this point, the sector as a whole is often typified by the central dilemma regarding the balance between cultural value and profit. The art and commerce debate (Ryan’s ‘art-commerce relation’, 1992, cited in Banks and O’Connor, 2009) is in itself something that reflects a special characteristic of the creative industries and one that particularly engages debate in publishing (Kung, 2008).

Most publishing has some sort of financial imperative in order to break even, whether aiming to produce cultural texts or not, and very little is entirely subsidised. Yet publishing, along with other creative industries, is also seen to be doing something important for society either in the form of entertainment, or for information and education; for this reason, it is an industry around which certain specific rules may apply (over sales tax for instance). This illustrates a tension between its commercial necessities with its artistic relevance. This somewhat uncomfortable connection can be recognised across the creative industries and so reflect a connection between publishing and other sectors. This dichotomy may well be

reflected in the collaborations: for instance, an arts organisation and a publisher both share similar need to make money while also educating and entertaining.

Publishing therefore, along with other industries, recognises that there is a fine balance between art and commerce. This may impact the expectation creative collaborators have about what it is they are developing when exploring the case studies: how do they measure the success of their digital projects? When collaborators come from within the creative sector, they may have similar expectations for their projects, ones which may not always be about commercial gain.

### **Distinctive market behaviours**

The next issue establishes that characteristic market and economic behaviours can be identified in the way the market works for creative sectors. Bourdieu (1993) unpicks the field of cultural production at one level in terms of assessing value, but there are specific ways in which each sector may operate – from the artist using exhibitions to showcase their work to advertising agencies developing new business through beauty parades. Paul Hirsch (1972) identifies systems around publishing activities that, for example, combine filtering with producing surplus, and make use of intelligence agents at the input and output (from talent scouts to bookshop reps). Thompson (2012) also illustrates the structural nature of the industry as he observes various activities within the value chain that seem to be more characteristic of creative businesses compared to other industries. Balancing risk and supply in particular ways is critical to creative industries where it is difficult to predict success (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013, Hirsch, 1972;). Publishers are familiar with these market behaviours, as are other creative industries, and so reflect shared characteristics that can help when collaborating. It also suggests that publishers share a similar attitude to risk in relation to new projects, which may also make collaborating easier.

## **The Nature of creative work and importance of networks**

The nature of the work, as particularly studied by David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker (2011), focuses on the experience of the individual and the characteristics of their work. These characteristics include project-based working that is often dependent on people freelancing. There is a precariousness combined with glamour to the work and those who participate in the industry are often accustomed to portfolio careers where they may have the benefits of autonomy, but also may have to accept low pay; they may even see themselves as making a sacrifice for the sense of doing ‘good’ work (Banks et al., 2000; Bilton, 2006; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011, McRobbie, 2016).

These characteristics will be as familiar to those involved in publishing as other creative sectors, involving as it does many freelance activities such as copy editors to designers. There is within publishing an interplay between the overall publishing business and the various projects within it; creative labour is managed sometimes around the publishing business and sometimes around the project (Kung, 2008; Sigthorsson and Davies, 2013). Because work fluctuates for those involved between busy periods to periods with no projects, having strong networks in order to find the next project are important (Bilton, 2006; Blair, 2003; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011; Starkey et al., 2000). Many in publishing, therefore, are familiar with the project-based behaviour of their activity and so are used to working in a collaborative way because it is fundamental to their practice. The sector also recognises the importance of networks for making the connections that lead to the next project or collaboration.

## **Management through projects**

The previous point reflects the creative working for the individual. There is also a characteristic for these industries that centres on the wider context of work in exploring

management styles and managing creative processes and creative people. This builds on an understanding of organisational behaviour, where organisational and company networks feature strongly in project formation and execution. Organisations need to work flexibly and engender an entrepreneurialism in order to develop new creative projects (Bilton, 2006; Flew, 2013). Here publishing can clearly be seen share the characteristics of other parts of the sector; whether a project is drawn together from within a company or makes more use of freelancers, whether it is an author and illustrator with a small publishing team or a very specific project team gathered to start-up a large new online reference project, the publishing industry is used to working in a project-based way. This trend appears to be growing further in strength within publishing and it is having a more fundamental impact on publishing structures as some publishers are reconfiguring to allow for further management of project-based product innovation; for instance, Sweet and Maxwell in recent years has focused on developing outsourced, contract-based teams that can expand and contract around projects. Industries share creative project management practices because of their project-based activity.

### **Other characteristics**

There are other characteristics recognisable across the industries. Cultural production is, in various places across the sector, diverging between conglomerates (such as global media companies) and grassroots producers who are combining entrepreneurial and craft approaches to creation (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013, Jenkins, 2008). Evidence of that can be seen in publishing where large companies believe in the importance of merging in order to retain some power in the market place (e.g. Penguin and Random House) while others focus on the niche (e.g. e-book-only publishers of genre fiction) and the crafted product (with specialists like Visual Editions or Persephone books). There are other shared characteristics such as cultures of making, connecting and sharing cultures (Gauntlett, 2011) and gift economies

(Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013). Issues around government cultural policy and urban planning through creative clusters also link these industries. These aspects, while related, are out of scope for this research; however, they reflect the way publishing connects with the wider creative sector.

#### **5.4 Creative industries and shared challenges**

Having mapped recognized characteristics of creative industries onto the publishing industry, it can also be useful to map challenges publishing faces back to the wider creative industries; this should show how the same problems are testing many parts of the industry in similar ways. It may be that these shared challenges are, in part, a driver for these industries to collaborate more frequently as they attempt to find effective and cost-efficient ways to develop innovative products and to be entrepreneurial. Many areas of concern that publishers now face can very easily be recognized in other creative industries. For instance:

##### **Copyright**

Discussions around copyright, and particularly its ability to function in a digital environment, resonate in a number of areas for the publishing industry, whether open access or the Google settlement (Darnton, 2010; Hall, 2013). Similar discussions exist around copyright in other industries specifically (E.g. music, or reuse of people's artworks). There are most abstract debates about the nature of intellectual property giving rise to issues including freedom for creators to share easily (Lessig, 2004), freedom for fans to enjoy their favourite characters (Jenkins, 2008), and democratic issues around ownership on the internet and gatekeepers (Lanier, 2011; Leadbeater, 2009; Naughton, 2012). In this way copyright control can be linked to the restrictive impact of gatekeepers. There is the possibility that while the internet should be a collaborative space, the creative industry professional may in fact be regarded as a controlling, destructive, economically-motivated force that prevents creation and sharing by



aggressively protecting copyright (Shirky, 2008, Jenkins, 2008). Yet copyright remains central to many creative industries as an embodiment of their creativity and their commitment to developing, and adding value for the creator; they face a challenge to ensure this is understood properly and can lead to positive creative production.

### **New consumer behaviours**

The changes in consumer behaviour mentioned in chapter four (p109) are faced by many creative sectors where ownership is replaced by licensing, micro payments around usage substitute one-off transactions, and service and subscription models become more commonplace (Tzuo and Weisert, 2018); in these cases, the value of content changes in relation to the value of access. The actual content is potentially commoditised (as illustrated by the Google book scanning project, (Darnton, 2010)). This is an issue recognisable across many industries including publishing, film and music (Bilton, 2006; Healy, 2011; Jenkins, 2008; Kung, 2008). This sort of change can be a driver to collaboration as creative sectors need to find new ways to produce content that are directed to new generation of consumers (McKinsey, 2019; OC&C, 2019;). Here collaboration may allow these industries to share resources and information to develop new formats that cater for new consumers, recognising that these challenges may be more effectively faced together.

### **Discoverability**

With access potentially unlimited and the opportunity for DIY creative production, making products findable is a challenge across many creative industries. Creative products can find opportunities related to the long tail but also face challenges in making their niche findable (Anderson, 2006). ‘Publish then filter’ (Shirky, 2008) also reflects a changing consumer who expects to have access to everything and then decide upon and filter what they need for themselves. Similarly, the demise of the expert reviewer (or reinvention among the crowd)

adds to problems of discoverability (Jenkins, 2008). This is an additional challenge for publishers looking to develop digital formats as they may have to make their products findable in new arenas such as app stores. Collaboration can help things become more discoverable whether sharing expertise amongst partners about promoting content, spreading content into different publishing channels, aggregating content with competitors to gain critical mass or crossing media boundaries to ensure more accessibility from all angles.

### **Prosumer**

The prosumer (Toffler, 1980) who produces and consumes without the need for specialist creative intermediaries has been touched on already (Deuze 2007; Leadbeater, 2009). For some prosumer activity, the only intermediaries required are the global technology companies who produce the creation and distribution tools (such as Adobe), and who control platforms for distribution (such as Kindle) (Gauntlett, 2011; Rushkoff, 2011; Shirky, 2008). From self-publishing to viewers of YouTube, producers and consumers easily merge and by-pass creative distributors, which is a challenge many of the creative sectors face; this reflects the requirement of the sector to continue to innovate as well as embrace the new style of consumer.

### **The new competitor landscape**

As a result of disintermediation new competitors from outside the creative industries have started to enter the arena. The new entrants such as Amazon, Apple and Google etc. have different visions and valuation of content (Hall, 2013; Steiner, 2018); content for them is a subset to their work rather than their main activity, yet they can command immense resources and can afford to undertake activity within creative sectors without the same commercial imperatives faced by creative companies. Creative industries may need to collaborate in order to compete with these much larger companies, that are operating in very different ways

from the creative industries. Chapter seven (p199) will show how far competitors are an important driver for strategic partnerships and collaborations.

The changing business landscape, accelerated by digital transformation, is having an impact on all the creative industries. Challenges around copyright, discoverability, new style consumers, new competitors are all issues emerging as a result of the changing digital environment and the opportunities and threats it brings. The previous chapter looked at the impact for publishing and here it can be seen that these issues that impact not just publishing but the wider creative industries as well. To face these challenges, this thesis proposes that collaboration will be central.

## **5.5 Strategy and Management for creative industries.**

Up to this point this chapter has been concerned with understanding the similarities and links between publishing and the creative industries. This is in order to show that creative industries have enough shared characteristics in the way they think and operate for them to be able to collaborate effectively; and to show that, because they face similar challenges, collaborating may be an important strategy going forward. This final section will focus on the ways they can do this, showing how the organisational structure of creative industries can facilitate collaboration; this is of particular relevance when considering the structural and organisational aspects of the publishing for supporting collaboration. It will, therefore, examine in more detail the management opportunities and strategies to collaborate in terms of managing creativity and stimulating innovation throughout the creative industries.

### **Flexible organisational structures**

One of the central features of the creative sector is the way it manages creativity to ensure it is continuously innovative. Creativity, according to Chris Bilton is the sector's central ingredient: 'the way in which creative processes, talents and products are managed

and developed in the creative industries are distinctive and these are working methods and models that are worth studying' (2006:20). While his study is from the mid-2000s, predating more recent digital change, his analysis of the organisational behaviour of the creative industries brings to the fore some of the fundamental aspects of management theory when mapped to creativity such as flexibility and autonomy; these are still relevant today because of the increased need to focus on continuous innovation in a constantly changing environment.

Chris Bilton sees creativity as a 'source of new systems and structures' (2006:xvii); through understanding and applying these systems, publishing may find effective ways to develop new digital products. The essential structure of many creative industries is, as already noted, 'flexible, matrix based .... which allow managers to assemble and deconstruct project-based teams' (Bilton: 2006:49). Hierarchical, rigid organisations do not always suit knowledge creation which requires interaction and knowledge exchange (2008:182). Whereas, flexible structures make more sense for the fast-moving development of innovative products where highly skilled, talent-oriented workforces can be easily redeployed and mobilised quickly to respond to market changes.

The value chain (as outlined in chapter three (p83) however, in these circumstances, is a possible limiting factor for creativity due to the focus on output of products along a production line (Bilton, 2006; Mintzberg, 2000). Value chains simplify creativity which is a process that is 'unpredictable and discontinuous' (Bilton, 2006:xvii). There remains a question, therefore, as to whether the structures in some areas of the creative industries are flexible enough in a period of fast digital change.

## **Ecosystems and the process of creativity**

If creativity can be embedded further into the behaviour of an organisation, through its structure and management, then that may improve the sector's responses to the challenges it faces (Bilton, 2006; Kung, 2016). Organisational creativity is concerned with making connections between individuals and organisations within a creative network or 'system' (Bilton, 2006:49). Publishing has its own ecosystem (as noted in chapter 4 p125) but the wider creative industries can also be seen as ecosystems, not just because each sector has its own patterns and protocols around the way it behaves, nor because networks that give rise to creativity are 'delicate ecosystems' in themselves, but because creativity as a whole can be seen as a process or system.

This counters the genius approach to creativity, where creativity stems from one talented individual or is in other ways inspirational, unpredictable and so unmanageable. Rather, creativity is a process that can be managed (Bilton, 2006; Kung, 2008; 2016; Sawyer, 2017); 'creativity is dependent upon the relationships between individuals and organisations, not the competencies within individuals and organisations' (Bilton, 2006:53). This has important implications for the network and collaborative activity, to be explored in chapters six and seven (p178; p199), as it suggests the creativity itself is embedded in the connections and relationships of the organisations; the industry therefore can instil practices that encourage creativity, not just rely on creative individuals.

Innovation itself can be viewed as a business process whereby creativity is situated in the organisation in formal ways (Amabile:1988, Kung 2008:148). As such, everyday management practices can be put in place to encourage creativity: these include developing work environments that encourage autonomy, committing resources to experimentation, setting up challenges and assessing effective team composition (Kung, 2008:152). Creativity can be improved 'by the carefully judged handling of relatively mundane aspects of projects'

(Kung, 2008:163). The process of creativity therefore can be built into the projects themselves and into the organisational structure.

If creativity can be encouraged through appropriate systems, it is of interest for this research to see whether this will be in evidence in the case studies. It is important to understand how far collaborative activity can be facilitated to be creative and innovative, both at the collaboration level (which is to be studied in the first three case studies) and at the wider structural and work place level (which is the focus of the fourth case).

### **Managing creative teams**

Managing creative teams effectively is one of the central ways the industry manages creativity. Recognising the importance of team make-up for incubating creativity is important; as Bilton says, creativity depends on ‘assembling different components – different styles of thinking, different processes and ideas different contexts – in unexpected combinations. It is the combination of innovation and value that in the end is both surprising and satisfying, achieved through a combination of spontaneous inventiveness and laborious preparation’ (2006:5). Team diversity is therefore important for creativity.

The team is part of the wider ecosystem extant in industries in the creative sector which is concerned with ‘establishing connections between ideas (novelty) and outcomes (value), by building alliances between individual talents, experiences, technologies and people’ (Bilton, 2006:59). The challenge of managing and structuring creative processes for creative businesses centres on the management of, and tolerance of contradictions (Bilton, 2006:20, Hirsch 1972, Kung, 2008).

These teams need some level of autonomy to allow them to be truly creative (Bilton, 2006; Kung, 2016; Sawyer, 2017). It is important to have ‘sufficient autonomy and independence for individuals to challenge existing strategies and structures [and] at the same

time... absorb new proposals and shape these into collective decisions about allocating resources and redirecting strategy' (Bilton, 2006:133). Size of team can be significant too: it can be easier for larger organisations to give smaller teams the freedom they need to be experimental, what Kung calls, 'small-scale autonomy' (Kung, 2008:221).

Even where autonomy can be managed within a collaboration, there needs to be link to the parent organisations, where the resources to develop the idea into a sustainable proposition lie. Bilton states that 'new ideas in business must be tested against existing competences of the organisation' (2006: 120). Effectively managing change becomes key to the business's ability to adapt and evolve in order to absorb the new developments; Kung too points to the need to recognise the balance between the autonomy to be creative and the management processes required to bring a project to fruition (2008).

To be effective, it appears collaborations need to be systematic in approach while allowing space for creativity to happen. The case studies will examine how the collaborations manage autonomy while remaining linked to the wider organisations from which partners come. Assessing the way organisations need to be flexible will be examined, as well the ecosystems of the collaborations themselves.

### **Managing change in the creative sector**

These sorts of processes for stimulating innovation are central to the creative value of an organisation, particularly in times of change; change in this case is reflected in the rapid digital transformation of the industries. The need for creativity and innovation as 'enlarged when environments become unstable' (Kung, 2008:63); managing these aspects of an organisation is a critical way for these industries to 'mount a response to their strategic environment' (2008:59). If creative industries are facing challenges, as outlined above, such

as the emergence of new competitors or prosumers, developing further methods for more creative and innovative activity may be important as it becomes a way to manage change.

Effective change management is important as the creative industries need to respond quickly to environmental changes and to do so on a continual basis. Embedding structural and systematic approaches to change are important, creating an environment capable of dealing effectively with change in an ongoing basis, rather than moving awkwardly between change cycles (Kung, 2016). Change needs to be managed in a gradual and experimental way rather than as a reaction to a crisis, taking a ‘proactive incremental approach to change’ (Bilton, 2006:125). Where business structures have evolved into the inflexible hierarchies there is less ability to respond quickly (Kung, 2008); So continuous, adaptive strategies are going to be important leading to ‘an organisation continually investing in new ideas and new ventures from a position of strength’ (Bilton: 125). This suggests establishing a process of managing innovation that can first create new concepts or products, and then integrate them successfully into the mainstream activity of the industry.

Collaboration in this context could be one of several adaptive strategies that help an organisation face change. One of the key aspects of this thesis, therefore, will be to examine how collaborations help a creative business innovate. Drawing upon the theories of the management of creativity outlined, in terms of managing creative teams and embedding innovation systems, the research seeks to establish whether the collaborations under review reflect the freedom and autonomy they require to create alongside the formal management practice they need to be sustainable.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter presented ways of thinking about publishing in relation to the wider creative industries. By recognising shared characteristics and shared challenges, these industries may



be able to come together to develop collaborative approaches to competition and innovation. The approaches of Kung and Bilton, in particular, are important for this thesis as they reflect on the particular management styles applicable to the creative industries. They both recognise that creativity can be managed; they show how the sector does this through flexible organisation, creative ecosystems, autonomous teams and divergent thinking. These are features that are becoming more central to a creative organisation's response during a period increasingly rapid change, allowing the organisation to harness creativity for new product development. By working with the wider creative industries publishers can find allies from whom they can learn; bringing together diverse people from across the sector also offers new ways of collaborating.

The research tests how far competition, management of creativity and the need for innovation and experimentation are leading to more collaborations. An ongoing practice of experimentation and exploration is going to be important (Bilton, 2006) as the creative sector develops strategies for digital development. This may need to be different from previous approaches to new product development. Current publishing structures are set up in certain ways that maybe too rigid to allow for the sort of flexible innovation outlined by Bilton and Kung (2006; 2008; 2016). This thesis suggests that structures may need to change in order to instil this newer culture of creative collaboration for new projects. Kung says 'creating an organisation that combines the free space for small groups to be creative, unencumbered by bureaucracy, with the resources and infrastructure needed to finance and support successful products represents a tremendous challenge' (2008:216). The research will examine how far the collaboration case studies successfully manage this balance between the small group and the wider creative organisation.

## **PART TWO – FRAMEWORKS FOR STUDYING NETWORKS AND COLLABORATION THEORY**

### **Chapter 6 Network theory, network value and creative connectivity in publishing**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The next two chapters present the relevant concepts around aspects of network theory and collaborative theory in order to extract the key themes which are to be explored and tested in the case studies. In the previous chapter, networks emerged as playing an important role in the creative industries. Project-based working requires good networks to set up the conditions required for creativity; they form part of the ecosystem of the creative organisation and the wider creative industries (Bilton, 2006; Kung, 2016). If collaborative activity is an effective way to experiment and innovate, (Bilton, 2006:121) and develop strategic alliances (Kung, 2008:190), networks are required to create these collaborative opportunities. As organisational structures move from ‘stable arrangements to increasingly fluid ones’ (Kung, 2008:193) the network becomes more important as a way to facilitate effective project-based business activity and manage strategic growth.

Networks in publishing exist at a formal level; the Independent Alliance, for instance, involving, among others, Faber and Faber, Canongate and Pushkin Press, reflect this sort of way of working where certain resources can be pooled to achieve critical mass for particular functions, while individual firms retain autonomy and independence. At a more informal level in-house publishing staff will have networks of freelancers and suppliers to take on regular work such as copy editing or typesetting (Heebels, 2013). However, networks do more than this: they hold in them the potentiality to be creative. Networks enable an organisation to mix and change creative environments and to connect in new ways to spark

off novel ideas. If networks are developed and used effectively, in entrepreneurial ways, this should allow for a more sustainable approach to innovation (Bilton, 2006).

Networks are particularly important at the formation stage of collaborations as new partners are sought. Connections made between participants can themselves inspire new collaborative activity. Networks then continue to play a part as projects develop: new people join the collaboration to help solve problems, and new ideas continue to emerge as the project progresses. The strength of the network to continue to operate effectively, after the project is over, is also a consideration, as it can then lead to the next collaboration.

This chapter first briefly outlines the mechanics of the way networks work, as applied to creative business practice; outlining well-established terminology of strong and weak ties, and structural holes, it examines their application in a creative industries arena. It then illustrates how the creative industries are structured around network activity together with aspects of value in networks. From that it then draws out the key aspects that will be examined in the research of the cases.

## **6.2 How networks work and their application to publishing**

Discussions on networks can encompass many topics, from digital connectivity, convergence cultures, hyper textuality and new media ecosystems (Scolari, 2019). However, when examining management practices and collaborative activity, the study of networks centres on connections between people and how those relationships work. While network theory is studied across all sorts of business activity, many of the academic studies are situated in creative industries; this is because of the high occurrence of projects that depend on networks for their development and execution, and so the environment for networks is particularly active in this arena (Borgatti and Lopez-Kidwell, 2011; Burt, 2004; Grabher, 2004a; Granovetter, 1973). Creativity is ‘a distributed and embedded cultural process’ (Daskalaki

2010:1650). As such, network behaviour can enhance creative activity. Comparative studies are particularly interesting as they reveal the way businesses in the creative sector operate differently from other types of industry, for instance, in nurturing creativity (Graber, 2004).

### **Strong and weak ties and the balance for publishing**

Networks are formed out of a variety of ties reflecting an individual's connection with someone else (Borgatti and Lopez-Kidwell, 2011; Bilton, 2008; Granovetter, 1973; Heebels et al. 2013). These ties can cluster and sit within, and external to, organisations. Individuals will naturally have many ties of different sorts; some will be more formal, maybe due to their job function or position in an organisational structure; others will be informal, where they connect with others maybe on more social terms. These do not always have to be personal ties of friendship but social ties nevertheless. They maybe typified in different ways such as advice networks, friendship networks. These become particularly important for project-based industries.

These ties can be defined as strong or weak depending on a variety of variables (Borgatti and Lopez-Kidwell, 2011; Grabher, 2004a&b; Granovetter, 1973) such as emotional intensity or time. Creative industries tend to be characterised by reasonably complex ties, often referred to as multiplexity of ties: this means combinations of ties, both different sorts of relationships with different people, and different relationships with the same person (Parker, 2004). Where ties are weak it reflects a very loose link between network clusters; it may be only one person makes the link. Where that link is made, however, it can be quite critical to aspects of innovation: innovative thinking can benefit from diversity as a variety of different sorts of people connect and so develop new directions. This relates to diffusion theory: a weak link helps an idea spread further so reach 'a larger number of people and traverse greater social distance when passed through weak ties' (Granovetter 1973:1366).

This is the nub of the spread of ideas and so leads to creativity. Strong ties mean the ideas spread around and around the same group so never get onto the margins to make the leap. For Bilton, it is the ‘transitions’ between the ties, particularly those at the periphery of the network, where creativity resides (2006:48).

Barbara Heebels et al (2013) look at publishing industry exploring network connections using these theories (in particular Grabher’s theories of network types, 2004). They examine how the different actors work within the value chain of books. So, for publishing the author might be connected to the industry by a weak tie while the internal activities of the publisher, with their related network of professional suppliers, would reflect a strong tie. They break down the various relationships between different functions in order to assess how they work with their networks. There is an overarching point that the house operates as a network on different levels. Different roles in publishing houses will act in different ways when connecting depending on the function: having an author that has worked with the publisher before, already requires a more embedded approach with strong ties, working with someone closely and understanding modes of operation; but acquiring new authors needs an element of sales, outward connection to establish new contacts, so more open networks come into play.

In this way any individual within a publishing house may be operating networks in a variety of ways, although some may have more multiplexity of strong and weak ties; for Heebels et al (2013) It is clear there is a ‘strategic combination’ of these different network styles. Balancing professional and personal is critical for the publishing house negotiating the balance between its creative and commercial working. Heebels et al. say the ‘tension between culture and commerce is dealt with by switching between roles’ (2013:715). What they show is that there are many established networks behaviours already in place in publishing so that it operates smoothly; these behaviours are almost structural in that the organisation is

designed around these networks by functions: Desk editorial departments, for instance, will have well established networks with their freelancers; commissioning editors will have a looser network of external advisors. But these are all still reasonably strong, well established ties. The broader point for publishing is that it may need to take an explicit approach to developing more outward facing, looser networks in order to be innovative enough in a new digital environment; this might require recognising the limitations of the existing structures which are designed more around embedded networks with strong ties.

### **Embeddedness and its dangers**

The concept of embeddedness is a complementary theoretical framework for the issues of projects and networks introduced above. Embeddedness emerged as an economic theme that examined the way markets operated historically, but it makes use of network theory to examine this more closely in terms of organisational behaviours for particular sectors (Uzzi: 1997). Embedded networks are the ones that are more enduring and established which operate with ‘clearly defined standards of behaviour easily policed by the quick spread of information’ (Granovetter, 1985:492) and are based on strong enduring social relations, in other words strong ties; they provide a stability to risk-taking as well which is key and has some links to the latent organisation identified by Ken Starkey et al. (2000) whereby new TV projects can quickly form as they are based broadly on similar people, activities and structures each time.

Embeddedness allows for more enduring relationships that mean people understand each other’s ways of operation. This is important for projects as it can provide security in a level of predictability; they are easily sustainable; they can avoid conflict and self-interest because they have trust which means they can combine to compete effectively if need be and be supportive for each other if needed (Daskalaki, 2010; Uzzi, 1997). These are all

characteristics certain aspects of publishing would recognise as important for effective project-working.

However, embeddedness can lead to problems. Starkey et al. note that latent organisations can have a lack of creativity as they operate continuously in the same way (2000) so while they are a way to manage risk, conversely, they may also be a way to dampen risk-taking. There is the potential for embedded networks to operate in a limited way, even while it benefits from the security it can provide (Uzzi, 1997). Innovativeness can be hindered by working with a very embedded network, which, as Brian Uzzi admits, can lead to sterility. However, his proposition is that ideally ‘embedded ties enrich the network while arms-length ties prevent complete insulation of the network from market demands and possibilities’ (Uzzi:59). There is a balance to be struck between a network that operates along lines that are well established, so allowing for trust and mutual risk taking, and a network made up of looser ties that can be more entrepreneurial. Through new types of collaboration, publishers may be attempting to negotiate this balance. They face the challenge of not disrupting their existing business too much (embeddedness helps them function efficiently and manage risk), while introducing new ideas and ways to experiment. They may need to move beyond traditional networks to reach new creative partners.

### **Structural holes where creativity resides**

One further framework from network theory that is useful to consider in relation to the publishing is that of structural holes. This concept as presented by Ronald Burt (1992) represents a way to conceptualise one route to the development of new ideas. It looks at the holes or gaps within networks. A strong network has knowledge and information which can be useful for developing innovative ideas if it can be shared more widely. Gaps exist between different strong networks which, if connected, can lead to further experimentation and

innovation. Collins (1998) describes places in a network where friction leads transfer of ideas and suggests that networks with varieties of people provide more of these friction places where creative things can happen. Here creativity is not about the individual genius but a collaborative experience: as Burt says, (and as is embodied by the network) ‘creativity as an import-export business’ (Burt, 2004:388.). This highlights the need for network exchange, across structural holes, to engender creativity through collaborative means.

These theories are in line with Mark Granovetter who identifies weak ties as effective for spreading ideas (1973): interesting links are made through unexpected connections and ideas are distributed further, not recirculated around the same people. However, Burt takes this further as he sees value in the gaps themselves (2004). For Jean-René Fortou (cited Burt) ‘le vide’ –or emptiness is an important part of the drive to the formation of new ideas, operating in its way like a vacuum, or a gap that requires filling, with knowledge or with ideas. These structural holes can be organisationally important: they are ‘disconnections’ (Burt, 2004:388) or gaps between clusters within an organisational structure, where value may be buried and which may reflect entrepreneurial opportunities. An individual network can have structural holes but Burt considers the network of a wider business organisation; this contains a variety of clusters, each its own network, and between clusters too there can be structural holes.

This leads to two important considerations for a publishing company where it is seeking to be creative: first that networks are as important inside the company as outside for creative opportunity, and second that there are particular individuals that may well be important in developing these sorts of creative networks. Implicit in Burt’s discussion is the flexibility required in an organisation to allow these structural holes to be spanned. Rigid organisations do not allow crossing and integration as easily. New connections lead to diversity which in turn leads to new ways to solve problems and the development of new



ideas: people connected across groups are ‘more familiar with alternative ways of thinking and behaving, which gives them more options to select from and synthesise’ (Burt, 2004:349). But this also highlights a potential problem for publishing: in developing its hierarchies and value chain so successfully and so tightly it may have lost some of the opportunities to be creative in new ways.

### **Bonds and brokers – how to connect networks in creative industries**

Individuals who can connect these different networks are in a strong position and can gain comparative advantages. In idea generation someone is ‘moving knowledge from this group to that’ (Burt, 2004:356): the people who create bridges enable the value to be extracted from structural holes. They are needed to make the creative leaps for ideas as they can identify opportunities and cross boundaries. Burt cites research into a variety of examples of people and institutions bridging networks, from Cosimo de Medici to IDEO product design consultants. These people could be regarded as traditional brokers, much as a literary agent might connect an author and a publisher; detailed knowledge of the existing industry is of key benefit to those brokers (Bilton, 2006). However, network theory sees more subtle versions of this. Those at the edges of networks may have links to other networks, even where their knowledge is less detailed, and so make unexpected connections between networks that are very different, linking different expertise, knowledge and mindsets.

Brokers in this sense are the people who exhibit a particular network behaviour which enables unusual connections to be made and brings together the diversity of people that is needed in a creative collaboration (Bilton, 2006). The person who forms the collaboration brokers the relationships at the start, and holds a particular and vital role in setting projects in motion. The broker acts like a mediator within the company, the go-between who allows new partners to develop levels of trust quickly (Heebels, 2013; Uzzi, 1997). These brokers are

important as they are the people who sit near structural holes and so are, almost automatically, at ‘higher risk of having good ideas since they enjoy more opportunities to select and synthesizes alternative ways of thinking’ (DeFillippi et al., 2007:512).

### **6.3 Creative organisations and network behaviour**

Many creative projects in the creative sector already reflect complex network behaviour (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013; Hesmondhalgh, 2013). By understanding how networks operate in the sector this research aims to explore how networks can be exploited in such a way as to lead to the most effective and creative collaborative activity; if these networks are seen to be key to collaborations then it will be important to assess the emphasis given to their development when examining changing publishing structures.

#### **Networks and Project-based working**

Creative organisations are project-centred and so, in terms of network process, certain characteristics emerge. Andreas Wittel (2001) points out that media industries are often best understood by looking at their network behaviour, particularly in a digital environment; for media practitioners ‘social relationships and networking are crucial tools and resources for a successful business’ (2001:54). Network relationships are essential to individuals in the creative sector. Wittel characterises cultural industries as ones where project based working leads to non-linear biographies for those participating; portfolio careers and mixing and matching jobs around projects are traditionally part of the creative worker’s career trajectory; which is a key characteristic for these industries as noted in the previous chapter, (p160) (Flew, 2013, Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011). The need to develop networks that allow creative individuals to freelance in different ways and collaborate on different things is key to their ability to build a successful career. Davies and Sigthorssen indicate that many people will be working as freelancers or within small operations and so depend on the network for

their next jobs or to help fulfil orders with a ‘networked production chain’ (2013:77). For Wittel, the network becomes central to those participants to find new projects and establish their own value in their social capital.

Networks are not just about creative individuals. They are also embedded within creative businesses. Their centrality is reflected in two important ways: the first is the persistent ties people form with each other through ‘repeated organisation’ around projects; the second is the way creative freelancers organise themselves through ‘semi-permanent work arrangements’ (Daskalaki, 2010:1650). This regularity whereby repeated connections are made within the network is important for getting projects going quickly or slotting freelance individuals into existing workflows efficiently. Established networks are therefore central to a creative business-like publishing, whether for drawing on a network of regular readers or using semi-permanent teams of freelance editors or project managers. Where day to day work depends on the network, this leads to a certain way of behaving within the network: Davies and Sigthorsson identify, for instance, the need to learn collaborative skills effectively for the sort of ‘high-speed collective working’ that characterises the industry (2013:99). The need to develop a collective purpose quickly, when projects are continuously forming, is key.

A further feature of the network behaviour that characterises the creative sector is that, in order for the projects to operate effectively, there needs to be some level of trust between parties and networks need to embody that: networks ‘create sense of community and shared culture’ (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013:101; Smith and McKinlay 2009) which makes it possible to operate even in a project-based industry. Networks enable a ‘temporary team’ (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013:101) to get set up quickly and start work immediately as participants know how each other works and can move on to the matter in hand. Davies and Sigthorssen see the style of working as one of ‘negotiation rather than command and control’

(Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013:100), because each person has their own area of creative expertise and is used to working in a project-based way; roles are defined by the project and not by the hierarchies of a traditional organisation.

Developing this theme, Starkey et al., (2000) describe the concept of a latent organisation that can emerge as needed, following certain norms that operate with a shared understanding of the value chain of TV programme making. This then affects the behaviour of the network which encompasses particular characteristics that, in their view, surpass network behaviour: for them the 'latent organisation' is an organisational construct different from other network forms. Bilton similarly reflects on the importance of continuity in creative projects as well as diversity and the ability to call on a choice of partners to construct a 'virtual organisation' (2008:128). In terms of network process, certain modes of operating become central to being able to set up and work quickly; people can connect rapidly along tried and tested lines so in effect work as 'collaborations.... kept on a low flame' (Wittel, 2001:56). Uzzi and Spiro also recognise this in their study of musical industry: the characteristics they identify for the network organisation are based on a shared knowledge base that exists due the constant 'configuration and reconfiguration' (2005:3) of the same participants in an enduring network, as well as the trust that has developed to guarantee quality without there being much risk.

The way the network process works is therefore important: similar to the point above suggesting a balance between loose and strong (p180), a network has to be flexible enough to allow new projects to form with different ranges of partners, while maintaining some structures that make it quick and easy for them to operate once formed. This would be familiar to certain aspects of publishing where the need to move quickly in the production of a book means that it is useful to draw together teams of freelancers who do not require a lot of briefing because they already understand the processes of the larger organisation and of

each other; continuity with the organisation and with each other exists, even though they do not work within the organisation but are employed project by project.

### **Project ecologies**

While network processes are needed to set up each new project, Gernot Grabher has looked at the way a project itself works (2004a&b) once running. His research into the project ecologies that develop around different sorts of projects, is of interest to publishing as it looks more closely at the process of creativity that emerges from network behaviour. It bears some relation to the ecosystems identified by Bilton (2006) outlined in the previous chapter (p173) but is centred on projects rather than the wider creative business.

Gernot Grabher typifies projects that are from creative industries as being involving ‘turbulence, ambiguity; (2004b:1500). The characteristic of ‘improvising’ (using jazz as a metaphor that is also adopted by Sawyer, 2017) is something he identifies in creative industries that has ‘prototype organisations designed to maximise innovation’ (2004b:1500). As he compares the IT industry with creative industries (both of which innovate) he focuses in on the issue of originality. For the advertising industry, a continuous change in teams, an element of ephemerality and deliberate changing of collaborative partners helps ensure creativity and freshness (Grabher, 2004a and b). Projects, then, have their own behaviours and systems; even within a project the network develops its own network sociality which ‘is created on a project by project basis, by the movement of ideas, the establishment of only every temporary standards and protocols (Wittel; 2001:51). This reinforces the view that creative collaborations need to use wide networks to ensure they bring fresh new ideas forward.

As projects have their own ecology the networks for different sorts of projects need to reflect different nuances. Publishing may be very effective at a certain type of creativity (e.g.

around authors and production) but may be less creative in terms of experimenting around digital formats. It may use well established networks and not develop new ones as effectively. Projects that are set up to help them develop more experimental digital products need to encompass networks that lead to creative thinking. This becomes interesting to observe in the collaborations of this study: when projects are forming, how far are the well-honed networks already in place exploited, and how far are newer network connections used? If publishers need to, and are, looking for a wider range of partners, they may need to develop newer, possibly more fragile, networks when looking outward for more collaborators. This has implications for trust and shared narratives noted above but can lead to the creativity. as Wittel, says certain network sociality ‘is created on a project by project basis, by the movement of ideas, the establishment of only every temporary standards and protocols (Wittel; 2001:51)’. They are ‘open structure, able to expand almost without limits and they are highly dynamic’ (2001:52).

### **Challenges of network working**

There are downsides to project behaviours, as Starkey et al (2000) point out in relation to the TV projects they studied: the network needs to have a significant volume of transactions (i.e. be kept active, connections kept alive) to ensure they remain viable. While networks involve some cushion to help manage risk, if networks are not used, they become weaker. There is also risk involved in continuous re-forming around projects as it can feel more unstable, compared to the persistent and secure structure of a permanent organisation. In addition, the issues around speed of response as projects have to be put in place is still a problem. As digital transformation continues, creative companies need to respond quickly.

Sennett (1998) also considers the problems in this sort of project-oriented network behaviour: the longevity of relationships is lost; a shared narrative and value in experience

are also casualties. Skills are continuously transferred and so lost to organisations from which they have moved. On the other hand, Grabher (2004a) sees danger in the longer-term network where networks that are very established and repetitive, while reducing risk, can hinder creativity.

This is also suggestive of a balance required between different sorts of network behaviour, to ensure stability and creativity at the same time. Daskalaki reflects on this requirement for a balance between types of network behaviour: a network needs bridges, which cross gaps; and it needs bonds, where the links are strong. The bonds favour security and minimise risk while the bridges are outward looking and offer opportunities for enrichment. The way publishing is structured may avoid some of these issues: there is still an organisation in situ around which projects operate, so there is some continuity to ensure stability; imprint and list building, house styles and symbolic value for instance may create a shared narrative for the organisation despite the variety of different projects it produces. However, publishing may not necessarily change its networks enough (beyond recruiting new authors) to bring enough of the sort of experimentation required to compete effectively (Grabher, 2004). For publishing there is a danger that some networks do not get renewed, but rather end up embedded so that the same group of freelancers are continuously used and new ideas do not always emerge so easily. Publishers must look for the balance between the two that achieves ‘creative compatibility’ (Daskalaki, 2010:1652). Their networks must remain flexible, combined and recombining, alongside the project itself, to ensure they can operate effectively. Organisations must be agile, therefore, to be able to accommodate change as projects progress.

## **6.4 Value in networks**

Networks behave in particular ways within the creative industry and that in itself has value. This value can exist in a network in a variety of different ways; it can lie in its latent possibility to be creative from the connections that can be made or in the diversity the network encompasses. Its value can be reflected in the skills it encompasses and in its ability to find knowledge from elsewhere. The act of connecting itself inspires creativity, which also has a potential value. This extends to concepts of symbolic value (Heebels et al., 2013; Thompson, 2010) which rests within the reputation of the company and its potential to be innovative in signing up exciting and important new authors and so attracting readers.

### **Learning, knowledge and value from networks**

One of the key aspects of value of network is the learning that is embedded in it: ‘successful entrepreneurial business networks are typified by coordination devices that promote knowledge transfer and learning’ (Uzzi, 1997:54). For Grabher, strong, well established networks lead to strength in ‘long term collaboration with a relatively stable set of suppliers..., [which] affords interactive learning processes’ (Grabher, 2004b:1500). He recognises different learning styles between different industries. While some industries focus on iterative learning, accumulating knowledge progressively, for creative environments learning is a more stilted, experimental affair; creativity is provoked by sudden changes, switching around to see what works and learn new things.

The learning is important for an organisation despite transitory nature of projects as experience and skills are retained in some way. Network behaviour enables learning both in connecting to other people who have knowledge to bring to a project and in learning from them during project; then that learning needs to be kept accessible, and the network can embody that, holding knowledge that can be accessed as needed. Similarly, for Maria Daskalaki, the



network itself holds that value, retaining the knowledge within the network, through keeping the connections alive (2010). Social capital is, in this way, embedded in networks. The temporary nature of some project behaviours can mean special and specific learning is lost but the network still exists and this embodies the learning in a different way in terms of accessibility (rather than ownership) (Daskalaki, 2010; Grabher 2004a&b).

It is due to the fact knowledge is held in the network that there is a recognition of the power of the network (Scolari, 2019): not everyone can know everything so working with a partner with whom concepts can be shared, can lead to developing something new (Castells, 2010; Shirky, 2008). For those in creative sectors, it remains important to strike the balance; they need to share networks with those within the same broad environment, with the same challenges (as outlined in chapter five p168), but to connect with people who are accustomed to having alternative ways of thinking around creative questions (Defillippi et al, 2007). This combination is potentially fruitful and lies at the heart of innovative activity. This would reinforce that publishers should seek to develop contacts with wider creative industries and take the opportunity to learn and experiment while they collaborate with them.

### **Cooperation and trust through networks**

There are additional benefits to networks. Starkey et al, (2000) recognise that network-based working is beneficial in many ways: costs are reduced in an industry where production costs can be high and margins low; while it may not always be the best way to motivate people, quality is assured to some extent in that when projects are not done well, no new contracts will be made. For Daskalaki (2010) the network itself create a sense of security and fosters cooperation, since individuals that form the network are not always part of any other organisation. This counteracts the fragmented and deregulated organisational structures

and diverse contractual arrangements that individuals have to accept if they are working as freelancers.

For a sector that is used to taking risks around new products, networking provide support. For industries where risk taking and experimentation are central, the network becomes something that is a point of stability in an environment that is changing rapidly and which faces fierce external competition (Wittel, 2001). Publishing straddles both internal and external project-based working; both those within a publishing company and those working as freelancers around it will recognise that using networks is central their activity as it allows them to work in a project-based way. What they may not necessarily recognise is how far these characteristics of networks (i.e. where trust is embedded, where there is no overt central control etc.) enable both creativity and speed of operation. These networks potentially become more important as the industry faces new risks and needs to depend on partners to innovate in ways that help them move forward.

### **Structural and organisational importance of networks**

The aspect of network value and its ability to coordinate across partners for innovation has wider implications. For Manuel Castells (2009) networks are becoming ever more central to the ability of companies in the wider socioeconomic sense to operate in an increasingly global way. Castells points to the complexity of transnational organisations, as well as the increasing specialization required to operate in particular industrial sectors, as he considers the network enterprise. So, in examining an increasingly competitive, non-local industrial environment, industries need to operate in new ways to survive. Collective knowledge is becoming more important; pooling expertise is essential where no one company can know everything; and this is critical as industries need to respond to competition by sharing

resources and learning. Developing successful partnerships therefore is central to the future operation of any industry.

This corresponds directly to the Kaats and Opheij (2014) framework for the explorative and entrepreneurial partnerships which will be outlined in the next chapter. These partnerships focus on the need to collaborate in order to compete effectively in a rapidly changing marketplace. For an organization, the process to encourage networking becomes critical in order to develop the more innovative ways of working that enable the entrepreneurial collaborations to work.

Manuel Castells (2009) and Yochai Benkler (2006) both reflect on the fact that networks represent systems where knowledge and value reside, recognising their connecting and empowering characteristics. Castells in particular suggests the way the organization is set up and works is critical to its ability to operate effectively. Ultimately the operating unit in economic terms is not a static company but is the business project, reforming on a project by project basis; and these projects are enacted by a network. He proposes new organisational systems and structures to achieve this network identity. While the network focus of Andreas Wittel (2001) and Jeremy Rifkin (2013) is on new visions of individual participation in society and the third industrial age, Castells concerns himself more with the actual operation of existing industries who are operating in an increasingly global, competitive and de-centralised arena. His view concurs with that of Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij (2013) for whom collaborating is a way to compete effectively in industries of increasing complexity. Cooperative networks and strategic alliances are critical to succeed but Castells is concerned to stress the particular benefits of this, in relation to the importance of organizational learning and the development of organizational intelligence; by working together tacit knowledge can also be shared.

This knowledge, alongside with the recognition of value within the network, is key to being able to cope with continuous state of change. These allow a business to be adaptive in a constantly changing, digital environment. So, while these commentaries consider a large-scale shift in network behaviour in socio-economic terms, at the more micro level it is suggested that any organisation large or small will need to recognise how important its network behaviour will be in the future in order to remain competitive and define its value. Businesses like publishing will need to be aware what impact its structure can have on its capacity to operate effectively in a networked economy.

## **6.5 Relevance of networks to the proposed research**

Given networks are one key way to develop relationships with other creative sectors, how are publishers using them, particularly in terms of their desire to innovate? The themes that have emerged around network theory that are of particular interest for this research are centred on the quality for the network and those who form a part of it, as well as its operation in the wider organisation (so organisational aspects of its behaviour).

### **Quality of the network**

When looking at ways to be creative networks can play an important part if they allow for connections with diverse groups; for the collaborations under review it is important to observe how far they involve diverse partners and whether the quality of the network helps to make those connections. Do the studies reflect more entrepreneurial styles of networks which have weak ties that enable creative leaps and bring new learning into an organisation?

The balance between open loose networks and with embeddedness though is also important. Companies need to identify trustworthy partners with whom they can work effectively and flexibly, sharing risk; this is something more often enabled by embedded networks. Strong shared goals and more stable management competencies ensure the projects

get finished. Do the digital projects that are to be studied develop from networks that reflect the balance between creativity and stable project management?

In order to assess the effectiveness of the network for collaborative activity, the research will examine how the participants knew each other and the way they connect when forming the collaborations. It will consider whether the size of the network has an impact on the success of projects and will examine how far those who collaborate develop trust to work effectively together once they are in a collaborative partnership.

Additionally, what has emerged is the importance of the broker for networks to operate at their most creative. Observing how far this role exists within or outside an organisation, as well as how they actually undertake their ‘bridging’ work will also reflect on the way collaborative activity bring new ideas into an organisation.

### **Structural issues for an effective network**

The role of the organisation is also under examination in terms of assessing how far it can encourage and enhance network behaviour, as well as how far it can create value through the knowledge that emerges from network-enabled projects. Do publishers have the appropriate sort of networks in place? If there are aspects of network behaviour that help to stimulate innovation within publishing, are there ways publishing companies structure themselves to enable value, in terms of knowledge and creativity, to emerge from their networks? Networks may be workable in theory but in practice how far do those involved in connecting through networks perceive the value of that network?

### **6.6 Conclusion – the link to collaboration**

Networks are central to the operation of the creative industries and in themselves can embody creativity and opportunities to experiment. This chapter has focused on the way network

theories can be applied to publishing in order to understand ways creative collaborations can form and operate. Networks are an important part of the way a publishing company can respond to the competitive environment they are in. Project-based, collaborative working is becoming more central as a way to compete effectively in challenging market places that are undergoing big changes; networks, therefore, are an obvious route to ensure companies connect effectively. By understanding their processes and their organisational aspects publishers may be able to exploit these as they develop the sort of innovative projects they may need in the future.

Examining the quality of the network involved, and the way it behaves, is one way to test the nature of new digital collaborations. The network, however, is only one part of the collaborative process. The next chapter will examine in more detail other important aspects about the way collaborations themselves work.

## **Chapter 7 Collaboration theory and creating conditions for innovation**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Networks provide an important way to make connections with new project partners and in themselves hold value for creativity and learning. As such networks are an important aspect of an organisation and its people. However once projects are initiated how can they be set up and run in order to maximise on their potential for innovation and creative thinking? It is important to understand how the actual collaboration works once it is motion; this is in order to ensure that conditions are created that maximise the possibility for creative, even innovative, outcomes. While the previous chapter presented aspects of network theory to be applied to the case studies, this chapter looks at aspects of collaboration theory in order to identify characteristics and conditions for effective collaboration. These will then set up framework by which to test the digital collaboration case studies.

As with networks, collaborations have been always part of publishing: this can be seen at the level where authors collaborate with publishers to produce a product, but also in terms of innovative marketing projects or development of new online systems. However, the industry itself believes collaborations now to be different as the survey in chapter four showed (p138). By applying a typology to collaborations (Kaats and Opheij, 2014) it will be possible to see if there is a clear difference in style around new digital collaborations and if so, to examine why. This chapter also aims to outline frameworks with which to test collaborations to see how they operate and whether there are shared characteristics. How can collaborations be managed effectively in order to lead to creative outcomes?

In order to do this, the chapter will present aspects of emerging theory around collaborations and will outline the processes through which a collaboration moves, identifying attributes that appear to be significant in a successful collaboration. The chapter

then looks at the what makes a collaboration creative, and widens that examination to assess how collaborations tend to operate in the creative industries. This lays out the central features of collaborations that will be explored in the case studies. The chapter will conclude with some detail on the Kaats and Opheij (2014) typology for collaborations which will be used to assess how far the cases are entrepreneurial and exploratory in nature.

## **7.2 Definitions**

In general, the term ‘collaboration’ is applied loosely to several different organisational constructs such as alliances, joint ventures and strategic partnerships (and including subset domains such as ‘dynamics of cooperation’) all of which are tackled using different theoretical frameworks: economic, managerial, organisational, sociological. A ‘collaboration’ is be defined by Woods and Gray as ‘interorganisational phenomenon designed to achieve desired ends that no single organisation can achieve acting unilaterally’ (1991:140). This is the underlying definition that forms the basis of this chapter. While there are other definitions, this one is useful in that it takes an organisational behaviour approach to cooperative activities between companies; implicit is the fact that the outcomes cannot be achieved in any other way by a company on its own. Many definitions focus on a specific behaviour within the collaboration (e.g. around decision making, problem solving or power sharing within groups,). But, by looking at the wider definition of Woods and Gray, the prospect of collaboration is tied to a company’s aim to develop something new; a collaboration extends the opportunity of a company to achieve something original and different by working with others. It is this aspect of collaboration that becomes of interest when considering creative digital partnerships. The definition of Wood and Gray sets a base line for what a collaboration is.



## **Looking for collaboration theory**

‘Collaboration theory’ is not a specific entity, though researchers in different disciplines do, on occasion, use the term. Collaboration theories essentially only exist as a range of different approaches to partnerships between two or more organisations. Various definitions emerge from the literature, as one might expect in a topic that attracts multidisciplinary approaches. For instance, there is a biological approach which arises from one evolutionary theory that survival is about cooperation (De Waal 2006 cited in Kaats and Opheij, 2013), while the fields of psychology and mathematics explore influences of cooperative and competitive behaviour in game theory. A more defined approach to collaboration can be found in public sector studies where much of activity of the industry is based around partnerships between private and public organisations; here theories of collaboration follow specific rules for engagement and circumscribed sets of measures to evaluate success have developed (Gajda, 2004). But while there is specific ‘collaboration’ discourse for these areas, there are complaints that theories are applied almost randomly and are forced to fit whatever is being examined, in order to explain particular events and behaviours; this arises because the area has no overall theory, nor is a domain clearly demarcated (Bell et al., 2006; Hennart, 2006,). The field is, therefore, ‘fragmented, lacks coherence and has produced non-comparable research’ (Hennart, 2006:1608).

## **Generic collaborative activity**

While collaboration theory may be nebulous, there are various studies that focus more on the collaborative activity itself and its importance, without being specific to one industry or sector. They take a variety of angles. There are business studies approaches to the practical issues of collaboration such as team working and group behaviour for efficient management. Collaboration also sits within a sociological discourse around sharing and connecting behaviours that lead to new ways of producing and new outputs (Gauntlett, 2011, Jenkins,

2008). Some writers emphasise the nature of sharing as a new-style of social being is emerging due to the opportunities of the digital age; this leads into a Marxist-nuanced theory on the nature of labour, craft and happiness (Gauntlett, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2011; Shirky, 2008).

Collaborative outputs are also examined: they might be anything from theory development within scientific collaborations (Levine and Moreland, 2004) to artistic endeavours among creative groups (Farrell, 2013). The emphasis of these approaches is that collaborations can lead to an understanding about creativity and innovation that does, in turn, have relevance for aspects of industrial development and opportunities for business and economic growth. This can be situated in a context of convergence culture and the study of creativity in terms of the digital and social media that provide new collaborative spaces. It also reflects organisational behaviour literature around the stimulation of new ideas essential for economic development (Castells, 2009; Bilton, 2006, Kung, 2016, Leadbeater, 2009; Shirky, 2008;). This is corroborated by the survey in chapter four (p138) where collaboration was regarded as important response to the changing digital environment.

### **Collaboration and networks**

The study of networks is relevant when exploring definitions of collaborative behaviour, as they enable collaborations to come together and help describe how different sorts of collaborations can bring about new creative projects. As has been seen in the previous chapter, this is of interest as many network studies look at industries that are part of the creative sector (Grabher, 2004a; Heebels et al, 2013; Starkey et al, 2000); while they do not present a theory of collaboration, these network studies do examine collaborations in order to assess how critical aspects of network behaviour are to them. Businesses need to

look at ways to connect efficiently in order to grow and develop (Castells, 2009). There is a close relationship between networks and collaborations

For John Bell et al. network behaviour is central to the definition of a collaboration as each one will be formed of different people, operating in different ways (2006). There is a dynamic at play, similar to the ecosystems of network theory, where each collaboration is slightly different from another and, as such, creates its own unique environment. The involvement of the participants, and the arena in which they act, is central to their definition; they identify them as ‘socially complex organisms, consisting of concrete individuals or groups whose mindsets, dynamics and interests are likely to shape the alliance’ (2006:1622).

### **7.3 Defining frameworks to test collaborations**

Just as there are a variety of different definitions for collaboration there are also a variety of different ways of studying them. A more detailed framework is required to create tests for the case studies and this section examines different ways of breaking down collaborative activity. Some studies take a process approach to understand how and why they are formed; others track the collaboration’s stages chronologically while further studies draw out themes that are critical to all collaborations.

#### **Why collaborations are formed**

Collaborations are often defined by the sort of activity they are expected to undertake. Theories centre on different stakeholders who have gathered to address something specific; they must share mutual expectations of goals and outcomes as well as develop temporary structures to undertake the collaboration. They are reasonably frequently instituted to deal with some sort of jointly perceived problems and so have a specific outcome in mind.

However, some collaborations, particularly in the creative area, are less about solving a particular problem and more about sharing expertise to make something new. Here the outcome of the collaboration is less clear cut. This still might be instituted in order to solve some sort of wider issue such as the need to compete effectively in a changing marketplace (as envisioned by Castells, 2009) or the need for a different resource base in order to develop new products which cannot be done without outside help (Kaats and Opheij, 2014). In this sense outcomes are less specific. Understanding the purpose of the collaboration is one way to test out their newness, reflecting on whether the motivation for a collaboration is different in some way from previous ones.

### **Chronological approaches**

Several studies aim to break down the collaboration into component stages. Donna Wood and Barbara Gray (1991) employ a simple three stage approach which can be helpful: they divide action of the collaboration into the pre-conditions (as it were the formation stage), the process (the operation stage) and the outcomes. Each stage should have clear and distinctive characteristics that should form part of a general theory of collaboration; so that by examining how a collaboration starts it should be easy to test then whether it is a collaboration or not (Woods and Gray, 1991).

These stages are then broken down into more specific sociological processes involved in order to identify key attributes of a collaboration. For instance, in the formation stage, Woods and Gray identify the role of the convener, the environments in which they begin to happen and the relationships between participants (1991). They believe a clear delineation of the role of the convenor is essential to the understanding of a collaboration's second stage, that of operation. Their convenor role bears similarities to the broker role and network theory

may help indicate why certain types of people are more likely to be conveners. This breakdown of the collaboration is a useful way to examine the case studies in the research.

Jaouard Daoudi and Mario Bourgault (2012) focus on relationships within the collaboration as an alternative way to examine collaborations. This gives rise to a variety of themes that can be examined in the collaboration including the autonomy of the collaboration, how the relationships between partners work and where power resides. Certain types of managerial systems may be put in place, for instance to deal with decision making and problem solving; these also become part of these sorts of definitions.

Combining these different approaches can supply a framework for case study analysis which takes a stage by stage approach, while integrating the motivations and relationships that lead to the collaboration in the first place and influence its behaviour. This framework is summarised as follows:

- Formation - how the collaborations form, including consideration of how people connect through networks, the sorts of people who convene them, and the vision for the collaboration (how far is the journey important).
- Operation – this includes aspects of communication, levels of autonomy and power and processes for shared decision-making and ways to understand the organic nature of their progress.
- Outcomes - what outcomes proceed from them in terms of creative products or problem solving and how are these shared between participants.

These stages set up tangible ways in which to assess collaborations. The chronology of each collaboration can be examined and then themes can emerge at each stage.

## **7.4 Creative digital collaborations**

Having looked at the slipperiness of reaching general definition of collaboration, this research will take the view that a collaboration is an activity that involves a number of partners that come from different organisations and/or roles in order to work together on a specific project that is beneficial to them all. It is then helpful to demarcate the type of collaboration under examination by focusing on those that have creative outcomes in mind. The projects are focused on developing new types of digital products and, because they are centred on innovation, there is a level of creativity at play that makes these projects stand out. Hence the research centres on creative digital collaborations.

Publishing, as a creative industry facing impact of digital change, is particularly concerned with creative responses to the challenges of its business environment. Collaboration can be seen as a process that facilitates creativity (Sawyer, 2017); they are formal activities that are a part of creativity management: ‘team-based innovation is an attempt to build a collective model of creativity’ (Bilton, 2006:39). If innovation is at the heart of a creative collaboration what makes the collaboration creative? This may be seen within the way they are formed around a diversity of the participants, the way connections happen between them, the context in which they operate and the outcomes they seek.

### **Conditions for forming creative collaborations**

Innovation at one level can be about new ideas and new theories. Conditions therefore need to be ripe to lead to the initiation of new creative collaborations. In an exploration of the way group collaborations can lead to innovative thinking, John Levine and Richard Moreland (2004) examine theory development in both scientific and cultural environments: for them theory development emerges from creative thinking. They aim to identify the social context of collaborations from which creativity emerges and in doing so look at group formation and

group performance (the first two stages of Wood and Gray, 1991): they identify what leads to creative collaboration. Keith Sawyer (2007) similarly recognises the need to create situations purposefully, where creativity flourishes, bringing many ideas together.

In terms of group formation, various characteristics emerge: Levine and Moreland (1994) identify such as a ‘matchmaker’ figure which is similar to Wood and Gray’s convenor (1991) or the broker in network theory. These matchmakers are relatively loose roles that emerge as groups of scientific or artistic individuals organically link together to undertake collaborative working. While publishing collaborations, emerging as they do from business imperatives, may be more pre-planned than emergent, nevertheless it is of interest to understand how connections are made in the first place and the sorts of people pre-disposed to connect, something network theory outlined previously can help elucidate.

There is also a ‘magnet-place’ where groups start to come together (Farrell, 2003) or contexts which help spark ideas (Sawyer, 2017). These are of interest as spaces which encourage and facilitate collaboration, and which enable networks to operate effectively, are becoming key to the industry and something this research will explore. Spaces are also central to Bilton’s view of collaboration (2006); these are not always physical spaces but the point is that some sort of space is allowed for collaboration to take place, allowing freedom to experiment.

### **Divergence and convergent thinking in group make up**

Group composition is important for creative thinking as the diversity of participants is one of the drivers of the creative outcome; divergence of thinking is important, to bring a variety of minds to a project (Bilton, 2006; Sawyer, 2017; Uzzi and Spiro, 2005). Brian Uzzi and Jarrett Spiro summarise this when they say ‘creativity is problem solving, innovation and aesthetics... we know creativity is spurred when diverse ideas are united or when creative

material in one domain inspires or forces fresh thinking in another' (Uzzi and Spiro, 2005: 447). For Chris Bilton 'creative tension' plays an important part of creativity itself and the effective management of creativity. So, it is important for publishers to engage a range of people with diverse backgrounds for new style creative collaborations.

But divergence on its own would not be effective, without some areas of convergence (as divergence can lead to destructive behaviour and conflict). Collaboration helps to expand opportunities quickly and friction created by the diversity in the collaboration leads to the new ideas; but some convergent thinking then takes place to focus in on one new idea to develop and test. Levine and Moreland identify 'different but complementary knowledge' (1994). Group processes lead to creative thinking in terms of ideas generation, review and acceptance; an inductive process can mediate the diversity in order to reach an outcome (Leadbeater, 2009; Sawyer, 2007).

There are further complex organisational problems raised by diversity (Daoudi and Bourgault, 2012). Discontinuity exists not just between people but between time zones, locations, work practices as well as technological and cultural differences. The collaborative dynamics around diversity can lead to problems. But discontinuity is something that not only can be overcome but also encouraged: it can be a problem for collaborations to start to work effectively, but the richness it brings can lead to good outcomes; work practices are the biggest barrier to effective collaboration (Daoudi and Bourgault, 2012) and so attention needs to be paid to the working arrangements to ensure collaborations can operate effectively to lead to encourage creativity.

### **Trust between partners**

Themes that emerge particularly strongly in collaborations about developing new ideas and sharing or pooling knowledge are those of trust and support. Small collaborations will often



have more potential as it is often easier to create an emotionally supportive environment, (Levine and Moreland, 1994). These issues of trust and credibility relate to belief in the skills of the other participants or companies; participants need to respect the expertise of their partners as it is by doing so that they will be able to go further with the creative ideas. In this sense successful creative collaborations need to have an equality among partners, each of whom respect the others and bring something distinct to the table. Potential for conflict then arises around this balance where it may be disrupted by other processes in the collaboration, for instance on aspects of ownership of the outcome (if it is a product for instance) or levels of risk taking.

Michael Farrell (2013) also explores creativity within collaborations in a cultural environment, whether as writers or artists. He cites Scott Isaken saying creativity ‘involves linked together two or more ideas so as to produce something new and useful or something new and beautiful, or both’ (Isaken, 1987: cited Farrell 2003:114). He identifies characteristics of creative groups that lead to new outputs, even where it may be that the actual output is by an individual artist. In examining groups like the impressionists or English writers based for a while in Rye he sees that the group has to engender a sense of trust and support that allows them for a period to lose the boundaries between them. They seek to express something new in their articulation of a shared vision, which they then take into their own work and is exhibited in different ways. This creativity within a group is interesting to observe as it can highlight a way of looking at group work even within a business environment. If the outcome is to be creative, the process of articulating ideas can help lead to a new idea. For publishing, each project is potentially doing something new, particularly in the digital space where there are no strict rules for what a product might look like. For this reason, the creative opportunities are very open ended and the products are likely to be illustrative of an open creative discussion across different parties. The more divergent

thinking the better, but trust between partners to learn from each other and to be open to creative leaps is important.

As an adjunct to ways to build trust, participants need to bring some cultural capital to the collaboration to be able to have discussions in a supportive, open environment. As Farrell says ‘they are likely to be roughly similar in their levels of expertise in their discipline’ (2003:19); they have relatively equal status and relatively equal resources (2003:20). Trust, built on mutual respect, in the relationship is key to allow open sharing of ideas as well as the confidence to take risks (Levine and Moreland, 1994).

### **Relationships and the link with networks**

The network from which the collaboration emerges instils levels of trust for those that have been connected for a while; but trust needs to flourish quickly for those newly into a network (perhaps via weak ties or crossing structural holes). The brokers in collaborations help spread the sense of trust to all partners: they are ‘known and trusted sources who can effectively communicate to new teammates the value of unfamiliarity yet novel ideas imported from other teams they have worked on’ (Uzzi and Spiro, 2005:463).

As emerged in the network analysis presented in the previous chapter (p180), balance between partners is important. Uzzi and Spiro track creative outputs from different sorts of collaborations and they identify the problems that are faced if the participants do not vary enough (so projects become homogenous), while also recognising that without some level of connectivity, trust and cohesion the projects do not materialise. Projects need some levels of stability in order to take risks effectively yet be open enough to encompass new ideas (Uzzi and Spiro, 2005). This balance is difficult to achieve but it is important so that collaborations do not act as if they are a fixed environment but their ability to be creative depends on being

flexible. The continuous dissolution and reconnection of networks around creative projects is a feature of the creative industries and collaborations need to reflect this flexibility.

Yet flexibility does not mean lack of structure; certain creative approaches to project management are required to ensure collaborations are as creative as possible, while still leading to outcomes (Sawyer, 2017). Bilton builds on this to show that to be creative, projects also involve an organised and managed approach: ‘creative teams require active managerial involvement not through controlling and leading a process of innovation but more indirectly through monitoring and modifying the relationships which underpin that process’ (2006:36). This point becomes interesting when examining collaborations: how do those involved behave? Do they provide the space, the active but flexible management and the oversight Bilton feels are requirements for effective creative outcomes?

### **Risk for creative projects**

Creativity involves elements of risk, particularly in relation to the economic outcomes for the creative industries (Uzzi and Spiro, 2005). Experimentation means taking risks and the creative aspects of the collaborative activity of Levine and Moreland (2004) or Farrell (2013) illustrates the need to push boundaries. However, in certain creative industries an overriding issue is that outcomes must be commercial as well as critically acclaimed when measuring success. This can add an additional variable for assessing creativity; because of the commercial demands there is an added friction when trying to be creative. The question of balance emerges again: publishing collaborations can be creative but they need to ensure they follow certain conventions in order to be commercially viable. The play of divergent and convergent thinking within a collaboration is important; when developing something innovative or experimental there needs to be a subtle understanding among partners of exactly how much risk they are happy to take in terms of commercial imperatives. The

project ecology needs to embody this recognition of risk in the way it works so that decision making is effective.

### **Vision development**

One area of collaboration activity that is less well explored is that of vision development. Yet it is an important way to plan for accepted levels of risk as, in project management theory, setting clear goals is an essential and early stage of the project. Collaboration research may veer away from exploring vision development as theorists tends to be focused on unpicking abstract aspects of collaborations rather than dealing with pre-defined outcomes.

Nevertheless, given the way creative projects need actively to negotiate a balance between creative and commercial risk, the vision becomes central to effective collaboration.

Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij (2014), recognise that the outcome of a partnership is part of its defining characteristics: having some sort of vision, even if it is a fairly open one (e.g. that some sort of digital project will emerge), is necessary in order to ensure the collaboration is effective. They give weight to the importance of shared goals in collaborative work, building on themes around relationships and trust. The initial vision may be kindled by the broker while the subsequent evolution of that vision then becomes important for the process of the collaboration. The vision needs to be clear enough to ensure all participants engage with it, yet feel flexible enough that it can be change or adapted where necessary (in order to allow for creative leaps). Ownership of that vision needs, therefore, to be shared equally so all participants feel they can work with it.

So, collaboration theory when particularly applied to creative projects within creative industries has some particular attributes that may be studied in the publishing collaborations case studies. These areas of focus are:

- the role of the broker who helps form a collaboration

- the importance of divergent thinking for creativity
- network behaviour, relationships and trust
- attitudes to risk when trying new things, balanced with commercial necessity
- the evolution of shared visions that allow for creativity

From each of these themes it has been seen that the matter of balance is central: for publishing collaborations, this balance is at the heart of the ability to be innovative while also commercially strategic.

### **7.5 Strategic collaboration: explorative and entrepreneurial directions**

Having explored attributes that make collaboration work effectively, particularly in creative sectors, it is important to focus also on the strategic importance of undertaking collaborations for the wider company. Business, economics and corporate strategy studies see collaborations as providing ways to tackle systemic issues in growing markets or industries (Sawyer, 2017). Organisations can be set up to facilitate collaborations in order to further the strategic aims of a business. Publishing is under pressure, as has been shown, from digital transformation and challenges to their structure and workflow. The digital collaborations studied in this thesis are focused on digital innovation partly because of the need for publishers to strategize around their digital future. These projects are not numerous but they are some of the more innovative publishers are undertaking as they try to experiment in digital formats. Organisations want to understand how to facilitate effective collaborations that will lead to successful innovation.

#### **Categories of strategic collaboration – the Kaats and Opheij model**

If collaboration is one of the ways to be more experimental, there is an implication that the collaborations taking place now are new in style. The research in this thesis is particularly focused on exploring the potential difference between old and new collaborative activity. In

order to examine this more closely it is helpful to use a typology for collaborations in general to test out different sorts of collaborations and see if they are indeed newer in style. The classification established by Kaats and Opheij (2014) around collaborations is a useful way to test this. They analyse the nature of different business collaborations in terms of what the collaboration is trying to achieve. By providing a categorisation for different collaborations, along with variables that can be explored for each type, the model Kaats and Opheij develop helps assess the different emphases of collaborations depending on their aims, structure and behaviour. These facets dovetail with the characteristics already highlighted around the way collaborations are set up and the processes they use once in motion.

Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij present four different types of collaborative activity. The table 7.1 summarises the four models: transactional, functional, exploratory and entrepreneurial.

<p><b><i>Transactional</i></b></p> <p><i>Production process related to improving a chain</i></p> <p><i>Effective efficient exchange of people/services</i></p> <p><i>Purchasing and supply networks</i></p> <p><i>Easy to replace with some hierarchy</i></p>	<p><b><i>Functional</i></b></p> <p><i>One partner takes over an area of another to manage it– harmonise processes between the two</i></p> <p><i>High level of involvement for both sides</i></p>
<p><b><i>Explorative</i></b></p> <p><i>Suitable match to do something together to learn from each other – exchange knowledge and experience as they explore an area</i></p> <p><i>Not with a predetermined end result but a catalytic theme, maybe problem solving, explore an issue together</i></p>	<p><b><i>Entrepreneurial</i></b></p> <p><i>Need to renew/develop but cannot do it alone</i></p> <p><i>In depth sharing to promote invention and development – focused on something like new markets, new products, new tech</i></p> <p><i>Diverging and converging</i></p>

**Table 7.1 Four categories of collaboration after Kaats and Opheij (2014)**

Of these four there is a link between transactional and functional: they reflect more traditional collaborative styles that generally involve working with existing businesses contacts. They also integrate collaborative activity in a more normative way to the business and focus on specifics such as refining a supply chain or outsourcing a particular activity from the main business.

On the other hand, explorative and entrepreneurial collaborations can be regarded as newer in approach for certain sectors which are not necessarily accustomed to behaving in this way: firms more used to dealing with innovation and experimentation as part of the modus operandi of their business may be more accustomed to these models. Kaats and Opheij do not necessarily themselves see them in terms of 'old' or 'new' as they simply describe the different types of possible collaboration. But they do make the point that increasingly complex managerial situations are leading to the fact collaborations no longer 'fit inside the box: they are increasingly region, sector or discipline transcending' (2014:11). This leads to some implication that the characteristics of these different collaborations are changing: and in particular the explorative and entrepreneurial approaches reflect the need for more innovation-based models to compete in a more complex business environment. As they unpick the characteristics of these four types of collaboration, they make a clear link between these latter two types on this basis.

Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij (2014) overlay on this Marco de Witte et al's model of change (2012) where the first type (or order) of change is focused on improving the business, the second about transforming and the third involves systemic change in terms of transition. Certain types of collaboration can help transform and transition. For publishing the changing competitive environment requires stretching business models and developing new projects as they transition to manage in a new climate. There is an implication that while all collaborations involve some level of managing complexity and mutual problem solving, it

is the explorative and entrepreneurial collaborations that are more appropriate; they are important where business environments are changing rapidly, dealing with ‘catalytic theme’s (2014:25). These types of collaboration promote ‘invention and development’ and outcomes are directed at ‘penetrating new markets, developing new products or technologies,’(2014: 26) where to try and do so alone would be impossible: ‘no organisation can survive alone, nor can any one organisation single-handedly solve the complex issues of our day’ (2014:89), building on themes raised by Manuel Castells (2009). Richard Osborn and John Hagedoorn also highlight this issue: ‘numerous studies suggest the use of alliances has been more common in areas in which firms face daunting technological challenge’ (1994:269). Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij particularly focus on new business models suggesting that there is a current need to explore alternative ways of dealing with the changing business environment: they draw interesting connections between the need to have access to, rather than own, resources; so collaboration leads to more trust, sharing and the ability to connect, all themes that emerge in wider observations about the changing economy is outlined by writers such as Castells (2009) or Rifkin (2013).

The transactional and functional types of collaboration may be more inter-organisational, where partnerships are already established, while the explorative and entrepreneurial routes evolve, and may lead to new and unexpected outcomes. There is no particular hierarchy in the minds of Kaats and Opheij as they see all these collaborative activities as relevant and context dependent: it is by understanding the type of collaboration that you are in that you can ensure the effective measures to model success are in place. The importance for this research is that the second two types represent less traditional types of collaboration for publishing and yet seem to be on the increase.

The entrepreneurial and explorative approached also reflect an approach to disruptive innovation where unpredictable changes within the market is as at the core of the drive for



innovation (Kung, 2006:138). The danger is incumbents may disregard disruptive innovation in favour of continuous improvement of existing products; by doing this they do not have to make structural changes, but they then may not change their architecture quickly enough to respond to the shift in markets; this has resonance with the legacy issues publishers face for instance. For Kaats and Opheij (2014) explorative and entrepreneurial collaborations are a way to counter this; they allow ways to experiment in response to the changing market place without disrupting normal business while the experimentation is happening; and collaboration itself reflects the organisation's agility to accommodate new structures in which to experiment, without reorganising its core business too early.

Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij note that organisations are 'experimenting intensively with organisational forms that offer more room for variety and flexibility' (2014:76) noting that the challenges these organisations face are in a continuous state of flux so it is desirable to remain alert and react fast. For publishing the digital challenges, as seen previously, are such that collaborative activity can be a way to respond to try new things and test the water, while keeping flexible and nimble. Kaats and Opheij additionally comment that organisations need to build more of a culture of collaborative activity; companies need to institute ways to manage collaborations in order to be able to keep trying new projects with new partners (2014:9).

Another aspect of the Kaats and Opheij model for assessing collaborations is the axis that they observe around the need to improve or the need to renew. They use the term renew here to suggest the need for a business to react to and learn new things; this is as opposed to needing to continue current activity but with improvement. The need to renew connects the explorative and entrepreneurial collaborations as these types focus on new business development, exploring new markets and dealing with disruption, and this distinguishes them from the transaction/functional trajectory.

A further axis looks at exchanging and sharing: here lies the distinction between the explorative and entrepreneurial types: the former is somewhat more focused on exchanging concepts, knowledge and learning from each other, without a necessarily predetermined outcome, while the latter looks at doing something together, seeing what emerges and sharing the outcome. For this research both of these types of collaboration are counted as new as they both deal with challenging business environments that require new responses, even though their outcomes may be different. However, as Kaats and Opheij acknowledge ‘most partnerships forms are actually interim forms and thereby derive qualities from two or more basic models’ (2014:27) and as such the subtle differences between these two types of collaborations will be of less concern for the research than establishing the collaborations are broadly new in spirit and share enough significant characteristics of these types.

Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij highlight other elements of the collaborations: one feature that has not arisen so far is the issue of creating value for all partners. Value exists in the network but their proposition is that the collaboration also creates value, which may be different to the different participants, but nevertheless must be clearly present. The research will assess how far value is being measured for the project and what that value is. Value does not have to be commercial; the quality of the outcome, creative response, the solution to problems or the learning may all be part of the value of project; as noted previously, there is a balance to be struck between commercial and creative outcomes. Organisation learning may be the most critical outcome: as Osborn and Hagedoorn suggest, the immediate returns of a collaboration are not as critical a gain as the ‘building of technical capability, tacit knowledge or understanding of rapidly changing market’ (1997:270). These aspects may be regarded as valuable to the company but there may also be value to the participants at an individual level too.

### **Using the Kaats and Opheij typology in the research**

The framework outlined by Kaats and Opheij will be used for assessing publishing collaborations in order to test the overall direction and aims. By understanding the collaborations in depth, their framework will help the research identify if there appears to be more of the entrepreneurial and exploratory types taking place in publishing and, as such, whether this can be regarded as new for publishing. The stages of the collaboration (as outlined above – forming, operation and outcomes) will form the narrative structure for the individual collaborations as participants are questioned. The themes that emerged earlier such as diversity, size of collaboration, broker/convener roles, management of risk, vision formation, formal and informal processes will be integrated to this framework.

### **7.6 Conclusion – the research proposition and framework for exploring the cases**

While this chapter has looked at collaboration from a variety of angles, similar themes have emerged from the various theoretical approaches examined. Collaborations are different from other forms of partnerships. They carry specific features that reflect their uniqueness as an organisational response to challenging environments. Having assessed the context of publishing and the wider creative sector, and explored aspects of network and collaborative theory, what this research proposes is that new styles of collaborations are required for publishers to be innovative in arenas where new styles of experimentation are required. ‘Traditional’ publishing structures have built-in limitations that mean creative digital new product development may not be fully supported. By utilising networks in particular ways, and taking a collaborative approach, publishers can generate new ideas and strategies for creative digital projects; these approaches can be facilitated through organisational structures that instil specific project and network behaviours, that set up balanced systems for risk and stability, and that manage creativity effectively. The expectation is that these sorts of

collaborations will be seen to be of strategic importance as a response to the digital environment.

The case studies will be examined to see if they reflect the characteristics of collaborations identified this chapter as well as the network attributes outlined in the previous chapter. This will show how far the publishing collaborations are new in style they, how creative they are and whether they can be effective sites for experimentation. The framework laid out by Kaats and Opheij is the starting point for the case study research as it will be used to test the newness of the collaborative case studies. Then the research will break down the collaborations into stages: formation, operation and outcomes. The characteristics, that have emerged, particularly those that instil creativity, can be examined in these three stages, paying particular attention to the characteristics of creative industries (as outlined in chapter five p160), project ecologies and networks behaviour (as outlined in chapter six p178) in order assess ways in which collaboration can be effective. It should be possible to conclude how far these projects are entrepreneurial and what effect they have (in terms of organisational learning and creativity) as well as what sorts of structures need to be in place to ensure projects like these can flourish.

As a summary of the key issue to be examined in the case studies that follow, the formation stage will focus on the following aspects of the collaboration:

- How group formation comes about
- What roles are played by networks
- How participants reflect diverse thinking
- Who brokers/convenes the project
- How the vision is developed
- What size the groups are the most effective

The second set of issues look at the way the collaboration operates with focus on:

- Levels of expertise, trust and support
- What risks they take and how they take them
- Levels of autonomy
- What group processes emerge (E.g. around project management or decision making)
- How informal and formal processes are balanced

The third set of variables is around the outcomes of the collaboration:

- How are outcomes measured and what counts as success
- How creativity emerges if it does
- What learning emerges and how far is that important.

These themes will form variables in the observation of the case studies.

Wood and Gray make the point that ‘collaboration can open new and untested possibilities for action, interaction, and relations, and close off existing, well-known ones.’ (Wood and Gray 1991:158). For the collaborations under review something new is being sought and new networks are being created. It will be important to see how these ‘untested possibilities’ lead to something tangible for the participants –and help them become explorative and/or entrepreneurial.

It is likely that contradictions will emerge; this may be particularly evident in the creative collaborations under investigation. As Osborn and Hagedoorn say, collaborations ‘are temporary mechanisms and long-lasting relationships. They are cooperative and competitive weapons. Each is unique but they often share similar properties. They have intended purposes yet their emergent benefits may be more important’. (1997:274). The dualities set up by Osborn and Hagedoorn appear to reflect the challenges of effective

explorative and entrepreneurial collaborations outlined by Kaats and Opheij. Balances are required to ensure commercial and creative innovation is achieved, while understanding how to set up effective collaborations may lead to a useful structural response to digital change. The case studies will seek to establish whether the new publishing collaborations fit this mould.

## PART THREE – THE CASE STUDIES AND DISCUSSION

### Chapter 8 Case One - Consumer gamebook

#### 8.1 Overview to the case study

This case study examines the creative people and the publisher involved in developing a consumer book app. The app reworks a novel into an interactive format; it uses many elements from the original story but gives the reader/player opportunities to choose their own direction. Building on branching narrative and ‘choose your own adventure’ novels it uses story telling software to develop a more game-like environment with competitive elements. The project involved a publisher and a software game and story developer, along with additional freelance creatives to write story boards, illustrate, build animations and compose music. The project carries branding for both the publisher and the games developer and was marketed by the publisher.

#### Data for the case study

In-depth interviews were used as the main part of the data collection to examine the development stages of the project. As it was a very small project, with regards to the number of participants, the interviews are limited in number. The interviewees are listed in the table 8.1.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Citation Reference *</b>	<b>Reference as used in chapter</b>
Publisher	Publisher	Digital director; they published the app under their imprint and invested in the project proposed by the digital design company	C1P1	Publisher

Composer	Independent	Composed the music that played on the app	C1P2	Composer
Illustrator	Independent	Provided illustrations for the project, including a digital toolkit to make up other illustrations where required	C1P3	Illustrator
*The reference numbers refer to the transcripts and in the text the page number of the transcript is included.				

**Table 8.1 Table of interviewees for Case One**

Other data was used in order to build the case studies. This was in the form of document analysis. A web search was undertaken in September 2018 and used a variety of key words related to the product, the developer and the publisher. Two forms of document emerged: website information at the time of the launch and video footage of presentations where the process of developing the project is outlined. While the search was across platforms, in terms of videos only YouTube videos emerged as a result. Of the videos studied, two contained pertinent information that is included in the study. The two presentations used are summarised in table 8.2.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Reference for citations</b>	<b>Reference as used in chapter</b>
Writer	Independent	C1V1	Writer
Developer	Digital developer	C1V2	Developer

**Table 8.2 Video presenters from document analysis**

### **Case study presentation**

As this research is focused on new styles of collaboration, case studies have been identified that appear to reflect the characteristics of entrepreneurial and exploratory style collaborations as outlined by Kaats and Opheij (2014). The first part of the chapter tests the collaboration against their framework to see if it meets their criteria for explorative or



entrepreneurial collaborations. The chapter then explores the collaboration in more depth across the three stages outlined in previous chapter: forming, operating and outcomes. It looks first at the way the collaboration was set up, including analysis of the way people got involved and how the vision developed. It then examines the project as it progresses, to see what sort of techniques are used to manage the collaboration. Finally, it examines the outcomes of the project exploring the way the participants measure the success of the project as well as examining the learning and creativity that emerged.

## **8.2 Type of collaboration**

For Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij part of the definition of an entrepreneurial collaboration is one whereby the company is aiming to do something new that it cannot do on its own (Kaats and Opheij 2014:27). This project could not have been undertaken by the publisher alone. The technical and creative skills for the project came from the digital developer and other creative people involved. The experience of game production was important for the digital developers as well as the writer, the illustrator and other participants. They had skills developed in a games sector, which they applied to the arena of digital publishing; it was partly because of this experiment that the product was innovative. This, therefore, was not a project that could have been undertaken by the publisher in-house, though they did utilise their skills in terms of content editing and marketing. From the point of view of the publisher, the project was one that pushed the boundaries of publishing into a more game-like environment.

In order to progress the project, the publisher was required to provide financial investment for the developers and this relationship was also new. This arrangement is familiar within publishing in the sense that a publisher might invest in an author and provide an upfront advance based on future royalties. However, in this case the project was dealing

with a product requiring extensive technical expertise and it did not require any of the publishers' production expertise; this meant a different sort of business model from that of a traditional book was required in order to work out how to fund the project. This led to a different sort of relationship which was more like that of an investor than producer. The publisher reinforced the newness of this relationship and also acknowledged that any digital partnership requires new thinking for a publisher as they consider how to work with external specialists: 'I would say almost every partnership is new' (C1P1:2).

The publisher, while acknowledging the undoubted success of the project, noted that there was only a little pressure on the project to achieve success in financial terms (C1P1:6); there were no formal measures beyond hoping to earn back the marketing spend. Time and quality were not specifically assessed. This also reflects the Kaats and Opheij model for an explorative collaboration whereby simply being involved in the project is an end in itself: participants do not predict what the end goals are in very specific terms; instead they are open to seeing what emerges from the project. The project therefore was experimental, reflecting a new approach to collaborating beyond traditional functional or transactional collaborations (Kaats and Opheij 2013:25).

### **8.3 Forming stages**

The next sections look closely at the way the collaborations form and work. The forming stages examine aspects of the initial roles of the partners, the way networks brought participants together, how the project vision was initiated and the participants' motivations to be involved.

## **Publisher involvement**

As stated, this collaboration was unusual for a publisher as they neither initiated the idea nor made the product. The digital developer had the vision for what this project could be, building on their expertise from previous storytelling game projects. The publisher noted that it was an unusual arrangement and differed from the previous digital projects in which they had been involved. However they commented that there was a benefit to this as often the publisher has to come to the table with the ideas; this was different: ‘it was nice for me actually because quite often the publisher and the digital publisher has to work so hard to get anyone to come up with ideas; usually you’re the one coming up with ideas so it was nice for somebody to come along with what was immediately when I heard it, an amazing idea and [I] was really excited.’ (C1P1:3)

The publisher refers to their role in this project as one that was hands off, more so than any projects they had experienced up to that point. Their involvement is described as a ‘supporting role’ and ‘investor’; they were ‘the junior partner, not the same level of involvement from across the business that another [digital project] would have had’ (C1P1:1). This reinforces the non-traditional nature of this collaboration for the publisher. As ‘junior partner’ they were not involved in any of the day to day work on the project. It is noticeable too from the document analysis that the marketing material and reviews at the launch downplay the involvement of the publisher; the publisher’s role is only mentioned in the publisher’s marketing and it reinforces the sense that they are acting behind the scenes for the developer.

Nevertheless, the publisher role was very important for providing acknowledgement and support. They backed it with financial resources that made it achievable as the digital developers did not have the financial resources to do this alone. The publisher had to

recognise the potential in the project in order to take it on. When asked if their personal game experience made it easier to spot this potential he stated ‘definitely, I don’t think anyone really got it here and I think a lot of people perhaps still don’t’ (C1P1:4). There were activities that were undertaken at the publisher end: copy editing, proof reading and marketing for example (C1P1:9). The writer also noted specifically that the publisher went through all the proofs and edits in the video clip (C1V1). Nevertheless, the innovative nature of the product meant this was an exploratory project. It was important that the publisher engaged with the vision of the product as a book/game format; in an entrepreneurial way, they were able to spot an opportunity to do something innovative from this partnership.

### **Networks old and new**

The participants in the collaboration got involved in the project in different ways: some connections were already established and those involved built on their old network to develop the new project; for other participants the networks were either newly forming or based on a tenuous link that would, as a result of the project, evolve into longer term link. In the latter cases, serendipity to some extent played a part, an aspect of new network formation that emerges from the theories of Ronald Burt (2004) and Marc Granovetter (1973).

An example of building the collaboration using an older network can be seen in the relationship between publisher and digital developer which was already well established. This built on a previous project and the publisher described their original connection which was fortuitous given that the publisher and developer came from different sections of the creative industries (book publishing and games development). The publisher had heard about the developer from a meeting at the Independent Publishers Guild and so had arranged a general, introductory meeting to talk to them further about the story telling software they were developing. It happened that on the same day they had this meeting the publisher had earlier

met ‘just separately and coincidentally’ (C1P1:3) an author of interactive fiction via an agent. The publisher made a connection in his mind between the two meetings which led to the inspiration for the earlier transmedia concept; in this way the publisher became the broker and put the idea of a new interactive book forward, bringing together the author and developer. This initial connection developed into a successful relationship; that, in turn, led to the new project studied here. The network was relatively newly formed but, once in place, led quickly and naturally to the development of further projects.

This collaboration was easy to set up because of the prior relationship. Compared to the earlier collaboration, however, the digital developer conceived this differently. The strength of the relationship and the success of the previous project led to a more ambitious project the second time around. In the prior project, the publisher had acted as a connector between an author and a digital developer and had sparked the idea. In the case of this new project the digital developers came with a very clear vision and asked for financial involvement from the publisher. The publisher’s role therefore changed from being a broker to being the supporter, showing that network behaviours are not fixed but change as projects change. The developer commented in the video that they were a company that worked with publishers but adds, ‘I don’t know how we ended up doing this but it is what we do. We work with publishers to use game design ideas to make stuff, not necessarily to make things better but to make different stuff’ (C1V2). He acknowledged that the relationship between the game and the book was different from traditional games design and that, somewhat serendipitously, led to their working with publishers.

The interviews with the other participants each drew out further aspects of creative network behaviour. The illustrator outlined how he met the developers. He saw them at a conference many years previously where he had played a game they had produced and which

he had thought innovative; there was a further connection as the game was based on a story written by someone he had worked for. This inspired him to meet the developers to connect up and ‘talk about our expectations, what do we want to do, what do we like, how do we like to work and that was all’ (C1P3:4). No particular plan emerged from that discussion but after several months they contacted him with something specific. The earlier discussions established like-minded approach to work and product development. This reflected a bridge in the network which the developers were then were able to follow up once they had a concept to pitch: ‘they asked me if I liked it and if I could join them and I said: “yes for sure”’ (C1P3:4). He noted that his particular project is one that he might not have been able to afford to join because it would not pay as well as the advertising projects he often worked on; but the fees he could command for the advertising work meant that he was able to take on more creative projects like this: ‘the nice invoice [from advertising] gives me the freedom to hand pick the types of project I would like to work on and maybe that are not worthy from an economical point of view but from a creative and personal point of view are really worth it. It is like on one you pay the bills and on one you have fun.’ (C1P3:5). The illustrator consciously developed creative networks in order to find the longer-term creative projects. The time the network takes to evolve and lead into an actual project appears important for the more creative concepts; the openness to make a connection, to establish personal relationships and reignite the link when needed for a project are part of the network behaviour reflecting the entrepreneurial and creative approaches outlined by Gernot Graber (2004).

The composer used a newly established network connection. As part of his strategy to expand his industry links, he explored the option of connecting to games producers. He had previously been more focused on film music. He took a systematic approach to building his

network, writing speculative letters to a set of developers he has researched: ‘on that particular day I was working from E to J and they were the ones that responded. So, it was really by chance’ (C1P2:2). While the composer reflected that this connection happened through luck (catching the company at the right time), the approach to building a network was in itself undertaken in a considered, systematic way. The games links within his network then continued to develop as he gained more game work subsequently. Bearing in mind these different connections, it is noteworthy that key players, in what was a very small team, came on board through different routes, reflecting different ways the network behaved. Gernot Grabher (2004) would suggest that open networks are the most appropriate way to form creative projects, ensuring variety and diversity; each of these participants reflect open network behaviour in the way they joined the project.

### **Vision development – game and book**

The initial vision for this collaboration built on a concept that had been developed in an earlier project about an interactive story; this merged product reflects the convergence outlined by Alexis Weedon et al. (2014). The developers then took the concept further by building more gaming technology into the story telling. This vision developed at their end because they recognised the capabilities of interacting with narrative in a digital context. The concept was then articulated to the partners. As the publisher said the project was ‘first and foremost a game and it is a game-like adaptation of a book’ (C1P1:1). The writer commented, in the video clip, that the aim of the project was to ‘build story like a games designer’ (C1V1). The publisher noted that it was probably because he knew about gaming that it made the idea easy for him to grasp; without his knowledge of branching narrative it might have been more difficult to sell the idea to the publishing house. He also comments that it was not something that could have been quickly thought up: ‘you can’t just barge in... you have to

have thought about it a lot and for a long time' (C1P1:13). The vision needed some gestation time (something that emerges from the other case studies too).

The developer noted that his past experience in games design led him to recognise that the job of those who built the games was to make sure game players were having the experience the makers wanted them to have: experience is at the heart of the product and the developer adds: 'I think that is something that publishing and digital publishing needs to be aware of and pay attention to...if that sounds familiar to the business of writing a book, well it is exactly the same problem, exactly the same challenge' (C1V2). This sense of the link between the game and the book in terms of an experience was important for the vision development of this project.

The publisher also appeared to play an important role in terms of endorsing the idea; by confirming that it looked an exciting concept they were able to support the developers who needed reassurance that it could work, given it was using book content; the publisher stated that while the idea 'was absolutely them' the developers sought advice: 'they partly did because they had an idea that they felt might be brilliant but they didn't one hundred per cent know so they just talked to me because I had worked with them before' (C1P1:3). This shows how the network is important in developing the creative idea. The developers went to the person with whom they had already worked for advice, suggesting they trusted the relationship that they had already developed.

### **The vision and the creative briefs**

The illustrator and composer concurred that the vision was articulated very clearly from the start. It was possible to develop the project creatively once it was going, as will be seen, but the initial vision was outlined to the creative participants and they worked to a brief for their



elements of the project. Getting the vision well understood was important as the creative briefs given to the composer and the illustrator meant they were able to develop their creative work effectively; both describe their focus on combining classical and modern elements in their work, reflecting that at the heart of the project was a classic story that being brought into a technological, game environment. It appears from the description of what they delivered, that both clearly grasped the vision; this meant that very little change was required in either of their work (C1C2:5). The illustrator throughout was more involved in the evolving vision of the project as he put forward a lot of suggestions to increase the importance of the visual design for project's branding (C1P3:5); this emerges later as the operations and creativity of the collaboration are examined. The writer also made the point in the video clip that the various elements of the project were very interconnected: 'it is impossible to talk about the writing of [this project] without talking about design and visuals and game mechanics and user interface. So every aspect...was conceptualised in a really integrated way' (C1V1). Part of the vision, therefore, was that the meaning of the story was embedded in all the creative elements of the project and all participants recognised the centrality of this to the product.

### **Motivations for involvement**

The participants were asked why they were interested in getting involved. The publisher was engaged by the challenge that the project posed. 'I just thought it was incredibly cool and it was really ambitious and really different and taking things to a whole new level and I just thought this is the kind of cool stuff that everyone should be doing and that was honestly my main motivation' (C1P1:3). The idea that this project could be something exciting and extend a publishers' approach to storytelling was an important motivating factor throughout 'something that would really wow people' (C1P1:4). The idea was essentially developed at the developer end but the publisher's enthusiasm was an important aspect in making the

project come to fruition quickly: he was able to offer financial backing very quickly and was key to saying he was ‘in on this definitely’ from the very start (C1P1:4).

The illustrator felt great investment in the creativity of the project from the start: ‘I liked those guys, I liked the way they were thinking and the way they were approaches what they wanted to do and I wanted to be part of that yes, this is a good project and something of fun here’ (C1P3:5). It reflects that the vision was very clear as pitched by the developers; it engaged the creatives immediately and motivated them to get involved in the development process working together; they were not just fulfilling their own role in isolation. This was particularly important for the illustrator as he was not based in the UK yet worked closely with the team.

The composer was motivated primarily in wanting to extend the sort of work he did into a different sector. There was a recognition that, as this was the first foray into games music, the composer wanted to consolidate the opportunity by getting as much experience as he could and by proving himself to a new client base. Because of this he worked beyond the brief he was given and produced more music than was required: ‘there were only 3 minutes needed ... you just sort of zoom in and out... and then I think I wanted to extend it slightly so I did a beginning and an end to it to make it into a more cohesive piece’ (C1P2:5). He felt the need to extend his creative work as well as show that he was a trustworthy new partner. He added that ‘if I can show that I can work quite quickly... then that is another feather in my cap, as it were, in terms of coming back to [me]; [they will think] “if you want a good piece of music then [he] can do it fairly quickly as well”’ (C1P2:5).

The composer also noted, like the illustrator, that ‘I liked the look of the company...they did look to be friendly...they knew what they were doing and they wanted to

do it well; I think that is how they managed to strike me through the website' (C1P2:4). The importance of the type of organisation, the ideas and the work ethos seem to be resonant for both the illustrator and composer. The illustrator said that it was their eye for detail about the way they pitched the idea that made him interested in them: they presented the vision in detail showing how far they understood the way narrative interacted with the digital context (C1P3:13). He was motivated by an environment that provided the freedom to learn and connect through the collaboration.

## **8.4 Operation**

The way the project operates can help understand some of the characteristics that make a collaboration different, as well as test how far certain organisational behaviours enhance the effectiveness of a collaboration. This section looks at the size of the team overall and the way the publisher and creatives worked with developer.

### **Size of team**

The publisher noted that the tightly formed vision was important for the project. From his point of view, he felt that this meant it ran reasonably smoothly, though he acknowledged it was very hard work, particularly at the developer end. As a small, highly organised, experienced group of people (reflecting the sort of networks that brought them together in the first place), the culture of the team was significant in achieving the project outcomes. The illustrator also noted the working relationships were very strong because the team size was small. The publisher commented that the focus and commitment was partly due to the sort of people involved and partly due to the fact the vision was the developer's vision: 'they worked unbelievably hard to realise their ambition; that was of an incredibly high standard and this is a key differentiator of the project: what you have is a small focused team who are extremely experienced and expert in the area, putting absolutely everything into realising that vision... I

have never seen that level of commitment on the project before: and that is because it was their project'. (C1P1:5) It could be detrimental to a project if a freelance creative team are not on board or the developers are too hierarchical and closed to other people's ideas. However, in this case the team was close knit, committed and always listening to each other.

The writer in the video clip also commented on the size of the team. The ability to make changes quickly and to iterate was very important: being small and independent 'we are less beholden to the bureaucratic processes' (C1V1). They could also bring people in earlier and get them involved and she noted that this was a particular advantage with this project; this was partly because she and the other creatives were able to offer ideas from early on and also partly because it allowed more time for deeper research, which was important for developing a richer product. It reflects the sort of nimbleness noted by Chris Bilton (2006) and Lucy Kung (2008) in terms of ways to instil creativity.

### **Formal and informal project management, hierarchies and autonomy**

The publisher noted some important aspects of the way the management of the project was structured, and linked this to the success of the project. It was closely controlled at the centre and, in that sense, could be seen as hierarchical. The project was 'tight and focused and clear' in this case (C1P1:14). He recognised that the project could only work if the expert people were the people at the centre: 'it means the kind of people who are closest to the project are in charge and are supermotivated and that is why I think it really works.' (C1P1:13).

The style of management was relatively relaxed as the creative people involved were also highly expert at their roles and the small size of the team meant that it did not require heavy-handed project management with lots of follow ups, shared Gantt charts and many managed targets. The writer noted for successful projects there needs to be some freedom:

‘you need to make it easy for [your team members] to do what they are good at’ (C1V1). The lack of formal systems contrasts with later Case Three (p279).

The project management experience, as observed by the composer and illustrator, similarly reflect a balance between informal and formal approaches. The participants worked to deadlines, following a schedule and were focused on achieving results against a carefully planned brief. But there was also a level of autonomy and working without using formal shared project management processes. The composer notes that there was not even a formal contract at first but rather an unofficial, unwritten ‘gentleman’s agreement’. He also reveals that he did not know much about the rest of the participants of the project. He was not aware of the publisher being involved at all until later on and he met the other participants (the illustrator, developer, story board writer and the publisher) after the project was finished (C1P2:2). The illustrator also notes that he did not meet anyone until after the project launched (C1P3:5). This autonomy allowed creative freedom but indicates a more detached operational process as freelancers were left to undertake their own roles without management for some of the time (again contrasting with later cases two and three). The composer is accustomed to collaboration and this did not reflect to him an unusual way of working.

However, autonomy did not mean isolation. The writer noted that they all were consulted: they were ‘invited into discussion about the mechanics and design and we were all together on chat during the development process and this was really invaluable’ (C1V1). This was unusual in her experience and it was also an important aspect for the illustrator. The informal aspects of the project meant that he could insert himself into the decision-making process when required, bringing his wider experience to bear on this project in terms of helping the developers manage the cost of illustration with senior and junior artists. He opened discussions with the project team about the way they might need to balance quantity of

creative images with the cost and the time available (C1P3 p3). This was, to some extent, due the illustrator being motivated to participate. As a very experienced creative worker his initial decision to get involved was because he was interested and curious about the project; this then drove his determination to get as close to the project as he could and bring his high level of experience to bear on the vision. He was able to advise how they might adapt their plan for images; this would reduce his own contribution (which was a more expensive resource as he was a senior artist), but allow for a certain flexibility to expand and develop the game in the future with junior artists, so future proofing it (C1P3:3). He was able to do this because he had experience in collaboration and the demands of creative projects so helped the digital developer manage costs.

Additionally, the way the collaboration operated at the developer end appeared to reflect a more collegiate approach to collaborative team players; this allowed the illustrator to help problem solve and add new ideas. In some sense this was self-fulfilling as the illustrator had opted to work with them in the first place because he saw that this was the way they worked; he was predisposed to their sort of working environment (C1P3:4).

When the decision-making process was described from all parties it appeared to be very straight forward with no problems or negotiations. The participants worked very well together and the relationships were good throughout (C1P3:8). The illustrator put this down to good communication: ‘it is really important, especially at the beginning, to talk a lot with them to understand exactly what the tone in the communication is, how willing they are to be contacted for questions’(C1P3:8); in other words it is important to establish the good working relationship at the start.

## **Trust and expertise**

The illustrator elaborated on the theme of freedom from formal processes and hierarchies. He said ‘it really depends on how willing the people are ...how much they want to give you room to play’ (C1P3:7). He noted that there are people who are very territorial about management positions and so they require the freelancer to stick only to the brief and not offer any further inputs. This leads to lack of trust and sharing of creative ideas. The writer also noted that those running the teams need to ‘be clear that you need your team to speak up and tell you what they think’ (C1V1); for her it was important that the creative people the project had at its disposal were a resource that was to be properly used through active engagement.

The illustrator continued to note that the game industry has a loose, flexible way of working and decision-making is not subject to a hierarchy where projects have to refer back to senior managers: ‘the people you are talking with are the people who have all the decisions, they don’t rely on a third person’ (C1P3:8). It appears that because they were all experienced professionals, they were able to respect each other’s areas of expertise and were confident of each other’s professionalism in doing the job properly so they were left to work autonomously. The writer commented in relation to her work with the story developer that, ‘we bounced off each other’s creativity and invention, but it did require both of us to extend quite a great deal of trust in respect to each other’(C1V1). This reflects the sort of confidence that existed through the group and which led to trust that allowed them to be open to learning from each other in terms of idea generation and problem solving. In this way the ecosystem of the project (Grabher 2004) was such that they could become more hands-on and push the boundaries of their involvement beyond the brief.

## **8.5 Outcomes**

In order to assess the newness of the collaboration, as well as understand the sort of creativity and learning that emerged from it, the final part of the case study looks at the outcomes of the project, both in terms of specific expectations and in terms of the wider impacts of the collaboration for the participants.

### **Measures of success**

The collaboration as a whole was marked by a variety of different measures, reflecting the sort of explorative style of collaboration that is noted by Kaats and Opheij (2014). All participants noted that the project was a considerable financial success, and most noted that this was unexpected. However, the illustrator also noted that financially it was not as good as an advertising job for him personally so he explicitly looked for other measures of success. The project was also a success in terms of app downloads, good critical reviews and it won several awards for its writing, storytelling and gaming aspects. The document analysis showed that most of the awards and reviews within the first year of launch were from gaming websites and organisations but there was one digital book award and good reviews in book publishing press. Where it won accolades in general press, it is still under a game category.

While the illustrator acknowledges the awards were part of the reward for him there were many other interesting and more personal aspects of the project that made him feel it had been highly successful. These included the freedom he had to get involved, the developer's openness to suggestions, feeling part of the team and the fact the team were 'super nice'; this all contributed to the learning he got from the project which was imperative for him: 'that is also really rewarding for me they are brilliant people as they hire people and I learnt a lot from them' (C1P3:9).



Both the composer and the illustrator also noted pride in the project itself and what it achieved: they acknowledged the creative success of the project in terms of making a book app that was really clever, original and effective. The illustrator in particular noted that this type of game book he felt was innovative as it broached the boundary between game and book; he commented that the project managed to preserve aspects of 'bookness' despite the gaming elements and this could be seen by the fact that non-gamers enjoyed playing/reading it (C1P3:9).

The publisher also commented on many of these features of success. The publisher summarised his view: the project brought in strong financial returns, had high volume sales, good critical reception from both user and professionals and was award winning in both book and game environments. But he also commented that they were all just simply very happy with it: it achieved the vision, 'they absolutely nailed it' (C1P1:10). And furthermore, his final measure of success was about being seen to be a forward-thinking publisher (C1P1:1). The innovative nature of the project was therefore a key aspect for him.

## **Risk**

Notwithstanding the actual success of the project it did involve taking some level of risk. The publisher noted that this risk was not very large from his point of view. The project had to be proposed and be accepted by a publishing committee which limited the risk so it only had to break even. The publisher stated that, 'it was high on my priority list but on the organisation as a whole, sadly and unfortunately low' (C1P1:7). On a more positive note he added that the company was 'relatively... open minded and that does help in cutting through an amount of bureaucracy compared to large publishing groups' (C1P1:7); but there is a caveat as a company cannot undertake many of these sorts of unusual projects and so 'one has to bring only the things you really think make a difference' to the acquisitions meetings (C1P1:7).

In retrospect the publisher noted that they would have put more financial resources in if they had realised how successful it was going to be. Conversely it occurred to him, also, that if that risk had been predicted then the digital developer would not have needed a publisher to be involved. This sort of balance of risk is important in terms of encouraging innovation. While the digital developer worked semi-autonomously to produce a well-regarded and impressive product, the sharing of the risk was important to ensure that the project could come to fruition in the first place. However, the publisher stated that their role was reasonably passive, especially given in the end they were able to benefit from a significant financial return. What he recognised was that, for him, the risk really lay less in the finance but more in whether it was actually possible to achieve the vision, which he regarded as an ‘insanely intricate puzzle to put together’ (C1P1:10).

The composer and illustrator at no point expressed worry that this might not work as a concept; the fact that they were working to project briefs for fixed fees was probably partly the reason for this: they had no financial investment in the project. The publisher had more recognition of the challenges of the project and recognised that it might not be achievable. His closeness to the project and his closer understanding of game development might have been a reason for this; he had a much more acute sense of the developmental risk the project took on, which reflects a certain subtlety in the position noted earlier of ‘junior partner’. As he outlines his reservations he states: ‘it was just a total punt. Either it is going to go nowhere and it is too bonkers and it is too difficult to build or it will actually really work’ (C1P1:3). The publisher therefore acknowledged that, while in hindsight they would have invested a lot more, that was only with hindsight.

### **Publisher views of the collaboration and experimentation**

The publisher noted that while his role had been small, this sort of involvement was a very effective way of experimenting and innovating digital projects. Providing financial and moral support was important; as they would not expect to be very technologically expert in house, working with external people proved an important way to keep innovating. He recognised however that this is unusual in publishing: ‘I don’t know many people who have had quite this type of involvement.’ (C1P1:14). The publisher also commented that developing really focused projects like this, which the publisher supports financially, ‘actually does play to some of the strengths a publisher has so it is definitely worth doing more’ (C1P1:13).

The publisher reflected that a publisher’s attitude to digital development is important for projects such as these. He saw this as a ‘broadening of collaborative partners’ (C1P1:14) which could be used for further projects in different ways; he also recognised that the first project they did together was very different from the second. In that sense the publisher plays a part which is not dissimilar to a broker role in network activity as he has to have ‘an open mind to do something different’ (C1P1:14). He commented on his role in this sense: ‘I wouldn’t say there was really any skill at all, a lot of it is just luck and a bit of diplomacy’ (C1P1:13). While the publisher did not (and could not) make the book app in house, having someone in the company open to such projects, who is able in-house to steer projects through to find financial backing, following a fairly informal process, is important; this helps the publishing company to undertake innovative and exciting experiments. So, while the publisher had a supporting role with the project, in fact, within the publishing company he played the role of the broker role who can bring projects to the publishers and make them happen.

### **Value of the project to the creative participants**

The creative participants looked at the project differently from the publisher. The composer noted that his main learning from the collaboration was to charge more for his work. He recognised the success of the project afterwards; that made him realise how integral to the project the music was and so he would have a better understanding of its value on another project. The publisher noted also that the developer would also probably negotiate a different sort of deal with the publisher if they had realised how successful it would be (C1P1:8), though he notes that, at the time, it did seem like a very fair deal on both sides. This reflects the unpredictable nature of these sorts of projects; this makes it difficult to work out the risk and financial rewards accurately; this theme emerged in later case studies both with the educational project and the academic project.

The illustrator commented on the symbolic value of the project to him. The recognition that followed on from success of the project was important to both composer and illustrator; it helped their reputations to be associated with a famous project. As the latter noted, people came up to him at a conference to say: ‘that game was so good it changed my life’ and he continued: ‘there is no money that give you satisfaction of people coming to you and saying that kind of thing....for me it is one of the most successful projects I have been on in my professional career in terms of recognition and satisfaction’. (C1P3:9)

### **Learning and Creativity**

The participants also commented on the creativity of the project in their own views. The composer noted that the project was creative in the way he would expect; so, in that sense it was not any more creative than any other project where he would develop the musical elements. Nor was it a long project for him: ‘most of their problems had been solved and the

only problem they had was that they didn't have the music so I came in and solved that'(C1P2:6). This collaborator worked in the way of a traditional creative freelancer.

This was different for the illustrator. As he described the research process in developing the aesthetic concepts for the project, it is clear that he had free reign to develop his creative input as he wanted. Due to his inquisitive personality and his seniority, he became more involved in the project's wider creative process. He provided the developer with options on how to manage the budget (as outlined above). He also looked at ways to visualise the navigation. On navigation he used visual language to help the user understand how they were moving through the narrative. In this way creative solutions were developed through the operation of the collaboration.

The illustrator also describes the creative response to the brief in terms of developing a specific look for which he subsequently coined a term 'ethno punk' (C1P3:7). He stated that the project team wanted to avoid developing a game that looked generic and appeared to be following a trend (C1P3:6). The creative process was therefore given an extra impetus to ensure it had a coherent style that still reflected the original novel, the historical context in which it was situated and the new game environment in such a way that would resonate with gamers. (C1P3:7). The illustrator described his approach to the creative brief which involved a lot of research, more than would have been covered by what the developers offered as a fee. The creative challenge, however, appears to have been a strong motivator for the illustrator.

Learning through creative problem solving like this was an extremely important aspect of the project for the illustrator as he noted: 'I really love working with people and I learn from them' (C1P3:9). This emphasis comes from a career working in different environments. The publisher's learning was much more focused on the way the project team

worked: he observed the deep commitment and highly skilled approach they took, ‘you can’t fake that kind of thing (C1P1:6)’; the project ended up being very successful in his view because it was ‘just really, really good’ (C1P1:6). In examining how that happened the publisher recognised that expertise, commitment, hard work and clear ambitious vision were at the heart of the success (C1P1:6). The finished product reflected this: ‘every single aspect of the product is incredibly creative...this is saturated with creativity’ (C1P1:12). One further notable aspect of learning for the publisher was about the developer’s approach to the story. It made the publisher realise that ‘the game audience is much more sophisticated at understanding these new ways of telling stories and engaging with them than a traditional audience’ (C1P1:4).

## **8.6 Conclusion**

The central themes from Case One centre on creativity and collaboration. Certain aspects of the project could only be solved because everyone worked in a collaborative way. Only by collaborating could they reach some of the solutions. They needed a diverse team of people to come together and to work informally and openly together where everyone could put forward ideas: for instance, the illustrator solved one of the user experience problems: ‘some of the things that were tricky aspirations in terms of usability were finally solved by visual resources and that came from visual insights and suggestions’ (C1P3:5). If the illustrator had worked very autonomously or the developers worked in a less democratic way, he might not have been able to suggest a solution which ultimately became a key visual and experiential aspect of the project. As the illustrator noted, ‘they were really stuck in programming and interaction and how to make it...my job was offering that idea and they implemented it’ (C1P3:6). This creative approach improved the project; his input was therefore integral to the

project's success and it was garnered for two main reasons: the openness to collaboration on behalf of the developers and the collaborative confidence of the illustrator.

The writer also acknowledged that the collaborative environment led to creative solutions: her advice was to 'use your team's creativity' (C1V1). Even though the composer did not contribute as much to the project, he too has extended his involvement by building a longer piece for the game that could be used for the trailer and made a more coherent musical link. Everyone played a role in the end product. The illustrator summed up the project as one that brought together artistic references, the gaming aspect and the story telling side: 'what was particularly creative was the way we articulated all those things together' (C1P3:10)

There was clearly a match between the culture in which the collaboration operated and the keenness of the participants to bring their different skills and experience to the collaboration. This was particularly true of the illustrator. He took on characteristics of the creative broker role in his ability to cross over and understand different working and collaborative environments; he spoke the gaming language, the visual language and the commercial project management language that ensured his involvement became quite pivotal in certain aspects of the project. In a small team it appears this sort of person, even though a creative freelancer, can play an important part in developing the creativity and extending the project to achieve more than it might have done; the tight budget somewhat forced this to happen as there was no room for hierarchies nor lots of formal project management activity which can make participants feel distant. The small size of the team also meant the vision could be clearly developed and the elements, contributed by the different participants could come together in a very cohesive way.

The publisher comments as well that this level of commitment throughout the collaboration led to its creative and successful outcome; everyone was dedicated to the project: ‘a kind of deep love and understanding for an area is important for making a good product in that area – I think that is the main lesson I learned’ (C1P1:13). The writer in the video clip supported this saying that one of the reasons for its success was the team’s interest and focus about every aspect of the game; ‘[we gave] a shit about every single little thing, but especially about the things that players don’t even know that they want’ (C1V1). Her comments reflect the commitment of the people involved as she advised that for successful projects you should ‘work with someone you think is good, work with people who you think are talented, work with people who care’ (C1V1). This echoes comments from the survey about trusting partners and finding out who you can work with effectively. In talking about creativity, the publisher also stated that ‘there is no short cut to that you’ve either got really good people working really well and working well together or you haven’t.’ (C1P1:12)

There appears to have been almost a sort of alchemy that emerged from the collaboration. This was articulated in different ways. The illustrator said ‘I can keep talking about this project for hours as it was a really big and intensive experience... it was a kind of strange astral trajectory [his word] of elements that align a group of people... I would like all projects to be like that in my professional career’ (C1P3:11). The publisher also recognised something special had happened: ‘it is a very unique set of ingredients to [try and] replicate’ (C1P1:12). While it was successful in many ways, this points to the uniqueness of each collaboration and there is an implication that ways to sustain this sort of approach to collaboration may be challenging.



## **Chapter 9 Case Two - Educational interactive textbook**

### **9.1 Overview to the case study**

This case study examines a collaboration between a publisher and an arts organisation to produce a series of texts for the English GCSE. The products are available in three formats, print textbooks, online and ebooks. The online and ebooks are particularly resource rich: they make use of a range of different materials from the arts organisation including textual, photographic, audio and video materials. The product is also highly integrated: for example, the textual material is linked to the video footage.

The collaboration primarily involved two organisations, the publisher and the arts organisation. At the start of the project there was one main participant on the publisher side who worked closely with the educational department at the arts organisation to set the project in motion. A number of individual freelancers were contracted by the publisher; in order to ensure the rigour of the educational aspects of the products and link them to examinations and syllabi, expert writers and contributors were brought in; a central freelance role was required to coordinate these individuals.

When the project was in motion, departments at the publisher end, such as editorial and production, were involved in processing text, images and resources: they were not closely tied to the central project team. These roles operated as they would normally within the usual workflow of the publisher (e.g. proof reading, typesetting etc.). The senior management teams of the publisher and the arts organisations were aware of the project and acted as distant stakeholders who supported the project, but let the collaboration operate autonomously; this would not be atypical but projects are more often managed in-house.

The project was jointly run and a contract was in place to outline the arrangements between the two organisations. The products were branded to both companies. The production, schools marketing and financial aspects were overseen by the publisher. The arts organisation worked on repurposing audio/visual resources they held; they generated new textual content along with the freelance educational writers hired by the publisher. They supported the publisher on marketing and gained financial reward for their involvement.

### Data for the case study

The number of participants at the centre of the project was small. Four members led the project at its start. For the case study these four people were interviewed as outlined in table 9.1.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Case number</b>	<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Reference for citations *</b>	<b>Reference as used in chapter</b>
Publisher & digital lead	Publisher	C2	P1	C2P1	Publisher
Education specialist	Freelance	C2	P2	C2P2	Freelance
Education department lead	Arts organisation	C2	P3	C2P3	Arts educationalist
Business developer	Arts organisation	C2	P4	C2P4	Arts project manager

\*The reference numbers refer to the transcripts and in the text the page number of the transcript is included.

### **Table 9.1 Table of interviewees for Case Two**

Some supporting data was collected and analysed. This included material made available from the start of the project that focused on vision and articulation of aims and partnership; this is referenced in the text at *C2 Presentation*. The marketing materials and press releases (which were primarily web-based) at the launch were also examined to see if they articulated aspects of the collaboration and partnership. The marketing information, which was limited, did not provide insight specifically useful to this research beyond noting that the publisher and the arts organisation used different vocabulary when promoting the texts (see appendix nine p438).

### **Case study presentation**

This chapter uses interview and content data to examine the collaboration in four ways. As with chapter eight, this will first examine the characteristics of the collaboration to determine which type of partnership it appears to be, within the typology laid out by Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij (2014). It will then examine the behaviour of the collaboration through the three stages as before (formation, operation and outcomes) to test aspects of network and collaboration theory.

### **9.2 Type of collaboration**

As with Case One, this collaboration appeared to fit the entrepreneurial type of collaboration as laid out by Kaats and Opheij (2014). They identify entrepreneurial collaborations as those that involve different organisations who want to develop both innovatively and competitively. Often an entrepreneurial-styled collaboration leads to the development of a new type of

product or approach (Kaats and Opheij 2014:27). The publisher and the arts organisation recognised they could not do this alone: They recognised that they are ‘unable to renew on their own strength’ (Kaats and Opheij 2014:26).

Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij also state that the energy of an entrepreneurial collaboration ‘could be directed at anything: penetrating new markets, developing new products, developing new technologies.’ (2014:26). The ambition of the collaboration was to do all three. They wanted to develop a set of new digital products that would be commercially viable, using digital technology. The collaboration was aiming to solve the digital dilemma, as stated by the arts project manager about ‘how to make money out of digital materials.’ (C2P4:8). The arts project manager also noted, in terms of their ambition, ‘there could have been a break through’ (C2P4:9).

The collaboration was also focused on entering new markets, in this case a sector of the educational market. New learning emerges from an entrepreneurial collaboration (Kaats and Opheij 2014:26). In this case, by experimenting the organisations could develop a better understanding of the digital school’s market. Each party needs ‘a complementary partner’ (Kaats and Opheij 2014:26) with different strengths in order to develop new understanding; here the educational and pedagogic approach of the arts organisation was combined with the publisher’s understanding of school’s market. By pooling these strengths these two organisations could collaborate in order to learn more about the way digital materials can be made to work in teaching environments.

The participants believed that a new type of product did emerge from the collaboration and, in particular, a new approach to curriculum development. The arts project manager outlined the complexity, time and expense involved in developing pedagogic

approaches to curricula and stated that one key result of this collaboration was that ‘we made curriculum development work in an era when the schools council doesn’t hand out [money] a year for five years to work on the project’ (C2P4:10). This collaboration therefore fits the explorative type.

### **9.3 Forming stages**

#### **Partners – diversity and initial connection**

The way the collaboration was formed appeared to be critical to its subsequent operation and outcomes. One of the aspects of entrepreneurial collaborations is the range of different partners involved. In this case the collaboration was centred on two organisations rather than a wider range of partners; these two organisations, however, came from different sectors of the creative industries and had not collaborated with anyone from the other’s sector before; this reflects some diversity between partners. The publisher was used to working with authors and suppliers and so had clear structural approach to working with external individuals and companies; they were more used to collaborative environments. However, it had not worked with the arts organisation in such an in-depth way before. The arts organisation, as stated by the arts project manager ‘did not have any experience of successful collaborations’ (C2P4:4).

The project was initiated by the arts organisation. The arts educationalist noted that while sometimes organisations like theirs do endorse publishing projects by publishers, this collaboration was unique in the sector as it was regarded, from the first, as a joint venture (as evidenced by the preliminary *C2 presentation* documents). It was aimed to do something different and both the arts educationalist and the arts project manager noted that when looking for partners they were not looking for the usual sort of author publisher relationship (C2P3, C2P4). The arts educationalist said he ‘was not going to sell the birth right and [...] brand to an edition’ (C2P3:1), in other words put the arts logo and branding onto a

publisher's ready-made product. The arts project manager recognised that 'if we want to generate some money on publishing...[we] would need to think about the school's market', (C2P4:2). They decided to do so by determining what it was they wanted to produce first: 'we put together an internal memo which said we can do what we think is exciting and different and which we think [will have] a reasonable likelihood that the [texts] are commercial and easy for other people to follow' (C2P4 p 3).

The idea therefore emerged from the arts organisation side and they looked for a partner organisation after the initial concept had been developed. The proposal document stated on it that the arts organisation was looking for a number of things in a partner. The presentation stated:

- *preference would be for a formal joint venture, but may be willing to discuss other types of collaboration.*
- *A collaborative relationship during the development phase, with the partner bringing its own expertise (C2 Presentation)*

This illustrates the importance for the project that each partner brought its own areas of expertise and that the partnership should have collaborative approach. The arts project manager, in looking for partners, felt in the first instance there was only one publisher they could connect with, given that there were competitive texts already in the market. The arts project manager articulated in the proposal why they had identified their publisher of choice: this was based on an understanding of the competitive schools publishing environment, the digital platform the publisher already had and arts project manager's prior knowledge of the publisher. This suggests that in certain types of collaboration, the number of potential partners may be quite small but the match between partners is important.

## **Other participants**

The two central participants were the arts organisation and the publisher. The functional roles were generally centred at the publisher side (e.g. editorial, software design) while content development was focused on the arts organisation side. There were further people involved, working to prepare textual content or render content into digital formats, for instance; they were in-house staff or freelancers for either the arts organisation or the publisher. Both at the arts end and the publisher end there were people who undertook recognisable roles using specific expertise that they would have already employed within their own organisations, such as digital production; in this sense both organisations had teams of people who worked as they normally would, fulfilling their day to day roles; they conducted 'business as usual'.

There was a further group of people working on the project; they were the education experts who were freelance and were managed by the freelance specialist (C2P2). She commissioned them to write educational commentaries on the material so it was relevant to different exam boards; she stayed in touch with them and managed that side of the project. As she suggested, they had their own relationship with her and, through her, worked closely with the central team.

Once the collaboration between the publisher and the arts organisation was set up, the number of individuals involved in the main development of the project, i.e. the central project team, was quite small. The publisher and arts organisation representatives appeared to stay very connected which meant they were able to move the project forward and keep it on schedule. The arts educationalist stated that the publisher had worked very effectively with them: he said, 'in terms of the way they came into the room, joined the conversation, supported as much as they could, to the best of their abilities, the vision and scope, I think we [had] a very good publishing partner' (C2P3:4)

It was apparent that the environment in which both partners operated was reasonably homogenous (unlike Case One). While they came from different sectors of the creative industries (arts organisation and publishing) there were enough commonalities (e.g. around educational ethos, textual analysis, creativity around audio/visual materials) that meant the environment for the project was broadly recognizable to both; organisations operated in different ways under different demands but the focus of the work itself appeared to be mutually familiar territory. This supports the commentary from chapter five (p160), reflecting that there were shared characteristics, even while they came from different parts of the creative industries, that helped them connect effectively.

### **Networks and the formation of the partnership**

The networks of the individuals played an important role in bringing the partners together. Social capital was invested in the broker, who was the arts project manager, due to his long career straddling different industries. He was able to bring together the various participants in the project; this role appeared to act as a bridging point for the two organisations. He acted as a broker who helped to build trust on both sides; this was necessary to help the collaboration operate smoothly and meant there was limited conflict. This trust was first encapsulated in the initial partnership, based on the arts organisation side, between the arts educationalist and the arts project manager. In their interviews both outlined the way the arts project manager and the arts educationalist has become connected. The arts project manager had a background in running a department of an educational publishing house, had subsequently built a relationship with the arts organisation as a volunteer following retirement, and from that had gradually become more involved with the educational department, suggesting ideas for educational publishing projects (C2P3:1; C2P4:2).



It is clear this relationship developed over a number of years, concurrent to the development of the vision. The ideas did not take off immediately: when the arts project manager suggested that the arts educationalist could have a meeting with a publisher the educationalist remembers ‘my heart sank’ (C2P3:1); but later the arts project manager pursued it again and at that point the educationalist said: ‘I realised now with online that we really could excite texts in a new way’ (C2P3:2).

In network terms, the relationship between the arts educationalist and the arts project manager reflects a strong tie; this tie represented a level of trust that had built up between the arts educationalist and the project manager so that the former began to accept the latter’s view of the opportunities. This link was strong, even though each side represented two distinct backgrounds. This trust then appeared to spread along the network as the other partners became involved (the freelancer and the publishers); it maybe this which helped the collaboration operate very smoothly almost from the start. This trust allowed also meant that the partners could reach compromises over, for instance, marketing language.

While this central tie was very strong, the network operated more widely too. There were links between the arts project manager, publisher and freelancer which might be termed weak ties, but where there was a bridge (Granovetter, 1973:1364). The arts project manager noted how important the link to the publisher was: it was a loose tie in that the arts project manager did not previously know the publisher but knew *of* them. The publisher, by chance at that time, had both a digital role and a publishing role; as the arts project manager said ‘there’s one of those pieces of serendipity: there is someone who is responsible for the list whose heart is probably with the fantastic new things you can do with digital’ (C2P4:4). Additionally, the publisher noted that the project manager had been, while in education

publishing, 'my competitor for years' (C2P4:2); they knew of each other from different environments.

Similarly, the freelancer was working for the current publishing company but was brought because she had worked with the arts project manager at his educational publishing company in the past. The project manager saw that the freelancer 'knew the market backwards... the actual market backwards in the way [he himself] didn't'. The freelancer raises a point that because of the different prior connections between them all, the collaboration did not necessarily feel new, even though the configuration was new: the freelancer comments that 'it was new in the sense that I hadn't quite been involved as a freelancer with two different companies, but it didn't feel new because I was familiar with [the publishing company] and I was familiar with [the arts project manager]' (C2P2:4).

The number of people involved in this network here is small. However, the way the network behaves concurs with the way entrepreneurial networks operate: loose ties exist between participants and the broker brings them together through his strong ties with the different participants. The arts project manager acted as an important connector between the two organisations. It is consistent with network theory and the broker role (Borgatti and Lopez-Kidwell, 2011:9; Burt, 2004:388) that he was central to setting up the relationship and enabling trust to be established between partners.

### **Knowledge broker**

In this case, the arts project manager could be viewed also as a knowledge broker as they understood (and so had knowledge of) the arts organisation and the publishing sector. The broker was an expert in both fields having crossed over from one to the other: he was in a unique position to know both and could share his knowledge between them.

The arts educationalist noted that this person was central to the collaboration happening. He said ‘This is where we were amazingly, incredibly lucky and it wouldn’t have happened without him’ (C2P3:1). He continues to explain that the broker was able to understand ‘both languages’: in other words, the requirements that the publisher had, and demands and ethos of the arts organisations. He says:’ so that is where we were very fortunate, he had his foot in both camps’ (C2P3 p2). The broker understood both fields of operation and so could be regarded as someone who can interpret for both organisations. Because of this the arts project manager was regarded as an extremely unusual person. The publisher, freelancer and arts educationalist all mention the words ‘fortunate’ ‘lucky’ and ‘serendipity’ when talking about him and even the project manager himself says ‘It is just so odd that there was a person with history in both camps’ (C2P4:6) echoing the arts educationalist’s words.

The publisher noted a particular skill that the arts project manager had: he was ‘pragmatic’. The publisher regarded this as important because he saw the arts educationalist as an academic, ‘who thinks in very high level terms’ (C2P4:4) so the broker (the arts project manager) was able to bridge between gap between the highly academic approach of the arts organisations and the publisher’s approach to the schools market. The broker role became important as he developed a vision for the project that appealed to both partners and therefore could be successfully adopted by both partners. The broker here translated what one organisation says to another and recognised the different, sometime diverging, demands of the two operations throughout the collaboration. It appeared that both sides trusted the broker to undertake this bridging role; as the publisher noted, this helped the project through a ‘process of osmosis’ as they developed a formula that worked for both organisations’ (C2P1:4).

The publisher regarded the arts educationalist as a broker but saw a subsidiary broker role within the project. He said that the freelancer was also a kind of broker as she was central to the fact the publisher made the connection with the project manager in the first place; she also connected to the wider orbit of freelance educational writers. There was, therefore, also a different sort of broker role apparent in this collaboration. The publisher saw the collaboration as the work of three partners all playing a different role in the way the project came together: the idea came from the arts project manager; the freelancer was the broker directly connecting organisations; and the publisher's own role was to engage with both of them. His responsiveness to the people involved was as important as those proposing the connection and the idea. In this way, any broker role is only as strong as the engagement from other parties and so ties in the network need to operate both ways to be fruitful.

### **The project vision**

As with Case One, the development of a strong and clear vision was central to the project. The vision focused on building an innovative set of texts: the vision combined the resources and education approach of the arts organisation with an online environment that made texts exciting, engaging and dynamic created by the publisher. All key parties understood it from the start and this appeared to make the operation of the collaboration straight forward. This was particularly apparent in the way all those interviewed gave a consistent picture of the aims of the project.

The Publisher described the project outlining that by using the assets of the arts organisation they could make books that were dynamic: 'the whole vision [was to] mesh together the text and the pedagogy, and ... translate [it] to digital'(p1). He acknowledged the importance and richness of the content; the arts organisation had a 'big archive that you could leverage – that to me was the most valuable thing of all' (C2P1:4). The freelancer described

the project as combining the expertise of the two organisations; the idea was to publish books for secondary schools using the approach to text of the arts organisation, an approach ‘that the students find incredibly engaging’ (C2P2:1). For the arts educationalist the vision was that ‘we really could excite texts in a new way by having an online equivalent’ (C2P3:2) while the arts project manager said the idea was to ‘produce a teaching tool that says ... this text is dynamic’(C2P4:3). He recognised what the publisher had noted, that ‘we had a glorious collection’ of resources which they wanted to be commercial as well as educational’ (C2P4:3) which they realised they needed a commercial organisation to help them. The vision combined the resources of the organisation and their educational approach, with an online environment that made texts exciting, engaging and dynamic. This seemed to be clear to all the participants as they outlined the project and they used similar vocabulary to describe the vision.

### **Vision formation and vision sharing**

Reaching a coherent shared vision however took a few steps. The first articulation of the concept was centred at the arts organisation end. The arts educationalist and the arts manager describe the process of reaching the vision in some detail and it appears to have been some time in development.

Several circumstances noted by both the arts educationalist and the arts project manager influenced the development of the project idea. The arts educationalist stated that there was a ‘convergence of things’ (C2P3:). These were:

- observation of the market and product range of the education book sector (C2P3:1)
- ‘a coming of age’ in the vision of the arts organisation which began looking for new opportunities (C2P3:2)

- a consolidation of the organisation's internet presence which has developed well ahead of many competitors and has also 'come of age' (C2P3:3)
- a recognition of the opportunities technology could now offer (C2P3:2, P4 :2)
- enough resources having been built up by that stage to provide depth and comparative materials (C2P4:3)
- a frustration with existing materials (C2P3:3)
- an understanding of the richness of this content by participants (C2P4:3)
- concurrently observing the development of the publisher's own digital strategy, platform and expertise (C2P3:3)

By the time the publisher and the arts organisation connected up formally, the vision was highly evolved. As such, the vision rested with one side more than the other.

The knowledge of publishing that the arts project manager had helped the educationalist's vision become tangible; then the arts project manager became the broker of that vision to the publisher and specialist freelancer as they came on board. In this way the publisher and freelancer could be described as vision stakeholders and the continued to develop the vision. The arts organisation led the vision at the start so that it could be articulated effectively to the publishers: the publisher then refined the vision in relation to the digital platform they already had; because the platform had particular features they could extend the vision of what was possible for a digital text. The publisher and the freelancer refined the vision, using their expertise; as the publisher notes: 'we sort of brainstormed really around what the project might look like and how it could be unique.....we went through various iterations but arrived at a kind of formula' (C2P1:1). The freelancer noted it was a 'balancing act of trying to meet the different markets needs and keep the freshness and

energy of what was being done...Seeing how we could match up what they could provide with what we knew would work in the classroom' (C2P2:2).

The complexity of the product that emerged rested in the combination of the two organisations' pedagogic approaches. The publisher stated 'I was dealing with an institution that had a very specific way of viewing teaching' (C2P1:2). The freelancer faced this issue in particular; 'I was involved in seeing how we could match up what the [arts institution] could provide with what would work in the classroom for GCSE, mapping it against the specifications which were just coming out at that stage – so it was quite tricky to do because all these specifications were quite different as usual' (C2P2:2). She also noted that complexity lay in the fact the project was 'working to the mission statement of the arts organisation' whereas, from a purely educational publisher's point of view, they would have gone about the mapping differently (C2P2:2). As the freelancer noted, the publisher was trying to put some structures around the arts organisation's concept that made the texts manageable for teachers: the publishers were aware some teachers would not have time to be very proactive and the texts had to appeal to different sorts of markets within the school sector. However, the different approaches to pedagogy that emerged from the partnership was one of the reasons that made the project distinctive: the approaches 'complemented' each other.

The knowledge broker (the arts project manager) remained central to managing this complexity and ensuring the central vision was not lost: the freelancer notes he was 'brilliant and conceiving what this might be and holding together all the different parts of it' (C2P2:2). This strength of vision continued through the project. While the idea for the texts originated at one side, due to these iterations, it was owned across the team. The publisher felt the vision was equally shared by everybody (C2P1:4) and he later continued that the project 'was

absolutely consultative all the way' (C2P1:5). The freelancer also stated: 'everyone knew where they needed to go with it to make it work' (C2P1:6). The different participants saw the opportunity and ended up thinking along similar lines: the freelancer said 'we saw the potential of working together. We all had the building blocks in place and we had a group of people who were genuinely thinking the same way (pause) most of the time' (C2P2:4).

### **Vision sharing to the wider organisation**

The central team had a strong view of what the project was trying to achieve. They needed to share the vision across their own organisations at the higher level where investment might be required, and with those other staff members who might be involved in later product development stages.

Through the interviews two moments are recorded where the organisations refer the project to their own internal organisational hierarchies. For the arts organisation, the arts project manager outlines how he and the educationalist put together an internal memo for the organisation so they could get agreement to proceed. Similarly, the publisher also talks about taking this to those higher in the organisation; they made a proof of concept for the digital version to demonstrate to their division and took it to the digital board: 'it was really just a way of showing what was an opportunity and a threat' the publisher notes' (C2P1:2). The impression is that the process of taking the project to the board of directors in both cases was mostly straight forward and the organisations were both comfortable leaving the decisions to the main participants thereafter. This may be partly due to the high level of the individuals involved; they were seen as expert in their areas and so their boards allowed them to act autonomously; a somewhat informal and consultative approach appears to be in place at both organisations allowing these sorts of projects to move swiftly. In both cases control structures higher up the organisations are not mentioned again after these initial stages. Decision-



making in this sense was divested to the collaborative team, which is very similar to Case One.

There is also a local development of the vision. As the publisher noted his company had a vision around ‘plugging a gap in the portfolio’ (C2P1:12), a goal which was specific to the publisher. Companies can have their own objectives, but as noted by Kaats and Opheij this needs to dovetail with the project vision: ‘the shared ambition of the partnership has to be one that is important to all the participating organisations and in line with their organisational strategies’ (Kaats and Opheij, 2014:43). The strength of the shared vision is critical for keeping up momentum: ‘if partners can keep the ambition of the partnership alive and beckoning, it becomes a source of inspiration with a mobilising effect’ (Kaats and Opheij, 2014:57).

### **Developing the partnership**

The arrangements of the partnership were set up in formal terms straight away with a contract. There was an outline of the way the partners could work together in the initial presentation from the arts organisation. The arts project manager recognised that this was going to be an important part of operating effectively and, because he knew both organisations, he was able to construct a contract and subsequent working practices that would be acceptable to both. He started with a traditional framework for a publishing agreement contract but this was swiftly adjusted to accommodate different issues for the collaboration. It included an outline of working processes that was specific to that project such as a plan for stakeholder meetings and sign off procedures. The contract accommodated aspects of the collaboration that meant it moved beyond a transactional arrangement. The project structure that was set up was specific to this project and sat outside of the normal arrangements of the publishing house. This may suggest that one way to manage creative

collaborations effectively is to set up separate, flexible working arrangements that allow projects to fit alongside a publisher's normal workflow.

The publisher said they had to 'model' the arrangement as 'it wasn't your traditional kind of partnership (C2P1: 2). The project manager also noted 'we talked about it as a joint venture, we set it up with a conventional contract and tweaked it in the most extraordinary and creative way. A virtual joint venture but with none of the bureaucracy that would normally come with a joint venture' (C2P4:6). In doing so, the project manager also admitted that both organisations had to trust each other (C2P4:6). This was summarised by the arts educationalist in the statement that 'as long as you have that shared vision about what the edition is seeking to achieve, which we did, ... it was a tight team that has absolute shared values and a shared mission and that is what has given strength to it [the collaboration]' (C2P4:6). The contract therefore embodied the relationship between the partners and their shared ambition.

## **9.4 Operation**

### **Project management, steering committee and decision-making**

Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij's entrepreneurial model notes the importance of clear procedures for operation and decision-making together with good levels of autonomy and clear mutual commitment through the activity of the project (Kaats and Opheij, 2014:27). This collaboration spent some time focusing on vision development and creating clear goals to ensure strong levels of buy-in and a shared vision. Once in motion the processes that were planned at the start proved to be very effective. It was a complex project and some of the key staff changed while other staff who worked on specific aspects, such as copy editing, were bought in as needed. It therefore had the potential to be chaotic but the participants did not consider there were any major problems as the project came to fruition. A clear articulation of

the project appears to have been critical to maintaining continuity as it moved through various stages and teams.

The collaboration was managed in carefully defined project management terms with systems set up by the arts project manager at the start: ‘we set up a steering committee which would have equal numbers. Representatives (From both companies) chaired by me which would be the way the decisions would be made and that was part of the original proposals’ (C2P4:4). The process of decision making was thought through by the arts project manager partly because he recognised that the arts organisation was not good at collaborating: he told the educationalist ‘you can’t run this the way you guys normally behave’ (C2P4:4). Making decisions through the formality of the steering committee ensured the organisations would accept that they would need to confer and ‘couldn’t just say “we know everything - these people have just got to take our vision”’ (C2P4:5). It reflects a recognition in the partnership that each side had decisions for which they should be properly responsible, but that they would need to bring these to the meeting ensure agreement, keeping the process consultative. The project manager stated his reasoning for this that: ‘there is always going to be a lot of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in these sorts of relationships but if you feel that the other side are making decisions away from you, you can start to demonise them and the thing can become more adversarial; if all the decisions theoretically have to be made around the joint table ... things can work’ (C2P4:5).

There were some issues that caused more problems than others: the project manager notes: ‘we had an interesting month on typography’ (C2P4:5) but from the interviews these occasions appeared rare on both sides. The freelancer summarises the process ‘we all input into what might work and work best.... we had regular meetings with all the different stakeholders...so we were able to put all the different configurations in and make decisions

accordingly' (C2P2:2). The arts project manager confirmed the process: 'those steering committee meeting were reasonably formally chaired, with written proposals from each of the major decision and it turned out to be a very successful way of making decisions and finding the compromises around the things that were difficult' (C2P4:4). Other participants noted that the project manager was critical for the process: the freelancer notes 'it was free of ..complication because of him, he is the lynchpin' (C2P2:11). The steering committee approach could reflect one of the conditions for successful cooperation outlined by Kaats and Ophelij: 'create enabling conditions for real dialogue' (2014:59).

### **Autonomy and trust**

Success also seems to have been invested in the fact the participants acted autonomously of their own organisations. The researcher asked how far it felt important for the individuals in the committee to have autonomy to make decisions and the project manager concurred it was important that they were at an appropriate level of seniority. Participants were high up in their organisations and mostly, or entirely, given authority by their organisations to take decisions. As the publisher noted 'we don't need to go through 'x' number of committees to get there' (C2P1:10) and the arts educationalist said: 'so yes the team has autonomy. I am just one of the team'. (C2P3:6).

The steering committee had the confidence to be flexible and the necessary authority to finalise decisions once discussions had taken place. This helped the project move swiftly. Everyone interviewed reflected that the committee meetings had been central way of communicating; they were underpinned by recognition of, and trust in each other's expertise, and that had helped lead to a productive collaborative approach. Some of these aspects of the steering committee and its decision making were articulated by the publisher: 'you couldn't go off and debate, it was shared from the beginning' (C2P1:7). He notes that 'You have to

have all the stakeholders there, people who are looking at different perspectives.... they have to be the people who can make the decisions yes' (C2P1:12).

This autonomy seemed to mean the iterative and creative process of the project developed smoothly. The steering committee could be regarded as the central part of the project ecology; the meetings provided a stable point of contact and continuity for the collaboration which was important; this meant that future developments became much easier: as the project manager noted: 'once you have done everything once, the 'steering committee' becomes significantly less important; in the second or third year of the project we probably only met once or twice because it has done its job' (C2P4:5).

### **Key workers and 'business as usual'**

The vision forming did not involve wider teams at each organisation and project workers on both sides (e.g. proof readers, data managers) stayed within their own spheres of working. There were people who might be described as key workers who supported the vision for the project. They had specific roles, autonomy and expertise of their own. The external team of education writers operated independently of both organisations but they needed to be aware of the vision in order to produce the appropriate content. They were managed by the freelance specialist; she appeared to act as knowledge broker to this team and she connected to them as satellites to the project. They needed to be kept linked to the overall vision as specialists and the freelancer was continuously interpreting the vision with the education aspect in mind. The freelancer, therefore, also had a role as a vision manager in ensuring those people were on task and understood the overall vision: she notes 'it was actually a very integrated project with a number of strands coming together in a glorious way' (C2P2:6).

It was less necessary for the related functional roles who operated in-house to buy into the holistic vision for product. They were not required to articulate the vision in detail as they undertook their different activities (e.g. editorial, rendering digital files, proofing, making the technical specification) and the project was slotted into their workflow in standard ways; for instance, when a piece of content needed copy editing it would be inserted into the standard schedules. It appeared as if they were running two organisational approaches alongside each other: one being the project specifically and the other the day to day workflow for their on-going publishing activities. As the publisher noted the project ‘went through the standard production run throughs, scheduling monitoring of progress, monitoring of money, all the checks and balances you would apply to a normal textbook project’ (C2P1:9).

## **9.5 Outcomes**

### **Assessments of success**

The participants were all asked what they considered were the measures of success for the project and then commented on how successful they felt it actually was. A variety of measures emerged which reflects the nature of entrepreneurial collaborations where the outcomes cannot all be projected. The digital textbooks themselves were an obvious outcome but views about how to measure the success of the collaboration beyond this were varied. Positive statements ranged around timing and quality of the product: the publisher noted ‘It came out a bit late but it wasn’t horrific.....I think it is very good quality’ (C2P1:11) while the freelancer said ‘It achieved what it set out to achieve and did a kind of good blend of all those things; a fantastically rich product and, I think for the people who used it, if you look at the reviews,... there is a lot of enthusiasm about it’ (C2P2:6)

For some of the participants the quality of the product was central: the arts educationalist noted that other publishers were copying their approach: ‘I am very flattered

proud they (competitors) are imitating us' (C2P3:10). He adds: 'I think we care deeply about them and we spent a ludicrous amount of time on them from our team, but I think that was worthwhile' (C2P3:10). While he admits the arts organisation wanted more financial return for the time spent, they acknowledge the exceptional quality of the product was a result of this time. The publisher particularly noted the hand-crafted nature of the digital versions, the beauty of the materials and effectiveness of the pedagogy. Both the publisher and the educationalist note that they were pleased to enter into a competitive market with an exciting product, the latter stating that he felt the products had revolutionised the schools' textbook market (C2P3:5).

There were also comments on the nature of the partnership and operation of the project. The project manager commented that 'practically it could not have gone better; we found two organisations who were willing to make compromises; I mean sometimes there was a lot of banging of tables and certainly shouting outside the room, if not inside, but we got there' (C2P3:9). For the publisher the ongoing relationship was strong: it was 'a highly valued partnership' (C2P1:11)

The consideration of financial goals showed they were less confident that they had achieved what they had hoped, notwithstanding it had appeared to be financially sound; it did break even at this first stage but there was some feeling it had underperformed. The arts educationalist said that 'in terms of meeting our objective be it financial or pedagogical we did a bit, but not as much as we might have done' (C2P4:9). The arts project manager noted that 'I think it fulfils most of its educational goals certainly hasn't hit its sales goals' (C2P4:6).

The publisher voiced a more subtle point that, while financially it was not an overwhelming success, the collaboration as a whole was regarded in a positive light: it was

‘A success on many levels; I think it has not been as successful financially as we would have liked, but I think that is not going to be the case in the long term.... it is a very valuable partnership and it is regarded as success when we talk about it; we talk about it in good terms,, there is no bad vibe at all’ (C2P1:11).

The measurement of success was therefore not judged purely in financial terms but by a variety of other things. This concurs with the Kaats and Opheij (2014) view of an entrepreneurial collaboration and is suggestive of this being a different sort of collaboration than traditional transactional ones.

### **Collaborative compromises and missed opportunities**

While no major aspects of conflict were raised by the participants, there was some reflection on compromises that were made. This was expected: as the arts educationalist noted he saw the two partners as reflecting a Venn diagram: ‘you have to hope there is enough of a crossover of interest that satisfies both partners and their needs.... you have to have that shared mission, not mission, our missions are different, but the goals have to be common enough and I suppose one learns that all the time’ (C2P3:10). What everyone mentioned on the project was the compromise that had necessarily to be made between expectations of the education books market place (and its own market operations around curriculum, teaching, budgetary demands) and the arts organisation aspirations. These different approaches appeared to be mediated by the broker and led to some disappointments on both sides. Each side felt it had not quite pushed their own point of view as hard as they might.

The publisher describes making compromises over the demands of the education market, for instance, by not providing as much analysis for specific exams as they would have liked (C2P1:12). The arts educationalist was disappointed by the limitations in the way



the project was described in marketing material and on the cover as it focused on using the language of the education market, which he termed as ‘publishing speak’ (C2P3:5). He continued: ‘the only frictions that arose to my memory were around the cover illustrations and that was more to do with language on the cover ...that was the friction... inevitably there is a compromise’ (C2P3:6). The publisher wanted to direct the books more towards the education market, while the arts organisation was uncomfortable with what they felt was a simplification of certain aspects of the product. This is a possible downside to the collaboration as neither side felt they pushed the experiment as far as they might have; instead both felt a little compromised on aspects of the project where they diluted their usual approach to accommodate the other party; that might have had an effect on the product’s quality.

They both agreed more market research on usage would have been valuable. It was partly because of timing that this did not happen. The publisher noted he wanted ‘more evidence from the classroom’ (C2P1:4) and the project manager felt they had overestimating how much time the teachers spent on teaching the texts in class (C2P4:6). They both acknowledged that the project would have benefitted from planning more closely around the GCSE curriculum timing (C2P1:12 and C2P4:6). The second editions came out at the time of curriculum change and fared better (C2P4:6).

### **Leaps of faith and risk taking.**

The arts project manager said ‘both organisations had to take a big leap of faith’ (C2P4:6) in coming together which is suggestive of risk. He goes on to consider the ‘cutting edge’ and the ‘bleeding edge’ of innovating around a project; he notes that they were attempting to steer the project so that it was at the forefront of textbook development, but at the same time was not too vulnerable to the risk of it failing. For him this process of steering between the innovation

and the risk was ‘a series of judgement calls’ and he comments ‘we probably got too many of them wrong’ (C2P4:9). He made the most sober and pessimistic review of the project and the risks it took. This may be because he felt responsible to both organisations having brought them together; because the broker speaks both the language of the arts organisation and the language of the publisher, he was perhaps more sensitive to some perceived failures for both organisations.

The sense of risk taking and possible failure appears to be centred on the financial returns, though no large financial targets for success were explicitly set up at the start. Nevertheless, the areas of disappointment that different participants mentioned still tended focus on this financial risk aspect. The arts educationalist for instance, implied that there was a lack of entrepreneurial spirit in the publisher; he described a different approach to the market taken by a German seller who funded a loss leader for the German market: he noted the German seller ‘is not a publisher... what he wants is publishing madness but he says he doesn’t give a shit, this is what I need to engage with teachers....He says forget the pennies, forget the pounds, I want teachers to be happy. Extraordinary’ (C2P3:7). This also suggests a sort of compromise; both parties in the collaboration kept to what they knew and did not necessarily respond to each other’s suggestions and ideas in a creative way. The arts organisation felt that there could have been opportunities to be entrepreneurial, but the publishers did not experiment as much as they could have done. The publisher used their usual ways to sell and manage risk rather than take an opportunity to try something different. This might have been influenced by the fact they were having to generate financial return for the arts organisation and so needed to manage costs carefully. However, it is possible that they missed the opportunity to be creative; they did not take the risk to learn from the partner organisation’s view of the situation.

This reflects a sense of disjointedness about the project, despite the fact everyone agreed that outcome being in itself an exceptionally good product. The collaboration operated so smoothly that it may have missed an opportunity to be more innovative. The examples of friction are noted but are not extensive. In this sense the project developed along recognisable terms for both organisations and was not necessarily innovative in mode of operation, despite the innovative product at the end.

### **Creativity**

Notwithstanding the wider implication that something creative might have been done to sell the product, in terms of the project and the collaboration itself all participants considered the project reflected creativity in a variety of ways. There was unanimity that the actual digital projects looked very good, fresh and innovative. But there were other creative aspects. The bespoke contract was regarded as creative by the project manager noted (C2P4:6); and the collaboration itself created a really productive environment. The freelancer commented: ‘it was very creative, a very warm feeling of everybody really seeking to find something that would work’ (C2P2:6). The project manager articulated a significant aspect of the project. It was creative as it was a new way to develop curriculum: He said ‘I absolutely enjoyed working on it and it was stimulating, it was exciting to think of new way of doing things and then actually make them happen. Yes, I am proud of the way we made a curriculum development project work in an era when the schools’ council doesn’t hand out (money annually) for five years to work on a project’ (C2P4:6)

There was creativity in the process and the coming together of several elements (financial, commercial, pedagogical, technical, people, products) as well. This is described by the various participants as contributing to the creativity of collaboration. The freelancer noted that the digital products are ‘the ultimate manifestation of [the collaboration]... because it is

so embedded, the whole thing is embedded, they are a brilliant product.... from a pedagogy perspective, from a digital perspective, from a commissioning perspective it ticked all the boxes; it was just good fun and interesting' the Publisher (C2P1:12). The creative joy that emerged across all parties was very present and significant; as the freelancer noted C2P2 'you can really look at the possibilities and yes different worlds coming together if you like, it was really lovely' (C2P2:7).

## **Learning**

Much of what has been covered above involves learning but there was some focus on thinking about projects in new ways and learning from the other partner that was also noticeable. This was quite specific in terms of the learning about how to make ebooks; the publisher says 'we wanted to iterate an experiment ....it taught us a lot about what we could do, and what we could afford to do and what we couldn't afford to do in mass e-textbook production' (C2P1:11). On a more abstract level the freelancer noted that by doing it she learnt what the possibilities were: 'you are not working in a kind of fixed structure you have known; you are looking for new ways of thinking. 'that was very genuine I think in terms of learning for collaboration.' (C2P2:6)

In this way the learning about how to work together and achieve a new sort of product development was similar across the both organisations; they went on this collaborative journey together. The publisher notes that 'I learnt a lot about pedagogical development in an area I had never worked before and it was fascinating It was a very positive experience for me and it was motivating.' (C2 P1:12). But also, through this experiment, there was a growing understanding of problems of the digital market place: the project manager acknowledges: 'I thought that the value add that we could push the digital material the video

the audio we had the text machine where you could search text for... I thought that would be enough it wasn't enough.' (C2P4:8). In this way there was learning about limitations of the market too. Ultimately the project manager was forced to conclude 'we still can't make money out of digital resources' (C2P4:9). Entrepreneurial collaborations are about experimentation and exploration of an unknown market place and so learning may be negative but still important.

There were some other learning considerations that emerged too, mostly at the publisher end. He noted that 'it honed a lot of people's skills here one way or another' (C2P1:15). For the freelancer thinking about future proofing was important; she noted it was important to learn 'how you make sure what you have created has flexibility to be used in lots of different ways, as appropriate to the people involved and their different models' (C2P2:7). In terms of developing an effective structure to accommodate a project like this alongside the normal work of the publisher the publisher commented that 'you adapt [the project]... you have to. The key is not to disrupt your core business but to use the way the core business works to create the product that comes out of the collaboration' (C2P1:14).

## **9.6 Conclusion**

This was a small, focused collaboration between two main partners in two different parts of the creative sector. As with Case One there is evidence of the importance of networks in forming the relationships, as well as the importance of developing a clear vision very early on. The broker role emerged as particularly important for this collaboration; the arts project manager emerged serendipitously as pivotal to the project, while other participants also acted in ways that reflected the importance of making connections across the network.

The project management processes also were similar to Case One in that decision making was vested in the collaborative team and the members had autonomy. The organisations trusted each other's expertise. The broker remained important as they set up and maintained the processes by which the team made effective compromises. There were several measures of success, reflective of wide-ranging outcomes from the collaboration that were not just financial in outlook. This was also similar to Case One. In retrospect there was some dissatisfaction on both sides over limitations they saw in their partners but ultimately participants saw creativity and learning emerge from the project. Additionally, they all enjoyed the collaborative process and found it personally fulfilling.

There was a particular recognition by the publisher that this project had to be pioneering but it also had to sit alongside the day to day work of the publisher. One of the successful aspects of this project was managing it so it could be innovative while not disrupting too far other aspects of the business. The arts project manager summed up most clearly the achievements of the project combining both the creative and learning aspects that emerged from the collaboration: he commented that: 'two organisations that are entirely commercial, neither have any state subsidy, they have to live or die by profit, managed to do quite a chunk of curriculum development.' (C2P4:9). In this he indicated how far these two organisations came together to tackle something of which neither of them had direct experience. While each brought their own expertise to the table, they were both trying to achieve something new together, something they could not have done alone; in that sense the collaboration appeared to be very creative and successful.

## **Chapter 10 Case Three - Online academic resource**

### **10.1 Overview to the case study**

This case study examines a large digital online resource created for an academic English Literature market. It contains an extensive range of English literary texts searchable in a variety of complex ways and supported by video and film content, as well as an archive of scholarly monographs on the discipline. It is based with one publisher, making use of their extensive selection of historical and contemporary texts, but includes the materials owned and sold in print by several other publishers. The project started with two main collaborators, both well-known publishers, and several additional publishers, that are more specialist, have subsequently come to include their resources in this digital site. The site is used by academics and students researching in English Literature across many periods as well as theatrical studies departments and performers who might be making use of the play texts.

The project was developed at the lead publisher first who concentrated on looking at options for building a digital resource using their own textual materials. It became clear that in order to have some critical mass a relationship with another leading publisher in this marketplace would be important. The lead publisher developed a business plan with a consultant and then discussed with the other publisher how they might be involved, negotiating terms at an early stage. The lead publisher then involved various other digital, content and software consultants to develop the project and determine the content structure and architecture: they recruited, via tender, a software developer to build it. The software developers were an external organisation tasked with building the project once the digital specifications were in place; they operated a traditional transactional approach to the project as a normal supplier would; in this way they did not undertake a collaborative, consultative role. Various internal people were involved as the project developed. This included, at the

management end, division publishers and imprint managers to oversee the development of the project as well as commissioning editors who managed the selection of content going into the resource; it also involved a developing digital department and the person leading this department oversaw the costs and financial aspects of the project.

Further roles in terms of managing digital rights acquisition and textual editorial work on content were also based in house. The digital rights part of the project was an extensive piece of work as the publisher did not necessarily have digital rights for all the texts, particularly for the contemporary writings, so literary agents had to be contacted in order to secure digital rights for content to go into this product. However, the people who undertook this activity were not involved in the evolving concept development of the overall project. As with Cases One and Two these roles form part of the day to day activity of the publisher and were carried out as normal tasks within the usual workflow of the company; they were generally not involved closely with the project development.

The role of the partner publisher involved gaining the appropriate rights for the materials in digital form and preparing their content for rendering appropriately. They were involved in decision making around the look and feel of the site. However, the partner publisher, while they had the opportunity to be involved, did not play a large part in the project development stages. Around 30% of the textual material was from their list.

This was a project that ran broadly to a planned time scale and with a good quantity of materials (around a 1000) ready at launch. More were subsequently added and the resource continues to evolve on a rolling programme of planned content additions with around 1600 texts on it now, as well as extensive audio and video content. The projections for the project



were conservative and the project has been commercially sound; it is regarded as a successful project.

### **Data for the case study**

The case study uses in-depth interviews with participants in the project. This collaboration involved several freelance consultants who worked on the project at different stages as well as the partner publisher. It was evident that, because the digital expertise at the publisher was limited, the publisher had to collaborate with of a range of consultants to bring the project to fruition. Those interviewed include three of these consultants and two of the people involved in the project at the lead publisher end as outlined in table 10.1.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Reference for citations</b>	<b>Reference as used in chapter</b>
Publisher	Publisher	Oversaw content for key imprint of texts sited in the resource and carried out research in the development of the project	C3P1	Publisher
Content Engineer and Digital Publishing Consultant	Independent	Designed content specifications for the texts and carried out research	C3P2	Content engineer
Digital Development Director and	Publisher	Managed the digital development including the	C3P3	Digital Manager

Digital project manager		freelancer consultants and software developer		
Publishing Consultant	Independent	Involved at the very start to support the first financial plan for the project and present the initial case	C3P4	Publishing consultant
Digital Publishing Consultant	Independent	Designed content specifications for the scholarly monographs	C3P5	Digital consultant

**Table 10.1 Table of interviewees for Case Three**

### Case study presentation

This case study will present the findings from the interviews that took place with these participants following the overall structure of the previous case study chapters; it looks first at the type of collaboration testing against Kaats and Opheij's typology (2014) and then it examines issues under the three stages: forming, operating and outcomes. An additional piece of content analysis was undertaken looking at documents that were available at the time of launch and current statements about the partnerships on the publisher website; there were not many documents relating to the initial launch; the most useful documentation for the purposes of this research was a statement made to celebrate the anniversary of the project and the comments from the different partners involved. The documents for the content analysis were collected in one session (14/08/18); seven documents were identified, using specific search terms, and were assembled into one document for analysis: this is referenced in the text as *Document corpus Case Three* (not attached due to its length).

## **10.2 Type of Collaboration**

This project appears to fit the Kaats and Opheij typology for an entrepreneurial collaboration. These collaborations are ‘directed at anything, penetrating new markets, developing new products, developing new technologies’ (2014:27) and this online resource project reflected a combination of these aims. Additionally, it was clear that the lead publisher was not in the position to be able to do this alone; they needed to build relationships in order to do it (C3P1:10) as they did not have enough technical expertise in house from the point of view of building it, nor as much content from their own lists as they felt was necessary to make this a market leading product.

### **Collaboration with external consultants**

This project involved collaborative activity in two main ways, with digital consultants and with partner publishers. In terms of the digital and publishing consultants, these roles were engaged to conceptualise the project and it was recognised the publishers did not have the expertise internally to develop the project without this help. These external roles were consultative and worked in collaborative ways (e.g. through suggesting ideas, considering commercial opportunities, discussing ways to extend the project concept and suggesting ways to use content innovatively in digital form). The publisher noted that the content engineer for instance ‘was absolutely integral to all the thinking’ (C3P1:2). Two of the consultants remained with the project as it evolved, providing continuity through the project. It is notable the three consultant roles were all people who had a publishing background, although they had well-developed digital expertise. This may be a reason why they acted in a more collaborative way, mentoring the publisher through opportunities. The in-house digital manager worked primarily with them.

The consultants were integral to making the project innovative in its approach to content, rather than replicating other resources in the market. For example, they were able to develop ways of searching through the materials that would allow researchers to make use of the content in new and different ways such as searching by character, looking at the number of lines a character in a play text has. The consultants were joining a project that was new to the publisher and working very closely with them; Kaats and Opheij indicate this reflects an entrepreneurial collaboration in that it is an ‘intensive partnership in which the partners share competencies and skills extensively’ (2014:27).

In some ways the collaboration might be regarded as more one-sided in terms of sharing competencies, as the consultants were brought in because of their skills; but it appears they then shared their knowledge within the collaboration effectively, developed new directions for the project while working with the publisher and, in the end, learning emerged on both sides. The publisher subsequently was in the position to build more internal digital resource on the back of this project; as she states: ‘we have a growing stream of digital editors, digital product managers, project managers and digital editors.... We are all charged with finding creative digital content and products so the whole mind set of the academic division has really changed its outlook’ (C3P1:13). Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij discuss the way change can be affected through collaboration and it can lead to transitional change whereby the organisation may well set up new structures or work in new ways (2014:11); this appears to have been a result in this collaboration.

### **Collaboration with partner publishers**

The second aspect of the collaboration was with the partner publisher. They owned content that was important to help the project build critical mass. The participants describe a competitive environment where other digital text projects were under development at the

same time and there was recognition that academic libraries had limited budgets so content needed to be comprehensive to attract the market. The partner publisher, therefore, was essential to the project's success and this was regarded as important early on. As the digital director says, 'we came to the conclusion that we needed more than our content to be represented in that platform to make it different and distinct from the competitors' (C3P3:1). The publisher also stated that 'we quickly realised from our market research that the customer didn't really care who owned what in terms of the copyright.... They just wanted to access it all in one place so in simple terms we went to [the partner publisher] and said "look, shall we talk about this, because if you create your own digital platform and we create one it is going to help none of us" so we decided early on to make a partnership' (C3P1:2). The publishing consultant also felt it was essential that the partner publisher was involved: 'it went from being a good project to being a great project' (C3P4:6). He felt that there was a market building aspect to them working together: they 'basically created a market space which epitomised online products' (C3P4:4).

Alliances that are entrepreneurial are 'designed to promote invention and development'; in order for companies to develop and renew they 'need a complementary partner to do so' (Kaats and Opheij 2014:27) even if, at times, this means companies work with competitors. The publisher noted: 'it's a very unusual relationship as obviously in the print world we compete directly' (C3P1:3). The digital manager agrees suggesting that 'there weren't that many publishers who were willing to collaborate with one another at all' (C3p3 p7). The publisher had not worked in this way with a competitor before but recognised there were wider technology competitors with whom they were going to have to compete. Both companies recognised it was in everyone's benefit to join forces and that has led to further partnerships including with their other main publishing competitor who saw this

collaboration is important since they did not have the resources to develop their own digital platform (C3P1:3). The publisher stated ‘so it is a kind of ground breaking model in that sense... it really was a first’. (C3P1:3).

Competitors had to put trust in each other in order to achieve the best product. Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij expect that in a collaborative relationship part of a partner’s autonomy has to be given up, ‘trusting that in doing so they will gain more in return’ (2014:14). The partner publisher in this case did relinquish autonomy in the sense they did not become that involved in the project development; as the publisher stated the partner publisher ‘ had a very open and sensible and pragmatic mind about it’ (C3P1:3); they allowed the project development to take place without requiring much input (though they were offered it) which indicates a level of trust in their partner, the lead publisher, to undertake the project effectively.

### **10.3 Forming stages**

#### **The partner publisher and their initial involvement**

The lead publisher already had a good knowledge of the partner publisher in that they operate in a small focused market place: they generally know some of the staff at each other’s companies and have a good understanding of their different publishing programmes. The managing director of the academic division of the lead publisher approached the digital director of the partner publisher to open up discussions once it became apparent that they were interested in sharing content on the platform. The publisher discussed the motivations of the partner publisher in getting involved: ‘we realised [they] were getting into these things digitally and...we had a pretty good idea that they might be thinking along the same lines and I think it was quite inspired to have an honest conversation really quite early on.. I don’t mean it was a simple thing to negotiate and agree but the spirit was willing all the way along

so it was never being difficult but very grown up' (C3P1:3). The digital manager reflected that the partner publisher did not have resources to undertake lots of large digital projects and had some of their own they were working on, so they hypothesised the partner publisher was pleased to leave the development of this new project in the hands of the lead publisher; they appeared to trust them to do a good job. The publisher states that they were consulted but 'were not the ultimate authority' (C3P1:7). The relationship with the partner publisher appeared to have been strong throughout as it started off on good terms. The digital manager outlined the requirement for a good collaboration as reflected in this project: 'we managed to develop a really good relationship with [the publisher] it is important in any collaboration you have got to start with a good foundation'(C3P3:3).

### **Partner consultants and network connections**

Different external consultants were introduced to the project and it is clear network behaviour was central to their recruitment. The publishing company was looking for people it knew and who had experience to do the job (C3P3:2). It brought in a blend of consultants to work on different, generally finite, parts of the project. The participants on the publisher side used their network to identify suitable partners. Because these relationships were already established it was easy to identify appropriate people and bring them in and out of the project as needed.

The publishing consultant who came in at the start to help set up the project proposal was already known to those at the publisher end. He subsequently returned to work on other digital projects. He also knew the other consultants involved at the different stages, though they worked separately on the project. His role was to mentor the in-house team to produce the project concept and plan. The network meant it was easy for the publisher to get him in quickly to work on this; this avoided more formal processes to find a consultant, build up

their knowledge of the publishing company and provide them detailed briefings about the project. The consultant knew the people involved at both publishing companies, so could get on quickly with creating a formal business proposal. All the consultants were already connected by the network, so informal processes in bringing them on board increased the agility of the project. The digital consultant, for instance, quickly came in to help when a problem occurred. The digital manager acknowledged she went to people she already knew as she needed to trust their expertise and had to find relevant people quickly (C3P3:6).

The content engineer, who laid out the main data plan and undertook the user experience design, was also already known to different people at the publisher end having had ‘a long history’ with them in different companies before connecting on this project: it all worked through ‘word of mouth and networking with the [publishing] diaspora’ (C3P3:2).

The final digital consultant came in to advise on a particular approach to the scholarly texts, which had been rather left to the end under an assumption that they would be easy to manage: ‘they thought it was all easy as these supporting texts were bog standard monographs and thing that are not structurally complex...but they weren’t really rendering properly and the budget was running a bit low and that was when I stepped in a bit more...to try and understand what the problem was’ (C3P5:2). He was already known to the digital teams there as he had worked with them before ‘tons’ of times and he had known the other consultants for some years (C3P5:5). He also had experience with the literature texts directly as he had worked on finding digital opportunities in CD Rom for them when they had been owned by another publisher. This knowledge was valuable in terms of understanding the nature of the content that was being managed and its complexities.



### **Knowledge brokers and cross-over roles.**

In Case Two one of the participants appeared to act as a broker and was central to bringing the collaboration together. This project did not need a role that connected two organisations: in this case the different participants were brought in at the publisher's instigation. The publisher made use of networks to identify collaborators and so brought the participants together. However, the consultants were all people who had worked in publishing before and this appears to be important for the effectiveness of the collaboration. In the way the broker of Case Two was able to connect two worlds, so all of these consultants were able to understand both the culture of software development and the culture of the publisher. They could work on the structure of data while also understanding the nature of the content and how it was used by its audience. When commenting on the fact he knew both publishing and software the content engineer noted: 'One of the things I hope I bring to this kind of project a mixture of technical know-how and also knowing the content, having an affinity with the content and the context' (C3P2:6); for him, having general editorial understanding of the structure of content and the way authors want it presented helped him realise the project's potential 'I have known people come into publishing project who haven't had the background and I think it shows' (C3P2:6). The publishing consultant concurred: 'I am a commercially-minded, editorially-led, data-driven person' (C3P4:6). This understanding of the content from a publisher point of view is perhaps one the reasons for the success of this project.

The digital consultant noted that part of his involvement was to help the software developer and data conversion companies find the best way to work with incredibly complex texts; he could interpret the publishing content for the software teams. Being able to talk the language of different participants was critical for his involvement and helped the publisher achieve their objective for the texts. These cross-over roles appear to be important to the

smooth operation of a project when it is dealing with something very new. For the digital consultant having good knowledge of the ‘nit-picking’ detailed approach of software houses, combined with an understanding of the publishing environment, was ‘almost essential’ (C3P5:4). It appeared to be especially important for him as he outlined a variety of aspects that required a lot more attention than was expected; the project was so complex that it could not follow standard development procedures and he had to work on various things for both the publisher and the software developer, including writing the specifications for the publisher for the scholarly monograph content and ‘hand holding’ for the software house over the content they were dealing with; being comfortable with both environments meant he was able to respond quickly in these circumstances (C3P5:7). The digital publisher noted that ‘The economics of these are so content dependent it raises lots of other perspective and problems’ (C3P5:8). Understanding the content and the value of it became important. The digital manager at the publisher also recognised how essential this ability to cross-over was: when looking for consultants to bring in she said: ‘you need people who understand the sector and [finding them] is not always easy’ (C3P3:11).

### **Consultant motivations for involvement.**

It could be argued the consultants were not collaborators in that they were there to undertake specific jobs according to their expertise. But the consultants were interested to be involved for a number of reasons that suggest a deeper interest and involvement in what the project could be. They all acknowledged that it was a job they needed as self-employed people but they also recognised aspects of this project that made it new for them and interesting to work on. They all saw this as an opportunity to learn something with regard to the type of content they were working on. This appeared to make their activity more collaborative, and not

simply transactional, as they were keen to develop new skills working with a different sort of dataset.

The publishing consultant was keen to be involved in what looked like a major new digital project. He said ‘the continual thing that excited me about this area was getting the relationship right between what is reference content in this environment, [considering] the importance of the text and the importance of understanding the context..., and also, in this case, the opportunity to evolve more and more non-textual media things like the video and the tools’ (C3P4:4). He described the richness that can be achieved with a custom-built digital archive like this where metadata can be used effectively for contextual and semantic enhancement so that users can use the information in different ways, allowing them to find what they want from it (C3P4 p4). A similar interest in the data and content management itself was expressed by the content engineer. He was keen on the opportunity to work on a new type of textual material: ‘I wanted to succeed with this chewy stuff, get the metadata and get it to do things’ (C3P2:2). The digital consultant also reflected the project was developing an impressive platform for delivering this sort of textual content and ‘it seemed to do it much more impressively than had been the case before’. (C3P5:3). For him every project is different with complex issues to solve: ‘a lot of these big humanities projects that I have worked on have all been different; they all raise different issues and the books themselves are structured much more diversely... every project requires different considerations and new complexities that haven’t been thought about’(C3P5:4). In this way it appears the consultants, from their different roles, were interested to see where the collaborative activity with the publisher would lead the project and use the collaboration to experiment in new ways with digital products.

## **Other participants**

In terms of the other relationships around the project they were a variety of roles that formed part of the day to day publisher activity but they were not closely involved with the project as a whole; rather they focused on their specific role whether copy editing, testing or organising the rights aspects. The one other main relationship was with the software developer. They were chosen by tender following a standard process for RTP (request to participate) stage. Those who tendered were invited to do so and they were chosen on the basis that they had done publishing projects before. They then pitched for the contract; the digital manager noted that they could not afford to use American companies who charged more so that led them to explore UK based opportunities. She also noted that, as it was a complex project, they needed to work with people they could meet with easily rather than have to work around remote meetings and different time zones (C3P3 p4). From the descriptions of their role it is clear that the software developers were not involved in a collaborative way but rather undertook their tasks, fulfilling the brief and delivering their service as agreed at the tender.

## **Vision forming and sharing**

The vision for the project is clearly articulated by each participant when interviewed; it was summarised by the publishing manager as a digital library aimed at the Higher Education market which involved analytical search tools for the texts. This vision was clear from the start and that drove it forward (C3P5:3). The publishing consultant, who worked on the initial business proposition, noted that the aim for the project was to make it 'both as ambitious as it should be and as practical as it needed to be' (C3P4:5); his role was important as he worked closely with the publishers to develop the vision; he was able to do this partly because of the cross-over nature of his background where he understood publishing opportunities as well as technological limitations; from this he was able to collaborate with the publishers to extend

their vision, while ensuring they were not trying to incorporate everything: ‘in some cases it was pushing them to realise they could do more, but in other cases it was not telling them they could have all the bells and whistles’ (C3P4:5). The publishing consultant was clear in stressing how important it is to set up a well-defined vision from the beginning; this kept the project on track so that the software developer could not take it off into a different direction nor standardise it so it became simply a generic piece of aggregated content. His involvement ended after the first business proposal but he notes the final project outcome matched the initial vision.

When asking other participants about the vision, the different consultants all appeared to have a strong idea of what the project was and commented on the need for strong vision: the content engineer noted that he had worked with several different projects and not many of them could articulate the vision clearly, in comparison with this project (C3P2:2). In terms of working with the partner publisher, he felt the vision was especially necessary (C3P2:2): a clear goal was needed to manage complexity: ‘a vision is good because it sets realistic parameters for everything else you do, helps you focus and not go down rabbit holes: it is easy to get distracted or get worried about details and you can back off’ (C3P2:2). He noted that ‘I don’t remember any confusion or frustration or conflicting messages’ (C3P2:4).

One of the consultant notes that (C3P5) that there was a vision for what the product would be like, but also the vision evolved further as they recognised the product could be useful for a market that had not been considered at the start. Making use of the texts for a performance market was a new direction that emerged after the project had started; it had been seen as a purely literary criticism-based product but it became clear some of the content could be used in a different way. This was partly due the content engineer who started to explore further possibilities of what could be done with the texts.

### **Sharing vision with wider participants**

Those participants involved closely in the project acknowledged the need to get buy-in from external people. As noted, for contemporary texts there was an issue gathering the digital rights, most often via agents, for those texts which were in copyright. Here the vision for the project had to be clearly articulated to an external audience to ensure their cooperation. They would not necessarily be involved in the project as a whole but did need to understand the vision of it in order to sign over their rights. This had to be managed across both publishers so information and communication was important and put in place early on. The publishing consultant helped shape the overall vision and define what it was that would make it worth ‘going the extra mile’ to get the partner publisher involved (C3P4:3). The digital manager then commented that they discussed this articulation of the vision with the partner publisher and then helped them pitch it to their contemporary authors (C3P3:3). As literary agents began to decide to participate, this then led to a snowball effect as other agents and writers felt more confident assigning rights once a few had decided to do so. The trust in the project and its vision therefore built up (C3P1:9).

## **10.4 Operation**

### **Working with the partner publisher**

The publisher was involved in the relationship with the partner publisher but the external freelance consultants only had a relationship with the main publisher. In this way the publisher was the pivot between the different collaborative partners they worked with and developed different ways of working with each: the consultants and the partner publisher.

In terms of the way the project operated for the partner publisher, there were certain activities they undertook, such as rights clearance, and they raised issues around certain aspects of content rendering for some of their unique texts. However, apart from that, there

were few problems. The digital publisher describes the relationship with the partner publisher as a good one: they shared information and ensured there were meetings and structures in place to keep the partner publisher informed and allow them to input where they wanted. (C3P3:3). Partly as a result of this good planning and because the relationship between the two publisher's representatives was strong, the partner was 'kind of pretty hands off so that was a good achievement ...they actually trusted us enough and relied on our expertise in developing these products'. (C3P3:2). They relinquished some levels of control on the basis of this trust.

The publisher also recognised that this trust was well placed in that the structures ensured communication was clear and open: 'we devised it so we could inform them and let them see it; at key moments we would show them things and make sure they were happy and actually their feedback was quite useful but we owned it... obviously if they hated it we would have changed it' (C3P1:7). It is clear that the lead publisher owned the project ultimately as the publisher stated: they had the purse strings. This meant it was not an equal partnership, but there was a diplomatic approach to their relationship with the partner 'we were consultative in a sensible way' (C3P1:7). While there was consultation there was a clear hierarchy for the decision making.

### **Inhouse project team**

Overall, the number of people involved at the heart of the project and steering it forward was small so it could move quite flexibly. The original team that set up the business proposal also had other roles within the publishing house that they had to return to; so, they realised it was important to have a small project team that focused on this. Two main people worked on it in-house – the content lead who was a publisher, who moved onto this full time, and the digital director. They worked in close partnership and this avoided any delays in decision making.

(C3P1:6). This small size and the separateness of the team was similar to the approach taken by Case Two. The project team members were senior people who could take decisions and the project could move forward without distracting anyone else from the on-going activity of the publisher.

### **Project management flexibility**

The importance of project management is clear from the commentary with the consultants and digital manager, and there was some discussion about professional project managers and project management techniques. Initially the content engineer ended up, by default, doing some project management but he did not want to do that long term and he was clear his data role was not a project management role. The publisher recognised the need to bring in a specific project manager for this, which was a new departure for the publishing house (C3P1:9); the digital publisher stated ‘I think that some publishing companies do not price the value of project management when they go into digital’ (C3P3:11).

The content engineer, however, also acknowledged that there was no need for very specific roles and clearly defined lists of procedures as generally the project was managed in a less formal way (C3P2:4). The publisher also agreed there were no formal working protocols. The digital consultant too noted that the project was relatively un-hierarchical (C3P5:5) while the digital manager commented that having more formal structures can be problematic and hinder fast progress (C3P3:11). Her belief was that flexibility through informal procedures can lead to an agile approach to project management; this allowed the project to change in iterative ways, allowing it to move at relative speed. She felt that, with more trust invested at the higher level, it was possible for the project management to be more flexible and informal and so move more rapidly (C3P3:12).



However, the complexity of the project was a theme that emerged through all the interviews and this led the digital consultant to critique the agile approach. His view was that some important detail can be lost early on which then comes to 'bite you' (C3P5:7). Where content is complex the agile approach does not necessarily work as well because elements of the project cannot be easily standardised and handed on. More detail needed to be considered at the start and planned out, which does not always happen in an iterative approach (C3P5:7). It appears a hybrid project management style was, therefore, adopted which included some formal approaches, combined with flexibility when needed to move quickly.

## **10.5 Outcomes**

### **Measures of success and risk**

As with the previous case studies, the measures of success were varied and this seems to be a characteristic of explorative and entrepreneurial collaborative activity. The financial outcome was not the only measure of success for this sort of new product launch and, as with Case Two, there was a commitment not only to produce a product that worked but to do so to a high quality.

The content engineer was not aware of any agreed metrics beyond a restrained financial target (C3P2:4) and a target for the number of texts available at launch. A metric he noted that might be useful would be number of users, but he was not aware if there were those sorts of targets. The publisher reflected that for her success was based on both the good sales and the recognition within the publishing and the academic world that this was an innovative product. Feedback was positive and that too was a measure for her. Perhaps more significant for her was the fact that it was developed as a flagship product for the publisher, reflecting a critical change in direction for the academic publisher (C3P1:12). The digital

manager mentioned the user experience as a measure of success too as it was ‘really intuitive [which] made it a really outstanding product’ (C3P3:9).

No one specifically mentioned the financial risks involved in this project and this suggested a belief in the project that meant that, while there was the requirement to manage a budget for the costs, there was buy-in at management level to this project. However, the digital director who had responsibility for the financial aspects in terms of the budget commented that the business plan had been light at the start. She felt that the lead publisher had invested a considerable amount of resources compared to the partner, so the agreement perhaps did not reflect that as it should have; they may have been more generous to the partner publisher than was necessary. She recognised that this was due to a lack of understanding early on in terms of this sort of project.

The only other risks mentioned were raised by the publishing manager who was concerned the imprint brands would not be damaged, the values and credibility for the texts themselves were protected and the contemporary authors would not lose out on print royalties; these worries were allayed as there was no adverse impact and, in terms of the latter point, she stated writers had seen an upsurge in sales.

### **Collaboration with partner publishers and their views of success**

Findings from the content analysis provided some insight into the partner’s approach to the product and the partnership. The ongoing expansion of the product to incorporate further partners is an indication how critical this sort of continued collaboration is for the product’s momentum. A statement by the lead publisher that was written for the website to mark the first five years of the product provided quotes from different partners who have materials within the digital resource. Comments reflected on the way they understood the vision for the

product and were delighted to be able to participate because of both the quality of the product and the natural fit between the partners. One partner said that the product's 'vast and beautifully curated offerings mesh so well with [our] works of dramatic literature. We wanted to widen our reach and [they] was looking for more fine content—a match made in heaven!' (*Document corpus Case Three*). Another partner noted that the success of the product was one of the reasons for partnering: 'It's no surprise that the site has grown and expanded so quickly, and is now used by so many academic institutions worldwide; the resources that [the site] can provide are staggering' (*Document corpus Case Three*) while another commented that, though their own list was very well known, they are also pleased to be part of this enterprise: 'our growing presence on this brilliant, award-winning platform is a source of great pride to us, giving students, teachers and institutions around the world instant access to our rich list of authors; we're honoured to be included' (*Document corpus Case Three*). This suggests that the product had its own life and breadth, notwithstanding that these same partners might be competing in other areas. The product stands alone, separate to any individual publisher: it appears that the more quality material that is added to it, the better the product becomes, so that one of the new publishers who joined said: '[the product] rises magnificently to the challenges and opportunities of the digital age, and we're delighted to join forces with [the two publishers] in making the very best [...] available online and on demand around the world.'" (*Document corpus Case Three*).

These comments are less reflective of the initial collaborative activity as about the wider partnership in the longer term, but they suggest the strength of the product is a key reason for joining the partnership. The collaborative activity that took place early was focused on ensuring the product was high quality and innovative. Through the content analysis it is clear that, for many who joined it, the structure and navigation of the site was

important: there are comments such as: a ‘revolutionary, award-winning platform’ ‘it’s a thing of wonder’; ‘it’s an exciting new way to read and study’ it will ‘open up whole new paths of enquiry for scholars’ (*Document corpus Case Three*). The success of the product can in this sense be measured by the engagement of new partners in the project.

### **Learning: the business model for project development**

The innovative nature of building partnerships with competitors was, therefore, important for the future of the project. The publisher recognised their ability ‘to keep growing the platform by adding new content from our own list or by bringing in different partners’ (C3P1:11) was important for the long-term success of the project. A digital project, as the digital manager notes does not stand still, and continuing partnerships are essential to their moving forward. This was one of the important things she felt she learnt about the project as she considered its sustainability.

The digital manager noted one of the most important aspects she learnt was to scrutinise the software developer to ensure they have the appropriate resource in place to support the project. (C3P3:10). This was because the relationship with the software developer became more problematic as the project went on due to the complexity and specialist nature of the content. Considerable staff turnover at the developer was mentioned by three of the participants. With rapid turnover of staff, they were having to explain things again and again. Continuity, therefore, became important as everyone on the project was learning how to deal with the new sort of content. As the publisher said ‘it had all sorts of issues and challenges to it that everyone had to learn and get used to’ (C3P1:2).

There were also problems with regard to the timing in that the publisher found they needed something additional done but the platform developers were not available at that

particular time to do it. The publisher described the cumbersome process: if, following market research findings, a change to the interface was required, or they wanted to add in audio or video, they would have to put a spec together, present it to the developers who then would do a costing and subsequently negotiate timing and price to do it. The publisher noted that the software developers had their own priorities and own budgets so she recognised that with these sorts of comprehensive projects it was difficult to manage it smoothly if they do not own the platform. This has led them to now set up a structure where they can bring more digital management in-house.

### **Learning: Market understanding**

This project involved detailed user experience testing from early on and this led to learning as the project developed about the market and the opportunities for the additional tools outlined above. The content engineer said that he learnt that ‘there was more appetite in this community for these kinds of automated tools for this kind of content than I anticipated’ (C3P2:7). He thought the publisher might think these tools were ‘flim flam’ but they took them seriously and tested them out. Both sides here appear to be learning together and ensuring they did test things out to see what the opportunities were with the market, keeping an open mind. The publishing manager described talking with academics and realising how useful some of these search tools might be. She described the importance of the research in helping change and shape the project vision; it allowed them to avoid trying to do everything and, instead, realise what was reasonable within the budget; it was a process of ‘grounding’ themselves (C3P1:4).

The publishing consultant who was helping to formulate the initial vision outlined that thinking about the customer first was important; considering the way the customer approached the product was key: ‘you don’t show them what you know, you deliver the right

piece of content at the right time... That is the magical bit' (C3P4:5). The digital manager noted that they also learnt how to do research in a detailed and focused way; they undertook user experience testing and set up focus groups taking a customer-centred approach: 'you have to understand how to ask the right questions' (C3P3:5). The publisher reinforced this point: she recognised that this sort of focus on use and audience research could fundamentally influence the style of the project. (C3P1:10). This customer-centred approach was also important for recognising that collaborating with partner publishers was going to be central to the project. The participants, therefore, learnt a lot about the processes of putting a creative digital product together effectively and understanding the market for it properly.

### **Learning: New roles and organisational culture**

The publishing company recognised that they learnt a lot about the way projects like this should be structured as well as the way organisations can manage projects effectively going forward. New sorts of project roles were mentioned by the participants and both consultants and publishers could see the benefits of them in relation to large complex projects like this. The publisher recognised that two important aspects of learning for her were the recruitment of a project manager (as outlined above) and changes in workflow: the way this had to be managed was different to their standard projects 'it was not a giant book' but needed a different approach. (C3P1:9).

As might be expected, the consultants commented on the new sorts of roles that are emerging as a result of digital product development. The digital consultant in particular raised points about a certain type of overarching role keeping an eye on the project; this required more than technological expertise and digital development skills. He stated that in projects like this there is a need for 'an overseeing expertise role that you arguably only get when you have been doing it for 20 years; and the fact that I worked as a publisher on the publishing

side and at the software house interpreting publisher's requirements for codes, I ... had, over that time, quite a good breadth of understanding of the different roles within a big digital project like this' (C3P5:4). This overseeing role, where publishing experience is central, was particularly important when working with digital product teams as they did not spot problems about the content. In this case, the monographs aspect needed more work and understanding; the success of the project as a whole would have been affected if this part of the content had not been properly managed. The overarching, expert role would pre-empt this sort of problem. This role, he admits, was probably expensive for an organisation but it seemed particularly important for a complex product like this (C3P5:6). The content was critical for the value of the product and it could not be dealt with swiftly in a standardised way. The centrality of content and the way the project deals with it is a characteristic of these projects.

The digital manager also recognised an important aspect of organisational learning. They felt there was a need for a role within publishing companies to manage the growing number of partnerships and relationships explicitly (C3P3:11); but they also recognised the need for a cultural change that would allow the publishers to respond with more agility to project management: 'You ... educate the senior management team on how you develop more openness to go down the agile route' (C3P3:12). This approach recognised that the project was seeking to develop a minimum viable product that could continue to evolve, rather than develop a fully finished digital product.

Perhaps the biggest impact of this project was the plan for the publisher to develop a digital unit in-house. This is interesting given the question in the survey (p 146) about the extent to which companies were using outsourcing or bringing activities in house; in the survey it was significant that only half the respondents were thinking of outsourcing more (the lowest response to any of the planning measures proposed in the survey). In this case the

publisher outlined the plan to bring more digital development in-house so that they would be closer to the digital resource, own the expertise and retain it (C3P1:14) which would then avoid the issue they had with the software developer. The digital manager, who was on the frontline of the project continuously, noted that they were under resourced and they did it all with very few people, though the publisher commented that as a result ‘we have built up knowledge quite quickly’ (C3P1:11). The digital manager noted that to ‘develop audience [the publisher] needs digital products and you need to have in-house expertise’ (C3P3:5) and the key learning experience for the publisher as a whole appears to be this understanding that in-house structures need to be enhanced.

### **Creativity**

The consultants as might be expected given their specialist knowledge did not necessarily feel they had learnt as much as the publishers. However, they all recognised creative aspects of the projects and this reflected their motivation to be involved in the first place. The digital publishing consultant said that for him most creative part was the fact they got the supporting monographs part of the project to work. In addition, he stated: ‘the scope and vision were quite creative and clearly identified a good niche and I think there were quite a lot of quite creative solutions technically to achieve the [project] goals’ (C3P5:7).

The content engineer and the publisher described a particular aspect of the project that was especially innovative and creative in terms of the search opportunities and navigation around texts, especially for the play texts; several impressive tools were developed that had not been specified to start with, but the content engineer did a variety of wire frames and from that tools emerged which he noted nobody had thought of before. These enhanced search tools (e.g. around character) were developed as a result of the collaborative activity with the publisher and were reinforced by detailed user experience research.



The level of creativity vested in the innovative technology was also recognised by the publisher and the digital manager at the publisher end. The publisher stated that the consultant helped her think differently about data and that felt creative for her (C3P1:10). She and the digital manager remained excited by flexibility of the project and the fact it attracted creative people to use it. They were particularly keen on the clean, user-friendly nature of the project as a way to engage audiences in using it (C3P1:11). Creativity therefore was vested in the product for all the participants and the creative environment of the collaboration led to particular outcomes that might not have been achieved otherwise.

## **10.6 Conclusion**

This case study outlines two different sorts of collaborative partners for the lead publisher: consultants and partner publishers. The collaborative activity was different for each group and the publisher appeared to develop different ways to work with them. For both, networks were essential to the relationships at the start. As with Cases One and Two the early clarity of the vision for the project appeared to be central to ensuring that the project runs smoothly. While the approach to the management of the project was reasonably informal (as with the earlier cases), more professional project management approaches were acknowledged. The publisher's open-minded approach to market knowledge and the consultants' understanding of both publishing and technology led to a product acknowledged by them all to be creative, high quality, customer-centred and content-rich.

For several participants the fact of collaborating was, in itself, a learning experience. They reinforced the important of collaboration. The digital manager said 'first of all you should consider collaboration full stop' (C3P3:11). She notes that the industry does not really collaborate very widely even now, but recognises the centrality of collaboration for digital project development. Companies have to think 'where is the synergy that you might need,

how is it going to help you deliver an even better product and help you become more trustable in the longer term'. From her experience on this project she states that publishers should not 'be afraid to open up to another publisher'. (C3P3:11).

In recognition of their importance, and the need to encourage them, the digital manager stated that organisational structures needed to be in place to support collaborations. The digital manager reinforced their importance 'one of the advantages of partnerships in publishing are shared costs and resources to get a better result for the customer and lead to a better product' (C3P3:7); while smaller publishers tended to collaborate, as they did not have the resources to do things alone, larger companies needed more approaches to managing collaborations with larger external partners. She saw this as one of the emerging roles for publishers: 'we could have done with someone who acted as a person who managed our relationships'(C3P3:11).

The digital manager raised a more complex issue about digital development within publishing. She considered the opportunity to work on minimal viable products when dealing with digital projects, an approach that would be reasonably standard in software development. But she notes that publishers do not tend to do this; they 'want to go out with the final finished product because they see it as they would a book' (C3P3:1). However as the content engineer stated, the project is a 'living thing' (C3P2:1); the publishing manager also states: 'it is really important that it is living and growing'(C3P1:12) and the digital manager concurs 'it is not like a book that sits on a shelf it needs to be enhanced, upgraded the whole time because it is a living beast and there is not enough appreciation still of that in publishing' (C3P3:12). Working on experiments and launching with minimum viable products would suggest a different way of working. This appears to cause a dilemma for publishers working on digital projects: working to towards a finished polished product at

launch maybe unrealistic, as implied by the digital manager; but the digital consultant's view is that the attention to detail and the expertise is important, and this led to the launch being strong and comprehensive. The credibility of the project for its partners may have not been as strong at the start if this had not been taken into account.

## **Chapter 11 Case Four – Workspaces for collaboration in STM publishing**

### **11.1 Overview to the case study.**

This case study takes a different approach from the previous three. They looked at specific collaborations. This case looks at how the organisational strategy and the workspace environment may be used to influence collaborative activity and instil a collaborative ethos. The company studied is an international academic and STM publisher. It produces books and journals, and develops software for disseminating academic research. It also supports some incubator software companies involved in sectors in which they operate. This has led them to consider ways to encourage collaboration with these companies as well as across their book and journal teams. Due to office moves they redesigned their spaces to encourage more collaboration; reworking office spaces has been a trend, with three other large publishing companies also redesigning work space due office relocations.

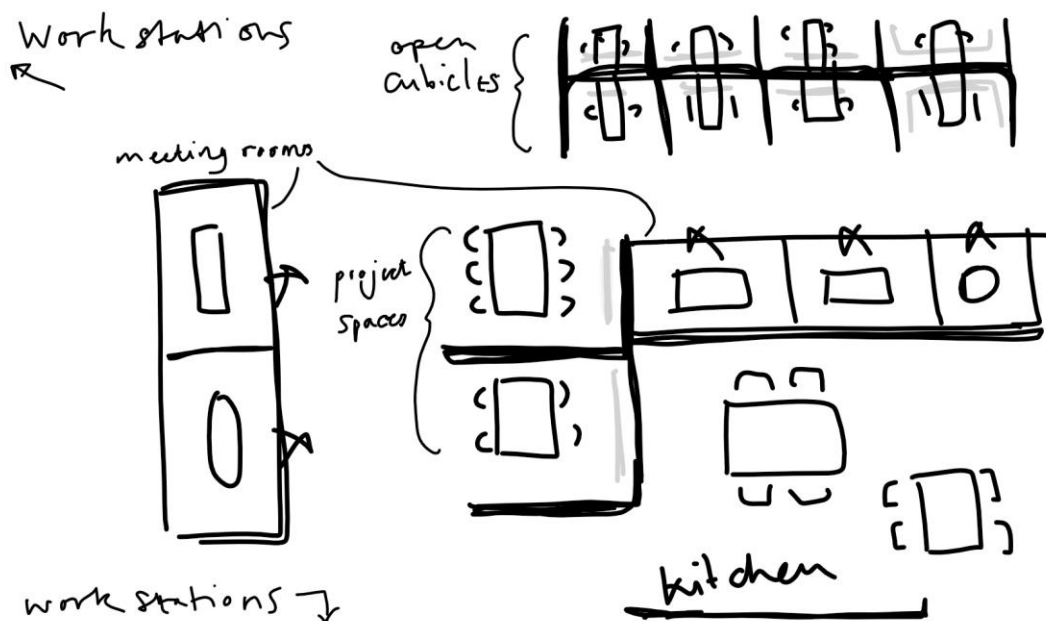
While the specifics of workspace design are important, the focus of this research is on collaborative activity and what has helped it to take place, rather than on the way spaces themselves work. Building on collaborative and network theories in relation to creativity and learning, this case examines the attitudes to collaboration of those involved in the company; it explores whether the opportunities to collaborate through the environment (workspaces, intranets, meetings etc.) has facilitated more collaborative work and led to an increase in awareness and activity amongst employees. This case, therefore, plays a role in the wider collaboration research in that it reflects on the different styles of collaboration that Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij describe (2014), as well as explores whether the organisation structure and work environment can lead to effective internal collaborations. While the previous cases explore the characteristics of new collaboration in relation to specific projects, this case presents an examination of the ways to facilitate collaboration (through corporate

culture and environments), and so moves the discussion on to consider structural aspects of new collaborative activity.

## **11.2 Data for the case study**

### **The company**

The case study builds on ten interviews conducted with a variety of people, with differing roles, within the publishing company. The company had instigated a ‘change programme’ as they termed it, as a response to their expansion in size (due to acquisitions). They wanted to relocate staff spread between sites to one new site. This was the primary driving force for instituting a strategy for managing change. However, they were also increasing their digital product development and was also a motivating factor. As part of this, the company redesigned its offices and relocated some members of staff so that they were all based in one main office. Within the new building spaces were opened up so there were no individual offices but large open plan areas. Specific features of the redesign were the inclusion of large, open kitchen areas with a range of tables and informal seating. On each floor there were collaborative working spaces in the form of sets of booths with open ends, furnished in a variety of ways from benches, high tables and bar stools with whiteboards or computer screens; in addition there were some open plan meeting spaces with whiteboards or film screens, some meeting rooms with doors for conferences, some areas shut off with informal seating for quiet work and some cubicles for phoning. A rough sketch of one of the areas can be seen in figure 11.1; the grey in the sketch indicates white boards, screens, flip charts etc. The relocation and space design were a key part of the change programme and this research looked at the way collaboration formed a pillar of this strategy; it also looked at how this strategy was enacted or embedded within the physical spaces.



**Figure 11.1** Rough sketch of workspaces

### Interviews

The people interviewed undertake a variety of functions including editorial, sales, marketing, production and management and reflected those in entry level positions as well as senior managers. The reason for asking different people to participate was to see if messages about collaboration were reaching all levels of the business. It also ensured both internal and external facing roles were covered and examined for any difference in their approach, depending on whether they were most likely to be collaborating with people within the company or outside of it. In this way, this case study, unlike the previous ones, is able to examine collaborative activity internally as well as externally, acknowledging that internal collaboration can also be very creative and fruitful in terms of learning. The table of those interviewed can be seen in table 11.1.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Level within the company</b>	<b>Reference for transcript</b>	<b>Reference in chapter</b>
Personal Assistant to business head	Entry level	C4P1	Personal assistant
Bibliographic manager	Middle manager	C4P2	Data manager
Business head	Senior manager	C4P3	Senior manager
Internal communications	Middle manager	C4P4	Communications manager
Sales coordinator	Entry level	C4P5	Sales coordinator
Publishing services manager	Middle manager	C4P6	Editorial manager
Designer	Middle manager	C4P7	Designer
Editorial Assistant	Entry level	C4P8	Editorial assistant
Journals manager	Senior manager	C4P9	Journals manager
Production and Design head	Senior manager	C4P10	Production head

**Table 11.1 List of interviewees**

The interviewees were asked first about their own views on collaboration, particularly on whether they were doing more of it, whether it was different than previous activity and what

they felt the approach of the company was to collaboration. They were then asked to comment on whether the workspaces were useful for enhancing their collaborative working styles. It was recognised that some interviewees had less opportunity to collaborate externally than others but they were asked about whether they were involved in collaborative activity internally. To help them, they were prompted to consider if they had been involved in a variety of different collaborative scenarios (such as with different departments, with external suppliers etc.). The list of questions is in appendix 2.2 p409)

### **Processing the interview data**

The transcripts from the interviews were processed using NVivo 10. Nodes were set up following the themes of the previous case studies. These themes centred on the following:

- Collaboration culture and related strategy for collaboration (to understand the ethos of the company and how far it overtly encourages collaboration);
- Newness of collaboration – in terms of how far people felt they were doing more and/or doing it differently;
- Reasons for collaboration (why), building on the organisational understanding this looked at in what ways collaboration was seen to be useful (for knowledge, innovation etc.);
- How people were collaborating (how), both internally and externally, and the relationships/partnerships that emerged (to tie to network activity);
- Workspace use - to look at ways the spaces were used for internal and external working.

These themes were divided into nodes (see table 11.2) and transcripts were coded with these nodes.



<b>Node title</b>	<b>Overarching theme</b>
Collaboration importance to the individual	Collaboration (why)
Communication including references to the intranet	Collaboration (culture)
Culture collaboration	Collaboration (culture and newness)
Day to day	Collaboration (how)
Email	Collaboration (how)
External collaboration	Collaboration (how)
Ideas and idea development	Collaboration (why)
Informal flexible	Collaboration (how)
Innovation	Collaboration (why)
Internal collaboration	Collaboration (who)
Knowledge and sharing	Collaboration (why)
Motivation wellbeing	Collaboration (why)
Newness collaboration	Collaboration (newness)

Relationships	Collaboration (who)
Workspace internal	Workspace use for collaboration
Workspace external	Workspace use for collaboration

**Table 11.2 Alphabetical nodes (or codes) used for coding the sources (transcripts)**

**Additional data: observations of workspace use**

Additionally, the data included information gathered from an observation of the use of workspaces. The intention was to examine how frequently the spaces were used and what they were used for. This was in order to see:

- 1) how far the meetings and collaborative activity described by the interviewees actually took place and
- 2) whether there was evidence to support the statements made by the senior manager that the redesign of space was intended to facilitate collaborative activity both at an informal and formal level.

The observations set up the researcher as ‘observer as participant’ (Angrosino, 2007:54) as the researcher was seen and noticed by those observed; this sort of research is conducted for brief periods and researcher relates to the subjects of the study solely as a researcher (rather than a participant); Michael Angrosino suggests this sort of research is effective as a context for interviews; those observed were not those interviewed but it served as a background to the interviews that did take place. The observations consisted of two one-hour observation periods. The periods were just over a month apart (to see if the observations were

comparable); additional visits would have been useful to verify the observation data further but it was felt the two sessions were nevertheless valid as supporting evidence for the interviews themselves, which were the central piece of the research. Notices, with an explanation of the observation, were posted up in the area so everyone was aware that observations were taking place (appendix 3.3 p422).

An area was chosen where there were nine booths (in two sets opposite each other), four meeting rooms, one open plan area with tables and white board and an informal area with bean bags. The kitchen was nearby. This was a general area that connected three different departments – the digital product teams, a small management team and the sales operations. The open plan desk area could also be seen.

Observational protocols were established (appendix 3.1 p417) and an observational data record sheet was created (appendix 3.2 p419). Counts were made to with regard to the number of people who came and went during that time; the number of people in the meetings; and, in the second count specifically, when meetings started and finished; this last point was added into the second observation as a result of noting that the duration of meetings seemed short during the first observation. More qualitative comments were noted with regard to the style of the meeting in terms of levels of formality and informality (observed from a distance) as well as the style of the rooms chosen and any other features (e.g. props). Reflective comments were made at the time.

### **Case study presentation**

The presentation of the case study starts with general comments observed from the data as collected in NVivo; this includes analysis of counts and information recorded at quantitative level. The case study then explores the quantitative comments made by interviewees grouped

by theme (using the nodes as the themes). Finally, the observational data is presented as a way to verify, in a more independent way, what was being said in the interviews.

### **11.3 Overview to NVivo data**

This section first looks at the total number of nodes and comments made in relation to the interviewees and examines this from different angles, using the queries facility of NVivo. It then explores wider queries run across the sources in terms of word frequency.

With NVivo it is useful to remember their terminology.

- Source = transcript (i.e. individual person interviewed). There were 10 interviews so 10 sources.
- Node = code (i.e. each code used that is linked to a theme under investigation). There were 16 nodes against which references in the transcripts were marked up (there are the 16 nodes listed in table 11.2 above)
- Reference = actual comments related to a node made within a transcript (so there may be a number of references that are marked up to one node – in other words several relevant comments made about a particular node/theme).
- Queries = different ways NVivo can examine the data with specific requests by extracting and cross-referencing data.

For an overview to the data collected, the following queries were run in NVivo. Not all the queries are supplied in the appendix, but a sample has been provided and their reference is in the text; in some cases, a separate table was generated for analysis but the data is also present on a related table and that is included in the text.

- 1) Total number of references (i.e. total of all comments across all sources) in relation to each node (appendix 11.1 p448)
- 2) Total number of sources mentioning each node (appendix 11.1 p448)
- 3) Number of different nodes mentioned by each role (16 being the maximum as the total number of nodes) (appendix 11.2 p448)
- 4) Number of different references mentioned by each person (i.e. within a transcript there might be several references for one node) (appendix 11.2 p448)
- 5) The table cross-referenced all the nodes against all the sources in order to see:
  - a) which node was noted across which roles - this showed which themes were most prevalent across the different roles;
  - b) which roles noted which nodes – this looked at it the other way, showing which roles saw which themes as most important (appendix 11.3 p449)

A text search was also undertaken across all sources and for word frequency: the summary of the words selected for these text searches is in appendix 11:4 p450. This data was then used to explore particular issues.

### **Roles and most important collaboration themes**

It was clear everyone was aware of many of the themes (i.e. nodes) around collaboration, whatever role they had; the more senior the role, the more nodes tended to emerge in the interviews (appendix 11.2 p448). The analysis of the different roles and the nodes they talked about shows that the topics of most importance were those relating to collaboration in specific, strategic ways (appendix 11.3 p 449). The questions that were asked will lead to a certain bias towards collaboration as a topic but, while many questions related aspects of collaboration already identified, some nodes were also included because they arose in the interviews (*in vivo* codes); the nodes, therefore, also reflected the level of interest in a topic,

as more nodes were created specifically to encompass issues that emerged; these were particularly focused on the amount of activity going on around collaboration.

What the analysis of sources showed was that while some nodes were only mentioned by a limited number of sources (e.g. *day to day decision making* emerged for three sources), all sources (i.e. ten) mentioned the topics *newness of collaboration*, and *informality and flexibility* of working, with nine sources mentioning *internal collaboration*, *communication leading to collaboration* and *culture of collaboration*. Workspace aspects were not mentioned by as many sources as frequently as features of collaboration itself (appendix 11.1 p448)

The number of references (total comments) to nodes (themes) told a similar story (appendix 11.1 p448). The issue that got most references was the *culture of collaboration* (30 references across nine sources); this shows that the cultural aspects were considered important and sources kept returning to this issue through their interviews. The next most frequent topics were *informal/flexible working* (24 references) and *newness* (21 references). Topics around *emailing* (changing email patterns) and (ease of) *day to day decision making* were not mentioned very much.

### **Roles within the organisational hierarchy and collaboration themes**

When looking more closely at the range of different nodes reflected across the different sources it was clear that those at the lower level of the organisation were as equally engaged in the issues of collaboration as those high up. For example, a node such as motivation and wellbeing (mentioned by eight sources with 13 references) was commented on across a range of roles throughout the organisation (appendix 11.1 p448).

In order to assess issues around different levels of organisational hierarchy, the roles were grouped into three groups, those entry level roles (lower level), those in middle management (mid-level) roles and those at the senior management end (higher level). These groups were as follows:

- 1) Lower level roles - personal assistant, sales coordinators, editorial assistant
- 2) Mid-level - bibliographic manager, communications manager, publishing manager, designer
- 3) Higher level - senior manager, production head, journals manager

Looking at individual roles from these different groups it is important to note that there is one more source with a mid-level role than in the other roles: this will skew the results a little for the queries, but it was felt that the data would still be valid, particularly in relation to the qualitative analysis presented later which focuses more on what was said by individuals than on categorising their roles. The personal assistant talked about issues linked to 10 nodes (appendix 11:2 p448). In analysing the detailed chart (a section of which is in appendix 11.3 p449) it could be seen that this included many references about strategy and culture as well as those about personal effectiveness. The business head at the other end of the organisation raised issues around 11 nodes (only one more than the personal assistant), though he did return more regularly through his interview to those issues with significantly more total references (37) across those nodes.

A slight difference between roles at different places in the hierarchy could be seen in relation to some of the cultural issues. The sales coordinator referred only to six nodes with eight references and this was lower than the more senior role (journals manager) that referred to ten nodes and 22 references; this reflected a slight difference in approach according to hierarchy but a topic like *newness* and the *cultural of collaboration* were covered across roles

perhaps reflecting how strong the message of collaboration was through the organisation, whatever one's role; whether collaboration was internal or external, the expectation is that collaboration was possible and important.

Further queries were run to investigate these findings. A coding matrix was run for the three different role groupings and the top five most cited nodes, which were:

- 1) *Culture*
- 2) *Newness of collaboration*
- 3) *Knowledge/knowledge sharing*
- 4) *Ideas*
- 5) *Innovation*

The results for each group (lower, mid-level and higher) can be seen in a consolidated table in appendix 11.5 (p450).

The higher-level roles mentioned these topics more frequently (43 references by the higher-level managers to 18 by the lower ones) and the middle managers sat in between, with 30 references across these topics. This reflects a higher level of importance and focus at more senior levels on these more strategic issues (and additionally there were less roles too in this category). This could be a problem if people are not collaborating as much lower down the organisation as they could be, or as the higher-level roles think they are. The higher roles in particular focused on *culture* and *newness of collaboration* (20 and 10 mentions); the lower roles also did, but with less mentions (five and three). Interestingly the personal assistant focused on *innovation* with seven mentions, which might reflect the people she was working for; *innovation* was not mentioned specifically by the higher roles. The middle level roles mentioned *knowledge sharing* the most out of all the groupings, possibly suggesting they



viewed their middle position as one that involves spreading knowledge and learning more about the rest of the organisation in order to make connections and increase efficiency.

### **Themes and key words across all roles**

#### *Word frequency analysis*

When the word frequency queries were run (appendix 11.6 p451) they showed that words mentioned most were *people* and *think*; with *collaboration* work next most frequent. While this sort of search is somewhat cumbersome, without excluding a lot of words that are used the course of informal conversation (such as *think* for instance), it is still of some interest to note that *collaboration* was high as well as *people*. *Space* was also reasonably high in frequency which could be significant. While people were asked about space specifically, that topic did not form the bulk of the conversation (as can be seen from the nodes) yet the word surfaced frequently in the general flow of the conversations.

#### *Text search queries*

Text search queries were also undertaken with key words. These drew out specific mentions of selected words. The list of words examined is in table 11.3. In all cases the search was based on exact and stemmed words, with a few noted for synonyms.

WORDS FOR TEXT SEARCH	SOURCES	TEXT COUNTS
Campus exact (i.e. title of Building)	5	17
Collaboration	10	210

Communication	7	10
Creative	3	11
Flexible (inc synonyms)	5	11
Ideas (inc synonyms)	9	41
Informal inc synonyms	10	37
Innovation	4	5
Know (inc synonyms)	9	22
knowledge	10	98
New	10	65
Partner	10	17
Relationship	3	7
Share	10	37

**Table 11.3 Summary of key word search tables in NVivo**

Words were chosen after the transcripts were coded so built on emergent themes. *Campus* was included as it was used to refer to the building now and then, intending to suggest a collaborative collegiate space. Some people mentioned it but the count was not significant.

In general, the text queries reinforced what might have been expected from the previous overview data. The word *collaboration* was mentioned most frequently out of the list (with a very high 210 occurrences). *Knowledge* and *new* also were reasonably frequently cited with *ideas* and *sharing* also noted by the different sources. The spread of job title referring to collaboration was also examined and it could be seen that it was reasonably consistently used across different job roles (appendix 11.7 p452)

Specific mentions of *relationship* and *partner* were less frequent, although the latter came up with all ten sources unlike *relationship*. These words were selected in order to test how far the people referred to specific activities that might arise from collaboration. The word that did not feature very highly, which perhaps might have expected to be higher, was *creative*. Collaboration in the context of working with new people and developing new ideas was regarded as important but the creative aspect of it less apparent in people's minds.

Word trees were developed to consider the context of some key words. The word *innovate* was used but did not reveal anything significant. *Knowledge* was examined and it confirmed what might be expected: that the word *knowledge* is used frequently with *sharing* (appendix 11.8 p453). This was then checked against the word *sharing*; this word in fact also came up without the word *knowledge*, perhaps suggestive of the general importance of sharing and connecting – not just in relation to spreading knowledge.

These sorts of text queries can have flaws. The discussions might talk about a quality of a collaboration (e.g. its flexibility) without mentioning the word very specifically or closely related synonyms. Taken in combination these NVivo queries provide an overview to show that collaboration is important throughout the company, across all levels. Nuances exist between roles but the general implication is that throughout the company there is a strong recognition of collaboration as a way to gain knowledge, innovate and connect to each other; the workplace aspect is less central to their discussion, which mostly centred on issues around collaborative activity reflective of a collaborative culture. It appears to prove that the company's goal to create a heightened awareness of collaboration and its benefits has been successful.

#### **11.4 Analysis of the data: collaboration**

In order to examine in more depth what this means to individuals, the nodes (across all sources) were analysed for qualitative commentary. The different approaches and considerations in relation to collaboration is examined next.

##### **Importance of collaboration and collaborative environments to individuals.**

Collaboration held personal importance for many interviewees. Several comments related to a personal feeling about collaboration and informal working that drew in aspects of motivation and wellbeing: this in turn linked to the company's desire to be an attractive place to work.

While few people specifically mentioned that collaboration was important to them personally (as opposed to recognition that it was important for company as a whole), the fact that collaboration led to wider personal relationships is raised. The theme of building professional relationships is examined later, but a few people mentioned it in the context of their own personal experience and motivation. The data manager, designer and production head in particular highlighted that their roles meant they had to collaborate individually with

a variety of people and saw themselves as sitting at the intersection of many different departments; because of this they connected regularly with different roles (C4P2, C4P7, C4P10).

The space itself and the importance of collaboration helped motivate individuals. The communications manager says ‘I feel very lucky to work here – not only is it a great place to work but coming into the building every day does [make me] feel that whatever it is I have to do, I have the space and opportunity to do it’ (C4P4). The editorial manager also commented in a similar vein: ‘you can be flexible about the way you want to work’ (C4P6).

The changes the company has brought in to encourage further collaboration was mentioned in relation to the workspace planning as several people commented that it was easy to find someone and talk to them: the personal assistant in particular noted ‘it does encourage a culture of go and speak to someone rather than send an email’ (C4P1). She also noted that, because it was easy to go over and find someone to talk to, it meant people are able to get immediate feedback for an idea or plan, and that makes ‘them feel better or more motivated’ (C4P1). The idea that the way the workspace works could encourage wellbeing is supported by the communications manager: moving around the space in itself was seen as a good thing ‘from a wellbeing perspective it has benefits: you don’t sit at your desk all day, you are much more likely to be getting up and doing things and moving around’ (C4P4).

Others noted the importance of events and gatherings which could be anything from informal kitchen discussions, personal celebrations around birthdays or get togethers to spread information or share company successes; all were regarded as opportunities to connect. This perhaps led to a more relaxed way of dealing with each other as people had met more frequently on formal and informal bases. The editorial assistant noted that the spaces

help people to be ‘more open and more comfortable...if we just had our normal closed off sort of meeting room I notice it can put people on edge more and people are more hostile; that is not quite the right word but [they] are not as comfortable to speak their mind.’ (C4P8). The editorial manager particularly noted a change: ‘I think what was brilliant about the way the spaces developed, and the department developed, was people started talking more and the atmosphere really changed, it became a lot friendlier’. (C4P6)

There were also guest sessions and several participants mentioned times when there are lunchtime meetings in which different departments outlined their roles or demonstrated something. The communication manager noted how these sorts of talk series helped people to find out about something they might not necessarily have heard about before, commenting that the space and environment helps this happen (C4P4). For the editorial manager this was important as their department had been often overlooked and so she spent some time focusing on using the environment and activities to educate the rest of the business about their work, making things more joined up, and through that she achieved better attention and service from other departments (C4P6).

For some, the ‘wow’ factor of the workspace itself was an attraction: the senior manager notes, ‘we want to attract and retain great staff’ in talking specifically about the office areas; he noted that the workspace became a public space where all sorts of stakeholders (e.g. authors, customers etc.) could be invited in: ‘some of the things we do are quite explicitly... to make sure [we are], as a technology employer, more attractive’ (C4P3). The production head concurred: ‘it is much more collaborative in part due to the location, people are happy to come in and work with us’ (C4P10). The communications head suggested that the space and location, therefore, attracted talented staff who could work together: there was an aim to ‘bring some of the really bright, creative, clever people that we

have here together [so they can] spark off each other and come up with new solutions' (C4P4). The journals manager commented that 'I would say we have people who are self-starters. If you put them in you don't need to tell them "go and collaborate", it's happening' (C4P9) and he put that down to the 'good positive work environment, somewhere they come to and feel good about what they are doing' (C4P9).

The production head also commented that people for whom collaboration was important, who personally invested in collaborative styles of working, were the ones who progressed: 'people that listen and seek information from other people will be the ones who keep moving forward and the ones who sit in their silos will not be able to do quite as much, or be able to innovate quite as much, to reach the same kinds of solutions' (C4P10). The ability to collaborate therefore can be seen as important not only for an individual's motivation but also for their ability to progress; if workspaces encourage this, then they will potentially be all the more motivated.

### **Importance of collaboration to the company**

It was clear from the interviewees that collaboration was seen to be critical to the company. This was acknowledged by all the participants. For several it was a conscious strategic aim, clearly stated by the company; but in some of the interviews it was also apparent that even when not explicitly acknowledged as part of the company strategy, there was culture of collaboration that was being created by the design and use of the workspaces.

Those in entry level roles were as aware of the importance of collaboration to the company as the senior staff. The personal assistant noted in relation to the need to combine different portfolios across the science areas that 'the actual act of collaboration' was the main way to achieve this: 'the company is all about innovation and new ideas and it moves

quite quickly and changes quite quickly'; she continued to stress the importance of space to do this, needing 'a space that is kind of open enough to be able to adapt' (C4P1). The journals manager concurred: 'change leads to an absolute need for collaboration' concluding that 'we can do more if we collaborate' (C4P9); he reflected that as a strategy it was regarded as critical to the company's ability to move forward. This reflects Kaats and Opheij's entrepreneurial model where collaboration is required for a company to continue progress (Kaats and Opheij, 2014).

Other people commented on the importance of collaboration to the company stating that is 'very important' 'really important' 'massively' 'crucial' , 'absolutely critical', (C4P1, C4P4 C4P3,C4P9) ; another interviewee stated ' the company is quite forward thinking in that way' (C4P6) recognising this strategy was perhaps unusual in the industry. Staff also recognised the building and workspace planning was key to this: the internal communications manager for instance noted 'that was the whole reason we went ahead with the workplace programme' (C4P4), while the journals manager stated that 'there are a lot of different ways to collaboration and actually being together is ideal' (C4P9).

The newness of this collaboration culture was also noted by several of the other roles as they described how things felt as if they had changed with the move and the new building. (C4 P5, P6, P7, P9 and P10); this does not just reflect those in more strategic roles but those throughout the hierarchy. The production head summed this up many in saying: 'I am definitely reaching out in ways that I would have been able to do, or thought of doing, five years ago' (C4P10). The success of the programme was noted by him: 'since we moved everybody was doing it [collaborating] and they are all pulling their organisations into one collaborative space: amazing' (C4P3).



The production head commented on the importance of collaboration in more depth, considering the company's changing approach to its activity and the way everyone gets involved as the company innovates: 'I have seen a change in the ethos from very siloed development of new products to a much more collaborative way of working, so a new idea or concept is brought to the table you immediately see different groups fall into [thinking about] that. I think that is probably because the business is moving away from publishing content, in a standard way, to having to present that content differently, more technology focused, so the pool of expertise needed is widening I think' (C4P10). This has overtones of the statements in Case Three where the publisher felt that new technology required different ways of producing digital products. The production manager went on to say: 'I still think there is more to do as I think, when you move from one model to a more collaborative one, some groups move quicker than others. So, I think there is still more to do, but definitely that is the ethos, that is the idea here: everyone who needs to be involved is pulling their weight' (C4P10). She also noted that they are learning different ways to bring diverse skills together and the workspace plan is part of that in its ability to attract in a range of talented staff. This need to bring diversity reflects the importance of divergent thinking for collaboration (Levine & Moreland, 2004).

These comments also focused on the particular the need for the company to change direction: it was felt it should move away from older models of publishing and reinvent approaches to publishing content and technology development. The senior manager elaborated on this, stating that the company needed 'to be bigger than the sum of our parts' (C4P3). This points to a view of collaboration that creates something larger by the act of collaborating; by bringing different elements together, the company can create something more than itself. He felt that in a print company one can have discrete businesses and

functions, but as the company becomes a digital business, collaboration would become key. He employs the metaphor of a flotilla of ships, whereby every department is working towards the same goal, collaborating together to bring about a change of course for the company as a whole. The senior manager particularly noted that this programme was developed differently from the way it would have been a few years earlier, where the decisions were made in a very structured, hierarchical and formal way. Instead, this programme was consultative and was developed and implemented in a collaborative way across the company at all levels.

### **Knowledge sharing**

One of the ways described by the participants that the collaboration culture manifested itself was in the increasing amount of knowledge sharing that was going on internally throughout the company. The variety of different sorts of meetings mentioned above helped people learn about others roles. Knowledge sharing of this sort was regarded as a key part of effective communication across the business; ‘because if you don’t really understand the sort of process that other people have to go through, you end up putting pressure on each other and it cannot be a great working environment’ (C4P8).

The editorial manager noted a specific session they had run, touched on earlier, that was intended to show the rest of the company, particularly their stakeholders across the organisation, what they did in more detail. It was called ‘behind the book’; it was ‘interactive and basically fun and educational and yes it was really brilliant because we asked everybody to get involved, not just a few people... it seemed really successful...that would be our main shout about knowledge sharing ...to say ‘look trust us more’’ (C4P6); as with the flotilla metaphor there is an assumption that everyone should be involved in collaborating effectively to move the company forward. She suggested that trust was key to their operating more effectively, and collaborating together. The designer concurred that this sort of understanding

of each other helps everyone do their own jobs more effectively as people understand how to help them (C4P7); a growing efficiency therefore is part of the benefit of knowledge sharing.

For the editorial assistant this sort of trust led to something further: ‘I see difference in people’s attitudes when they come to a meeting, feeling different...it is not conscious and I think people are more likely to share knowledge and want to collaborate’ (C4P8). It seemed this gave confidence to those lower down the scale: the personal assistant also noted this that people are more relaxed to say their ideas (C4P1). The atmosphere which encouraged this allowed those who were more inward facing to emerge: it ‘gently nudges them out...a lot less ideas would come to fruition because people would just sit and do their jobs and then leave’ (C4P1). It suggests that the workspace openness encouraged the more junior people in the company to have the confidence to put forward ideas and contribute as much as the more experienced people.

The production head at the other end of the hierarchy also commented that everyone felt more accessible and had a deeper understanding of each other’s expertise (C4P10). She noted an example where they had collaborated on a design project with the user experience teams, as well as with other roles from different parts of the organisation, which led to all groups learning from each other, and which then culminated in reaching a viable solution. (C4P10).

The communications manager noted one aspect of knowledge sharing in particular that was influential was around agile project working. The technology department had told everyone about agile framework of working and that had spread through the company: ‘the sharing elements of the agile methodology is a really collaborative approach’ she noted and

there was an increasing emphasis on shorter sprint-style discussions and updates, rather than on lengthy, structured meetings.

### **Innovation and new ideas**

The greater understanding of roles, through knowledge sharing, as well as the increased connections between each other, were seen to be important for encouraging new ideas to thrive. This emerged in the interviews as key for everyone throughout the organisation. The personal assistant noted that people can put forward ideas and test them with each other first, so that they do not have to risk money on testing it with the public too early (C4P1). Encouraging an open and creative environment was central to this, and the ability to suggest and test new ideas was seen to be of value to the organisation. The production head noted that the ‘the company prides itself on being creative top to bottom actually...[with] everybody in his building their creativity is respected and encouraged’ (C4P10).

The importance of ideas development such as this was reinforced by the fact that innovation was regarded as a key strategy by several of the participants (linking to the strategic need to collaborate outlined above). This could be seen within the entry level roles as well as the high-level roles. The editorial assistant described working on a new product which was innovative and had game-like elements. The need to work together to solve problems was particularly important here: the product was ‘new territory for us so we see we are going to need external help to get our heads around it...because it is such a new thing for us no one really knows entirely what they are doing without trial and error, so I think there is a lot of collaboration over that’ (C4P8). The production head also talked about the need to work with new sorts of companies in order to be innovative, reflecting the need to collaboration in order to diversify in a changing environment: ‘reaching out to these new

media companies is something fairly new for us and that is about us positioning ourselves ... in that area, rather than as a traditional books' publisher, journals' publisher, content publisher. We are having to be a technology company as well as; [in order to be] building that experience and skillset in house we are reaching out into those areas more and more; and the software and film side too .... I think for us to be in that space seriously you need different approach' (C4P10).

The newness of this approach was summarised by the communications manager: 'moving forward particularly in our industry innovation [has] got to be particularly important ... we are in a growing sector with the digital transformation that is happening ....., in order to stay ahead of the competition and to continue to serve our students, teachers, researchers, people that we work with, we are going to have to come up with more even more creative ideas and we need to think about what we are going to need in the future' (C4P4).

Throughout the conversations innovation and collaboration were clearly linked and both are regarded as important elements in the drive towards to company's ability to reinvent itself is a new-style content company.

## **Communication**

There was another important aspect to the change and workplace programme that emerged from the interviews. An intranet with social media elements to it was developed and implemented to allow people to communicate in a virtual environment. This was mentioned by many staff (though not all) as a way to identify people they needed to deal with. It appeared critical for the ability to connect, to discover people who could help with problems, to work together remotely and to do so at speed. The senior managers saw it as a key part of the strategic development and as an enabler of collaboration. It allowed people to identify internal partners quickly, share ideas and make connections. As he suggested employees can

reach people with different expertise and bring them into an issue or problem, and by doing it within a social media environment it can make conversations more relaxed (C4P3).

The communications manager, as might be expected, noted its importance: ‘we also have a social networking space that helps us [collaborate] virtually as well, and expand our thinking beyond London into our global teams (C4P4). The journals manager pointed out the benefits of using the technology for remote working: ‘the technology we have that enables us to collaborate: extranets, the ability to work in real time together on word documents or spreadsheets, yes I think if we are collaborate in a different way, the emphasis would be on making use of new tech’ (C4P9). The production head supported this noting that technology allows everyone to share things quickly in sessions and so people across different regions could work on things ‘on the fly’(C4P10).

All the senior managers particularly saw the importance of global collaboration developed by the change programme’s implementation of the intranet: ‘Looking at the international base of the company and this is a quick way to communication with a wide group of people but also to share more widely so dare I say it there is a serendipitous element to this that you know you can go and spend some time travelling around this environment and finding out an awful lot of things’ (C4P9).

The wider importance of the new ways of communicating, whether thorough the intranet’s social media or in person emerged as several of the participants mentioned how this had improved relationships. The workspace added to this as the aim was to ‘provide as many opportunities as possible, formal and informal, to get people talking to each other and connect people.’ (C4P4). In this way the intranet was as much a connecting space as the physical space.

### **Informal and formal ways of working in the open spaces**

The combination of formal and informal ways of working emerged significantly in the conversations. When asked about changes in the way they work following the workspace redesign comments from the participants included: ‘flexible’, ‘less structured’, ‘ad hoc’, ‘definitely a lot less formal’, ‘a lot less formality’, ‘It has been much more flexible’, ‘more incidental things happen’, ‘much easier’, ‘more open more comfortable’ (C4 P1, P2, P3, P5, P7 P8). The communications manager noted that these ‘informal interactions’ were possible because of the way people moved around the work spaces; the sales coordinator noted ‘you are exposed even if you just walk into the kitchen... to more people’ (C4P5).

Several participants described situations where they might use the booths to have a quick catch up without booking a formal meeting room. Informal areas were good for last minute meetings without the need to book up a room months in advance. One person even noted a particular favourite space they liked to go and work. The ease with which work could be done and serendipitous connections that could happen appeared to be an important part of the way the new office design had improved working life.

The booths, in particular, appeared to have improved efficiency. They provided spaces where people could quickly go when immediate decisions are needed. The personal assistant to the senior manager commented on ease of making decisions: ‘day to day decision making is quick as the open booths can be used immediately to discuss a point’ (C4P1). It was also noted that the culture is less meeting bound – the meetings now did not feel ‘grimly relentless’ (C4P3): the editorial manager commented in particular that her team had become more communicative and friendly: ‘the relationship between everyone changed quite significantly’ (C4P6). The communications manager noted too that by meeting people in one of the booths in an ad hoc way it was easier for people to see how each other work and that

means they can reach solutions much more quickly (C4P4). Throughout all the interviews, the work environment clearly allowed people to connect regularly in quick and informal ways.

### **Collaborating partners – internal and external**

Participants were asked who they had been collaborating with. The sorts of collaborations mentioned included internal and external projects. The internal projects contributed to further knowledge sharing; as already noted that was important for ideas and problem solving. In discussing collaborative internal projects in which they were involved participants noted how it helped to ‘join the dots’ (C4P2), find people who work in other teams who are ‘complementary’, (C4P4), collaborate with people in their own team and ‘think of different ways of doing things (C4P7).

External collaborations were also important. The senior manager noted that with the external relationships for an STM publisher, the customer base and supplier base were almost identical. But the nature of these relationships was evolving. The editorial manager noted that they worked with external suppliers in a much more collaborative way than they had in the past where the relationship was more that of a service provider: she described, as an example, a more creative relationship with an external project manager: ‘we needed something a bit more collaborative, something that was going to work for both our advantages’ (C4P6). The production head noted that in developing supplier relationships it was noticeable that they were getting more embedded with their typesetters, printers and developers, solving problems together about, for instance, rendering specialist material digitally: ‘it is a much deeper conversation than it would have been’ (C4P10)



## **11.5 Analysis of the data: Workspaces**

Already throughout the interviews above it can be seen that the workspace design had clearly been embedded with the new approaches to collaboration. Projects and activities described show the spaces were being used in a variety of ways from informal chats to remote screen-based working meetings. More innovative get togethers were also described, from Lego-based serious play sprints to tea parties themed to celebrate literary characters. One point about the design raised by the senior manager was that it was important to get the ratio of space per person right: to change behaviour there needed to be enough opportunities to break out and use a booth or a hub: as he said ‘ you get a tipping point’ which would not be reached if they were mean with the space (C4P3). Balancing noisy spaces with quiet ones and fluid ways to move between them was also a consideration. He raised a further point: the digital businesses are used to working in this sort of space and external guests coming in are impressed by the sort of organisation it is, something the communications manager supported (C4P3, C4 P4).

### **Observations**

In order to look more closely at the workspaces themselves, the case study used observation as a data collection method (as outlined above). This was particularly important in order to see how far the spaces were used in the way described by the interviewees. This section reviews the data that emerged from the observations.

There was no marked difference between the two observation hours, suggesting that the pattern of behaviour was reasonably consistent. The number of people who used the spaces was 11 the first time and 16 the second (including those already in the space). The number of people who entered the space during that time were nine people the first time and 12 the second time. Not all booths therefore were used at any one time. Throughout the

observation periods there were several instances of booths being used by individuals having phone conversations (three each time); the rest of the meetings involved two or three people. There was one exception with a larger meeting of ten people that took place during the first observation (not included in the counts above).

The spaces were used for a variety of things from phone calls, skype calls and short discussions. There was a sense of quiet activity and it was very easy for people to come and go. Where the duration of meetings was noted in the second observation, over half were short, lasting 15 minutes or less. Only the one larger meeting noted went on for the whole time. This suggests the use of these for quick points of connection which reinforces what emerged from the interviews: the ability to go through something and reach a decision swiftly had been noted, so avoiding the need for more formal meetings.

It is noticeable that behaviour was informal. Even on the longer meeting people came and went from the meeting and when it finished some people went into another room to continue the discussion. This supports the culture of informal, flexible meetings that was noted from the interviews. It was noticeable that people when meeting with another person, always spent a few moments to discuss what style of booth they would choose to sit in. It was also noted that external meetings did not take place here. All those using the spaces were staff.

The spaces often contained props of various sorts including diagrams on whiteboards, post-it notes and index cards on a magnetic board. These were used in most of the meetings but some charts and post-it notes also remained from previous meetings. This appeared to reflect the importance of preserving thinking and were perhaps the clearest evidence of collaborative working taking place in terms of brainstorming and ideas sharing via these

props. The more open area was particularly used in this way as a wall was hung with a large amount of post-its and diagrams. This area was not used by anyone while under observation and there was perhaps a sense of this space being owned by a particular project that was in development. Technology was used regularly – in particular the use of laptops and projecting laptop on screen.

Overall, the observations reinforced the views expressed in the interviews; while the meeting spaces were not filled completely at all times, it was evident that the booths and open spaces provided an opportunity for people to connect on a continuous basis in a quick and easy way. People moved in and out of the space regularly and quick productive discussions appeared to be taking place. The observations could not support whether the meetings were collaborative in terms of allowing people to meet others from different departments and make new connections. However, the ease with which people could have discussions and get meetings done efficiently and quickly appeared to support a sense that the culture was becoming more informal and collaborative.

## **11.6 Conclusion**

The data, reviewed at a quantitative level and at a qualitative level, reinforced that a culture of collaboration was prevalent in the organisation. The interviews showed this is important both at an individual level (for motivation, knowledge sharing and efficiency) as well as at a corporate level (for innovation, ideas development, problem solving and strategic change). As with Case Three, there was recognition across the company that collaboration was central to the company's strategy moving forward.

The participants clearly acknowledged that a collaborative culture is important as it is seen to offer the opportunity for the company to adapt to a changing environment.

Collaboration can help the company to initiate and test ways to reinvent itself. This is not just about collaborating on specific, pre-determined projects. The aim of encouraging a collaborative environment is to create situations in which new ideas around content might emerge, to let collaborations surface and take on their own lives. The suggestion from the senior managers is that the solutions required to move forward in a changing digital environment are not yet known, but the collaborative activity, if facilitated effectively, should lead to these solutions emerging.

The workplace, as the central plank of the change programme, was central to enabling collaboration to happen; effective collaboration arises from effective communication, easy ways to connect, serendipitous occasions and easy relaxed working which instils trust. The workspaces were inseparable from this: they facilitated a style of working which in turn encouraged regular informal connection and that led to effective and innovative collaborations. Workspaces allow easy knowledge sharing which, if done effectively, lead to successful collaboration. This helps individuals develop collaborative ways of thinking which in turn helps create the collaborative organisation (Sawyer, 2017). In this way this case study reflects that, with the successful organisation of a workspace (physical and remote), with an explicit message of collaboration, a culture of collaboration can be facilitated.

## Chapter 12 Discussion

### 12.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a cross-comparison of the case studies, drawing out the key themes that emerged from the research as a whole. While the cases come from different sectors of the publishing industry, the collaborations studied share similar characteristics. They all reflect the way the industry is responding to digital change by collaborating with wider range of partners from the creative sector and developing new collaborative practices.

The chapter will argue that, because the digital environment is changing the way publishers operate, more collaborative activity is required as a response. While publishing has always been a collaborative activity, it is developing new ways of collaborating, as these cases studies attest; they are connecting with a wider range of partners in the creative sector and they are formed and managed in new ways. The evidence suggests that these cases are all entrepreneurial and/or exploratory in outlook when tested against the typology of Kaats and Opheij (2013). The cases all share characteristics that reflect their entrepreneurial and exploratory nature. Furthermore, because these cases all turned out to be successful in various ways, they illustrate key attributes for effective collaboration, such as vision forming, network behaviour and creativity; these different attributes can be grouped according to the stages of collaboration: *forming*, *operating* and *outcomes*. The first three cases have been examined in relation to these stages. In relation to forming collaborations, theories about collaborative behaviour and networks, particularly in creative projects, are applicable to all these cases examined. Once formed, these collaborations operate in particular ways that can be seen to be significant for success. They also have similar attitudes to the outcomes; the resulting projects are not always expected or predicted but are creative and lead to significant learning. The remaining question is how to create conditions for collaborations like this to

flourish; the evidence provided by the final case suggests a way to develop an organisational culture that instigates collaborations effectively.

## **12.2 Structure of the chapter**

The chapter provides brief summaries of the cases, as a recap and then contextualises the cases in the context of digital transformation and creative industries. The chapter then takes a two-part approach. First it looks at how far the cases can be regarded as entrepreneurial and explorative, looking at the collaborations holistically. Then it focuses in on cases to summarise their shared characteristics; from this analysis, themes that illustrate network and collaboration theories are highlighted. The fourth case provides an opportunity to examine themes that look at ways to inspire new ideas and facilitate the sort of collaborations that the first three cases represent; this case assesses issues around organisational culture that can foster effective collaboration.

## **12.3 Overview to the cases**

As noted by the publisher in Case One, all collaborations are different: ‘I would say almost every partnership is new... everyone is made up as you go along’ (C1P1 p2). In this way each case tells a different story. This section provides a brief recap of each case, providing a summary of its key features.

Case One, an example of a consumer-oriented game book, examines the way different creative people, from composers to games producers, come together to work on a project; it looks at how they get involved in the development of the idea and extend it through their collective creativity. This case is of particular interest in relation to the issues around the collaboration with different areas of the creative industries discussed in Chapter three. The case involves creative individuals rather than companies and, as such, reflects a growing

importance of the creative network in order to connect, and reconnect, to such people for each new project. The case also highlights an unusual role for publishers as supporters and investors in projects.

Case Two examines a carefully managed collaboration between a creative organisation and a publisher to produce an educational product. This collaboration can be regarded as more traditional in the way it is organised, but it reflects a new approach to working with a creative partner to develop an innovative publishing project. The connection with the creative industries, through the development of the relationship with the arts organisation, is much more embedded and developed for the longer term in this case study, compared with the previous one.

Case Three draws out the key issues of a larger academic digital project. Formal project management techniques are in place but also informality is also required at points; it shows how companies need to negotiate a balance between these two styles of project management for particular types of non-traditional project. This is particularly important where the scale of the project could disrupt the day to day business of the company. In particular, this case study is of value because it shows that, in certain circumstances, collaborating with another publishing company for digital projects may be essential even if in other arenas they remain competitors.

In this chapter, the first three cases will be referred to as *project cases*, as they focus on product development of specific creative digital projects and they have some links between them. While these projects are not necessarily developing highly innovative products all are doing something new, in a new way, through the collaboration. Cases One, Two and Three extend the application of digital technology in some way, for instance, by using iBooks author to produce a highly crafted interactive book (Case Two) or integrating

game and storytelling (Case One). In all the projects there is an element of hand crafting in building the product (unlike standard ebooks) that means these cases require levels of expertise and a certain type of collaborative behaviour in order to develop something new. For ease, Appendix six (p431) contains all the participant tables that appeared in the individual Case chapters so the codes for the transcripts can be found in one place.

All three cases are experimental and so the outcomes are not necessarily guaranteed; in that sense, they are speculative. The organisations admit that they want to try something innovative and take risks; for instance, the education case the participants comment on the complexity of their project and state they were unsure at first as to whether they would be able to achieve what they set out to do.

The final case, Case Four, looks at the elements of a change programme, based around relocation and workspace design, that were explicitly related to the desire to encourage more collaborative activity in the company. The case explores the ways external and internal collaborations can be encouraged through organisational culture, communication and workplace environments. The culture that is being nurtured in the organisation focuses on simplifying the way people connect with each other, through physical and digital spaces, so allowing the organisations to be flexible while managing complex new projects.

## **12.4 The challenges of digital development**

The collaborations studied are situated within the wider context of the publisher's response to digital transformation; they all attempt to develop new types of digital products, working with other companies and individuals from the wider creative industries. As chapter four outlines (p109), digital transformation requires some changes in behaviour for the



publishing sector: the industry participants reinforced this expectation in the survey; they feel that collaboration is regarded as one important way to bring new digital ideas to fruition.

Additionally, the survey participants felt it was important to link up with wider creative industry partners. Chapter five (p160) examines publishing's position in the creative sector and why it is feasible for publishers to collaborate more widely with creative industry partners, providing opportunities to share knowledge and creativity. The literature reflected that all creative businesses are increasingly facing similar challenges and need to collaborate more widely to improve their collective competitiveness; connecting with other industries in the sector is relatively easy because of their shared ways of behaving, particularly in relation to projects (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013; Marsden, 2017), while they can learn from each other and produce something that they could not have done alone (Gauntlett, 2011). The collaborations under review reflect the importance of making connections with the wider sector.

The project cases tackle a particular challenge for digital development: creating new digital products. In examining the evolution of the publishing industry, it is clear it has been continuously innovative both in content (i.e. different types of content for different markets, new ways of writing) and form (from new printing techniques to new formats like Penguin paperbacks). However, though the industry is always evolving, certain aspects of publishing such as the workflow, from manuscript to bookshop, have become central to the way the publishing houses operate. As Padmini Ray Murray and Claire Squires say, 'The publishing value chain has remained relatively consistent since the invention of the printing press' (Ray Murray and Squires, 2013). This, to some extent, limits certain sorts of digital innovation that would not be able to make effective use of that workflow.

Publishing theorists like Michael Bhaskar (2013) and Brian O’Leary (2011) call for new ways of thinking about publishing in relation to the challenges of digital environment. As Ray Murray and Squires state: ‘The traditional value chain...is being disrupted and disintermediated at every stage’ (Ray Murray and Squires, 2013). Digital transformation has created instability and disruption that means organisations require more creativity and innovation (Kung, 2008). Digital media offers the opportunity to develop new products but this can be a challenge if a business is not set up to innovate effectively. While publishing innovates and has developed flexible processes in order to do so, digital experimentation is demanding and requires an iterative approach; it needs a different application of resources (e.g. user experience design up front, or rendering of content into adaptable digital formats) and on-going testing and development, which can be expensive and time-consuming in comparison to the smooth operation of the existing business processes. As noted by John Thompson, innovative products need to be led by the market, rather than by the technology, so understanding the context of their use is important (Thompson, 2005:318). Digital products (beyond standard ebooks) tend to be complex and the markets for them can be unpredictable so publishers can find it challenging to work on them; they may not necessarily have the expertise in-house nor the resource to spend a lot of money on buying in those skills; they may not want to commit to large digital developments when it is difficult to assess the market potential for those sorts of innovations. Nevertheless, publishers need to manage new ways to innovate in digital products and learn to ‘fail better’, (Gaiman, cited by Nawotka, 2013).

## **12.5 The opportunities for creative collaboration**

With that context in mind, the project case studies in this research examine the opportunities to innovate through collaboration. The products that are developed in the cases offer services to the market (particularly the educational and academic cases) and are defined

by market need (Thompson, 2005). The products are all experimental in different ways: the first around game books; the second around an interactive approach to education curriculum; while the third brings together complex range of different content types working with competitors to develop a product with critical mass. Converged products like these are emerging as part of the new digital landscape (Jenkins, 2008; Weedon et al, 2014); they reflect themes of convergence as they combine different media (such as audio and video performances) and combine skills from different sorts of creative businesses (such as games producers, user designers, game illustrators, storyboard writers and music composers) in order to develop new product types. In this way, these projects represent the sort of product diversity that creative businesses need to nurture.

These sorts of projects, then, are only possible where they are able to bring in expertise from other areas and sectors. Collaborating in new ways around digital products is one way to develop expertise and learn from others; collaborations can bring knowledge from others to the project, such as technical capabilities or market understanding; it can also mean access to different sorts of content and financial risk can be shared between partners where projects are complex and outcomes uncertain (Kaats and Opheij, 2013; Osborn and Hagedoorn, 1997). Collaborations can be effective sites for experimentation without disturbing the day to day work of the organisation which is operating successfully. As evidenced in the survey in chapter four (p138) the industry leaders not only recognise the importance of collaboration but are working with new sorts of partners in new sorts of ways already; furthermore, they recognise that the structure of their companies may need to be adjusted in order to accommodate new approaches to digital publishing, including the ability to collaborate with a wider range of partners and to do so more frequently.

## **12.6 New style collaboration: entrepreneurial and explorative**

If being creative about collaboration is central to publishers wanting to develop digital products and strategies, and industry leaders feel they are undertaking new styles of collaboration, what are the aspects of the collaboration cases that could be regarded as new? One of the ways to test newness is to see which of the four categories laid out by Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij (2014) they fit. The case study chapters have shown that each case fits within either an entrepreneurial or explorative framework, or reflects elements of both; as Kaats and Opheij attest, these two types of collaborations are more complex and open ended than the transactional and functional types. The cases under review reflect a combination of the features of explorative and entrepreneurial collaborations and are not always wholly of one sort or the other; as Kaats and Opheij state ‘most partnerships are actually interim and thereby derive qualities from two or more basic models’ (2014:27). With that in mind, however, the cases can all be seen to reflect four attributes that are central to both these styles of partnerships. These attributes are:

- the diversity of partners they connect with;
- the focus on being innovative;
- the equality of the partners and
- the expectations for the sorts of outcomes that may emerge.

### **Requirement of a range of partners**

The first feature that can be observed across all the case studies is that these projects cannot be undertaken alone. All the projects involve working with newer sorts of organisations or individuals that the companies have not worked with before as they gain content or expertise from other parts of the creative sector. The education project requires the content from the arts organisation; the technological complexity of the consumer game book requires software

expertise and different approaches to writing and illustration that are new to the publisher; the academic project requires competitors to come together to compete effectively against new market entrants. The fourth case embodies a recognition that people need to be open to collaboration in order to learn and develop new projects and improve processes. This reinforces the view of Kaats and Opheij when they state: ‘it is often better to learn together, than to leave everyone to think and work in his own context’ (2014:9).

Additionally, projects evolve and so further new people come on board: the digital developer who worked on Case Three, the academic case, notes ‘certain sorts of needs evolve in a project and then there are roles you don’t stipulate for that you need to have and [which] become quite valuable and finding someone who is actually able to do them becomes a critical part of it.’ (C3P5). Those participating in the projects recognise that collaboration with wider range of people brings divergent thinking that can lead to creative leaps (Bilton, 2006; Kung 2008; Uzzi and Spiro 2005); by working together they learn from each other and consolidate new approaches to creative thinking for product development (Kaats and Opheij: 2014).

### **Focus on innovation**

In the models of explorative and entrepreneurial collaborations there is a focus on innovation and experimentation. The cases centre on developing new products concurrently with developing new technologies for their content; they also are interested in penetrating new markets (such as the digital academic market for the academic case, or the education market for the arts organisation). The cases, therefore, reflect approaches undertaking creative digital innovation.

There is an issue of sustainability to continue to find new products and set up new collaborations of this sort which are complex, innovative and experimental. However, the

fourth case examines a way to manage this through a workspace and environment that encourages collaborative behaviour. The emphasis in this case is on internal collaboration and sharing expertise across the business. This builds on the recognition that sharing brings more knowledge (Gauntlett, 2011; Jenkins, 2008; Kaats and Opheij, 2014; Levy, 1999). It also shows that encouraging people to develop networks is important for developing new collaborative ideas. The network (in this case the internal network) holds value that can be utilised (Daskalaki, 2010; Heebels et al., 2013; Kogut, 2000; Scolari, 2019) and the culture of the organisation (including the physical environment) can support this.

### **Partners are equal**

An important characteristic of both entrepreneurial and explorative collaborations is the fact that while the companies involved may be of different sizes, everyone is regarded as equal. This is evidenced in the case studies: in the education case the publisher is considerably larger than the arts organisation, when taken in its global reach, but they operate as equals in the collaboration. In the consumer case while the publisher is an organisation, several of the creative people are individual freelancers; nevertheless, they all treat each other as equals (as evidenced in their eliciting advice from all parties in the project). Commitment is required from each partner equally and high levels of involvement can be seen in the projects. The equality reflects a level of trust between partners which appears very important for a project's efficacy; as noted by the survey (p138), building trust between partners is important and the cases reinforce this through the way they operate in decision making and problem solving (as will be seen when examining the shared characteristics below).

### **Varied expected outcomes**

The final key attribute of both entrepreneurial and explorative collaboration is that they tend to be very open-ended in their outlook, with no fixed outcome, particularly the explorative

collaborations (Kaats and Opheij, 2014). Partners in the explorative type of collaboration are considered suitably matched and able to cooperate to renew their own knowledge levels (2014:25); there is ‘no clearly delineated result’ but a ‘catalytic theme’ (2014:25). For the entrepreneurial sorts of collaborations there are particular expectations that a product or service will emerge from it but there is not necessarily a ‘precise description of the expected results’ (2014:27); promoting invention and development are at the heart of this sort of collaboration (2014:26). When asked, it is apparent that the participants in the cases do not look primarily for commercial success; rather, other aspects of the collaboration are regarded as equally important. While the project cases do have a product they were aiming to make, they recognise that they are experimenting and that there is some flexibility in outcomes; the publisher of the gamebook, Case One, does not know if their vision for the app is at all achievable, while the educational project manager realises curriculum design is a challenge they have not undertaken before. They enter into these collaborations with the expectation that they will learn from each other and develop creative approaches to project development. They fulfil the view of Richard Osborn and John Hagedoorn who (1997) suggest collaborations can be about building knowledge and understanding; they are not set up just to fulfil commercial imperatives.

The collaborative environment produced by the fourth case facilitates the opportunity to stimulate more open ended, explorative collaboration; the aim is to create a culture where exploration can take place. As Kaats and Opheij state, explorative collaborations ‘put accessibility and interaction centre stage’ (2013:26); the work place environment and the mindset nurtured by the fourth case focus on encouraging these opportunities.

## 12.7 Shared characteristics

The case studies, therefore, are evidence that new, experimental, digital collaborations are taking place as a response to the digital environment; they reflect features that show that the collaborations are entrepreneurial and explorative. Looking more closely at the cases it can be seen they share certain characteristics. When these cases were chosen it was not clear how successful they would prove to be, but subsequently it is clear they all reflect levels of success and so these identified characteristics may indicate ways to set up and run effective new-style collaborations. These characteristics presented are a synthesis of the findings from all the stages, the formation, operation and outcomes of the cases; in order to see where each characteristic fits in this process of collaboration, table 12.1 shows each characteristic mapped to the different stages. Each of the identified characteristics is examined in turn, reflecting on evidence drawn from the cross comparison of the case studies.

<b>COLLABORATIVE STAGE</b>	<b>Identified characteristics</b>
FORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size of collaboration</li> <li>• The role of the broker</li> <li>• Centrality of networks</li> <li>• Vision development</li> </ul>
OPERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speed of set up</li> <li>• Project management techniques</li> <li>• Decision making and autonomy</li> <li>• Creative project ecologies</li> </ul>
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of success</li> <li>• Learning, content and creativity</li> </ul>

**Table 12:1 characteristics by stage in the collaboration process**



### **Size of collaboration**

The projects all involve small numbers of people. This appears to be an important aspect of their success and writers such as Charles Leadbeater note that at the start of a project a small creative network is the one that, even if it subsequently grows, allows for diverse voices to be heard and flexible working practices to be put in place (2009). All these projects, in their development stages, operate as small satellite groups, separate from the day to day business of the publishing company. Even the academic project, which is a much more ambitious, database-based project, and so requires more people working on it doing various functions, has a small core team of people responsible for developing the vision, focusing on the key elements of the product and ensuring project management continues. This way of managing scale appears to be important from the point of view of running it effectively. Those involved in wider aspects such as rights management or copy editing are not as close to the project. This reflects David Gauntlett's consideration that the most effective projects for reaching creative solutions involve a small group at their heart (2011). Small manageable sizes are important for complex projects; everyone is alert to the central goal and keeps to the core vision (Kaats and Opheij, 2014). Lucy Kung (2008) notes too that it is easier for smaller teams to act autonomously and that allows them to be more creative. For John Levine and Richard Moreland, a smaller size (2004) provides an emotionally supportive environment that allows people freedom to express creative ideas, which is similar to Michael Farrell's collaborative circles (2003) or Keith Sawyer's groups (2017).

### **The role of the broker**

Even a small project team requires some catalyst to draw the team together. It is significant that the three project cases all involve people who play the part of a broker. This is a role, described within network theory, which is particularly important at the forming, or convening stage of a collaboration (Farrell, 2003; Levine and Moreland, 2004; Wood and Gray, 1991). In

these cases, this role can be observed in different ways. It is most clearly seen in the education project, Case Two, where there is the broker who is pivotal both to the development of the idea as well as to the setting up and managing of the relationship and project. He is the convenor of the Wood and Gray's collaborations (1991) and is particularly proactive. In this case an additional broker role also emerges where the publisher in the publishing house is required to be the link between the external arts organisation and different functions within the house (such as desk editorial or software development). Both roles are able to connect to each other through the understanding they have of each other's organisations. The project manager, based on the arts side, acts as a bridge between the two organisations and he understands both sides of the collaboration. This role is complemented by the publisher, who is also able to connect effectively, partly because they are accustomed to adapting and creating an empathetic environment for those who are not part of the publishing house, such as authors. These two broker types understand and use the language of each other's environments and so they are able to communicate and collaborate effectively. They bring experience from past roles and other projects which helps them understand the way the other person and their organisation works. It seems these brokers are strong because they are able to talk to each other knowledgeably, and negotiate effectively because of this knowledge. This, in turn, leads to the new opportunities as brokers nurture the knowledge exchange that is required for innovation, supported in this activity because they understand both groups: 'Idea generation at some point involves someone moving knowledge from this group to that, or combining bits of knowledge across groups' (Burt, 2004:356).

This pattern of shared knowledge and language for those who broker the collaborations can also be seen in the other projects. The developers setting up the academic projects. Case Three, are all people who have worked originally in publishing and who have then moved into digital working. Therefore, as with the education case, they can speak the

language both of publishing and of software development. Meanwhile the publisher of the gamebook understands the environment of the software developer enough to be able to recognise what the product is aiming to do and how it can be done, so he can articulate the vision effectively to the publishing house.

These broker roles are important not just because they can facilitate effective collaboration but also because they are also able to spot opportunity. In terms of network theory, as outlined in chapter six (p178), brokers help cross structural holes in the network (Burt, 2004); their ability to connect across gaps and to act in an entrepreneurial way is important as this leads to innovation and creativity (Granovetter, 1973). The brokers see where connections across networks might lead to a fruitful collaboration, just as the education project manager saw how to draw the links between the arts organisation and publisher together. As publishers increasingly look at ways to collaborate beyond the boundaries of their traditional operations, identifying types of people who can become brokers becomes very important to cross big gaps in any network, make new connections and recognise the way collaboration can lead to creative opportunities and solutions. These sorts of people are ‘collaborative leaders’ (Kaats and Opheij, 2014 citing Chrislip and Larson, 1994: 85); they are people who can ‘bring together interested parties, facilitate their interaction, remain neutral, deal with complexity and identify with a range of diverse interests’ (Kaats and Opheij: 2014:43); this highlights their interdisciplinarity and their ability to draw together complex innovative collaborations.

### **The centrality of networks**

While the broker plays a particular role in crossing gaps in networks, the network as a whole is important for effective project formation, bringing people together in a number of ways. If, as outlined in chapter seven (p199), creative collaborations require divergent thinking

(Levine and Moreland, 2004), then the quality of the network is important to connect diverse people. These projects are all facilitated by the workings of the network and, if one considers their success, the network could be regarded as a feature of their success.

A blend of older, embedded networks with newly growing entrepreneurial networks appear at play with the project cases. Old networks are necessary to establish connections quickly, reflecting some of the expected characteristics of the creative industries (Starkey, 2000; Uzzi 1997): for example, in the consumer project the publisher had worked previously with the digital developers; on the academic project the digital consultant had worked with the content before. Some of these connections might be loose, reflecting the weak ties of Mark Granovetter (1973): for example, the education publisher knows the work of the project manager at the arts organisation, though he has not worked with him directly; instead he is connected indirectly to the project manager by the freelancer; but prior knowledge of each other leads to a readiness to connect up. Some links are very new, such as the composer who is on board for the consumer project; in his case serendipity plays a part in the creation of the connection as he got in touch with the software team at just the time when they needed a composer; this adds dynamism and newness to the project, reflecting the creative project ecologies of Gernot Grabher (2004). Old, new, strong and weak ties are all at play in these projects.

The importance of networks is not only associated with the projects specifically. The loose ties are also reflected in the way people connect before there are any actual projects in development; for example, the illustrator connected with the digital developer at a conference and it was some time before a project evolved. While these links are loose, a trust develops, after a serendipitous meeting or an unexpected link in their past. It is significant that often there is a long-laid foundation, even though a project does not emerge immediately. The

network, therefore, holds latent value (Wittel 2001) that emerges when required; the loose ties make it more entrepreneurial (Burt, 2004) so creating an environment where more innovative projects may emerge from divergent groups of people; this could be seen to reflect the outer edges of the publisher's network behaviour examined by Barbara Heebels et al (2013).

The survey (p138) notes that publishers are looking for trusted partners, and the participants of the case studies reflect on the confidence in each other's expertise. The network represents this sort of trust, even for those not directly connected to each other; the knowledge and expertise distributed throughout the network are important in order to deal effectively with the complexity of the project once it is up and running and this too helps builds the trust between partners. The network therefore leads to creativity and diversity but also provides security for effective cooperation (Daskalakai 2010).

If the qualities of a network are critical to certain types of collaboration, what sort of network should publishers be developing for new types of digital collaborations? The ideal network for creative collaborations looks for balance between the embedded network which provides an opportunity to take risks (Uzzi, 1997) and the need to be innovative through entrepreneurial, open networks and loose ties (Burt,1992). This balance between the strong and weak ties, newer and older connections seems to be important for these projects so that they form in such a way that makes them as creative and risk-taking as they need to be to innovate. These projects successfully embodied that balance. The network, therefore, is of value for being able to lead to innovative responses when activated. In order to achieve this type of network the right sort of people are required: they need to have an entrepreneurial outlook in order to straddle the weak ties, make diverse connections and spot opportunities for new projects (Granovetter, 1973). The fourth case reflects a recognition that, through

creative and collaborative environments, people like this can be nurtured. In this case the workspace itself opens up opportunities for people to make serendipitous connections and it facilitates the creation of new links and ties along which knowledge and ideas can flow; in this way the publisher can encourage new networks to evolve.

### **Vision development**

One further aspect of the formation stages of collaboration is the importance of the vision development that is both focused and flexible. A characteristic of all the projects is the clarity of their vision. The effectiveness of small project teams is linked to the fact the vision can be clearly articulated between them. In the case studies the broker role plays a central part in vision development; they become the vision owner. In the education case, Case Two, for instance, the project manager/broker sets up clear definitions of what the project is attempting to do; this is similarly laid out by the consultant on the academic case (Case Three). This is then articulated to the core team; in all the cases the participants are consistent in describing the vision for the project, usually expressing it both in terms of what it is (e.g. the gamebook) and in how innovative it is aiming to be (building critical mass and offering new ways to navigate the content for the academic project, for instance). Even where the team partners sit in very different organisations or work remotely as individuals, it is noticeable how clear the vision is to them all.

This vision is then devolved in various ways beyond the core team. For the education case this happens most clearly; the freelancer is the person who outlines to the freelance writers what is required; as a key stakeholder she is a conduit to interpreting the vision in a way that makes sense for the freelancers and their briefs. The effectiveness of this approach to devolving the vision can be seen in the critical success of the final educational product.

However, the detail of the vision is not shared with all those involved in the project. Those on the periphery of the project are usually sitting within the mainstream parts of the publishing business and not extracted to work on the project separately; they undertake a precise role in the project which is slotted into traditional workflow of the company. In the academic case, for instance, those getting rights organised at the competitor end are not as involved in the vision for the project as a whole; functional roles of this sort remain within the day to day functions of the business, separate from the main project team. This is not to say the wider organisations are not aware of the vision. The manager at the arts organisation, in Case Two, when talking about the relationship with the publisher, says ‘our missions are different but goals have to be common enough’ (C2P4:10). The vision development needs to accommodate the fact that the collaborative partners come from different organisations which have slightly different missions. The vision has to be flexible to allow for different nuances between organisations, without being dominated by one. The effectiveness of the shared vision is a critical part of a succession collaboration: ‘shared ambition has to be one that is important to all the participating organisations’ (Kaats and Opheij, 2014; 43). Kaats and Opheij note that spending time on vision formation is key to the success of a project and that it ‘becomes a source of inspiration with a mobilising effect’ (Kaats and Opheij, 2014:57)

A further aspect of the flexibility of the vision is that it can evolve over time. The people at the core of the project are very close-knit, focused on the vision; and this in turn makes it easier for new ideas to come to fruition that can lead to a development of the vision. The project manager in the education case, Case Two, reflects on the creative impact of the project where the vision changed: initially the goal is to make money out of digital technology; however, the team start to recognise they are not be able to make a lot of money out of a digital resource; but the project that emerges from this is an important piece of curriculum design. Their biggest achievement is not what they originally set out to do, but it

comes about through the close knit formation of the team as it leads to important learning and problem solving: the project manager says 'it was exciting to think of new ways of doing things and then actually make them happen' (C2P3:9). It is possible, therefore, that a focused but flexible vision development facilitates creativity.

### **Speed of set up: flexible, latent organisations**

Once the projects are formed, the success of the projects appears to depend on the ability to get set up quickly and for the parent organisations to allow smaller, flexible units to emerge. The different participants are experts in their own area (whether illustrators, software developers, publishers); this expertise allows them all to be able to get on quickly with the project; as such they reflect the characteristic of Keith Negus's latent teams (2002): they know their roles and swiftly get up and running, without needing prior-knowledge of every person in the team. In addition, the organisations are able to allow individuals to join these projects outside of the day to day running of the company. While latent organisations tend to involve self-employed individuals (Negus, 2002), it is possible to see that the behaviours of latent organisations can exist within organisations too: people move out of day to day roles into creative projects (or work concurrently with them).

The flexibility of the wider organisation leads to project teams being set up quickly. This characteristic can also be observed in the final case, Case Four, about the workplace. The aim of the change programme in Case Four is to facilitate the coming together of teams so that they can configure and reconfigure easily (Bilton, 2006). The variety of connections the space allows to take place can lead to new projects; facilitating people mixing up quickly and easily is a feature of the workspace design. The intranet also leads to people making links to new internal collaborators. In this way the whole organisation works as a network from which new ideas and connections can arise; the organisation allows for the possibility for



latent organisations, focused on specific projects, to emerge from the day to day business activity and the workspaces allow collaborations to surface quickly. This allows organisation to respond quickly to new ideas; this ‘flexible, matrix-based’ (Bilton: 2006:49) organisation means projects can be assembled quickly and this embeds a level of organisational creativity in the structure.

Being able to operate flexibly appears, therefore, important for the operation of collaboration. Both the project cases and the workplace case suggest that structural elements can be put in place to facilitate collaboration, whether allowing projects to emerge and exist alongside the main organisations (as flexible latent organisations) or by making an environment and mindset that encourages nimbleness and connectivity. Both involve a level of flexibility that builds on the concepts of the agile organisations required to face digital transformation effectively (Bilton, 2006; Flew 2013).

### **Project management techniques: blending formality, informality and agility.**

Once fully in motion, all the projects adopt different project management tools, but in the style of their management certain similarities emerge. Kaats and Opheij note that ‘cooperation has an intrinsic tendency towards under-organisation’ (2014:58) but in examining exploratory and entrepreneurial partnerships they note that agreed project procedures are necessary. In the case studies, some formal project management techniques, such as agile management, are clearly employed, to varying degrees. However, a level of informality is also noted; in reviewing the characteristics of creative industry projects in chapter 5 (p160), it emerged that there are particular styles of project management that suit creative projects more than others, with flexibility being central to allowing creativity to emerge (Bilton, 2006; Flew, 2013; Kung, 2008).

In terms of the formal processes mentioned it is clear they are required, to ensure projects came to fruition; but due to the innovative nature of the projects, even when formal project management techniques are used, adaptable approaches, that allow for changes of direction to be made quickly, are important. Agile methodology introduces a formal process which allows for iteration as the project develops and sets up a series of short-term goals that lead on, step by step, allowing each stage to be changed where needed. The agile process is discussed explicitly by participants in academic and workspace cases and the digital developers of consumer case also follow what was described as 'standard' project management planning. In the case of the education project, it is evident that one of the important roles of the project consultant is to create an environment which is explicitly designed to encourage productivity and decision making. Here, formal processes are important because the two organisations (publishing and arts organisation) work in very different ways and have their own separate range of processes which need to be accommodated to some extent. This reflects one of the characteristics of collaboration outlined in chapter seven (p199) where specially designed formal procedures are required for each collaboration (Gajda, 2004; Levine and Moreland, 2004); Kaats and Opheij also recognise that each partnership will have its own logic for operation (2014:22).

However, a level of informality also needs to exist as collaborations are an evolving process (Gajda, 2004). The manager in the academic case acknowledges some formality is required to keep everyone informed of the project (2004:8) but they also note that 'formal structures can hinder fast progress' (2004:11). Conditions need to be created to ensure 'effective opportunities for interaction' (Kaats and Opheij 2014:25) without barriers. Methods of communication are informal in the all the project case studies and participants express satisfaction that this was the case; it is significant that there is not an overload of large meetings or formal stages. For the fourth case the avoidance of large meetings is also

seen to be a benefit of the more flexible spaces which create the opportunities for ad hoc chats. People on the project cases comment that they trust other people to undertake their part of the project without needing to check in regularly. Additionally, new ideas emerge in informal ways: for instance, the illustrator considers the navigation issues for the consumer through the open call to team members to help with problem solving. These cases all have an open environment in which participants can suggest solutions and take ideas further.

This leads to the conclusion that creative projects need to be ‘unencumbered by bureaucracy’ (Kung, 2008:216) to be agile and effective, even though the stability and resources of the wider organisation need to be made available. A nimble attitude to project management appears to be important across the case studies where a balance needs to be established between formal and informal methods (Bilton, 2006; Kung, 2008); this is specifically important for the sort of collaborative activity which is intended to lead to breakthroughs (Levine and Moreland, 2004). Stability is required to take risks effectively, but systems must be open enough to encompass new ideas (Uzzi and Spiro, 2005). This balance of formal and informal approaches reflects new styles of working for publishing projects, in contrast with the more formal structures in place centred on traditional workflows.

### **Decision making and autonomy**

One particular area where formality and informality combine is in decision-making. This surfaces in all the project case studies and is particularly important when undertaking new activities where decision making is not clear cut nor straight forward, but might require compromise (for example with the education project between the publisher and the arts organisation). Participants all note that decisions are made quickly and it appears that the seniority of people on the central team is a factor in that happening. Because all the projects are taking risks, senior people have to be involved to champion the project within the

organisation (e.g. the publisher within his education publisher company). The effect of this, however, is to ensure decision making at the publisher end is reasonably quick. While openness is required, this must not be at the detriment of decisiveness. Collaborations like these need to move away from issues of hierarchy and power between partners, which is why trust is important; nor should partners be overly modest or cautious: a balance is required as 'decisiveness is what is needed in this type of environment with the understanding it must be exercised with due diplomacy (Kaats and Opheij, 2014:26). Smaller collaborative teams allow increased autonomy and trust between partners (Levine and Moreland 2004).

Edwin Kaats and Wilfrid Opheij (2014) reinforce that the structure of successful entrepreneurial and explorative projects is not very hierarchical and the management style of the collaboration must be facilitating; nevertheless, those involved in the project must have autonomy to make decisions on behalf of their organisation and that appeared to be in evidence across the case studies. These cases reflect Kung's 'small-scale autonomy' (2008: 221) by which she means that large organisations are flexible and confident enough to allow individuals to have autonomy and independence when they operate in creative teams; this freedom is essential if the creative teams are to be effective.

It appears, in these cases, that this sort of decision making is only possible because the partners hold significant roles in their organisations or have high levels of expertise that makes them specialists. Those on the publishing side are senior, with financial and markets knowledge; the outside experts, such the digital software consultants, the illustrator or the arts organisations manager are either senior themselves or are all people who have extensive experience. This leads to a level of autonomy exhibited by the different participants so the project can stand alone and function without reference back to other people with the main organisations; this appears an important facet when dealing with complex, innovative

projects. It suggests that publishers need to allow senior or expert people, with decision making power, to participate in projects as part of the prerequisite for successful projects of this sort; these are often likely to be the same people developing valuable networks and brokering new ideas.

### **Creative Project ecologies**

As the projects evolve, they develop their own ways of working, their individual project ecologies (Grabher, 2004); these ecologies, although different from each other, allow them to utilise creative thinking and problem solving as well as develop their own approaches to project management and decision making; the projects do not replicate systems but each project has a different unique approach which in itself can prompt creativity (Grabher, 2004). What is important is recognising the projects have their own ecology even within the wider ecosystem of the publishing house.

The clearest example of this is the consumer case, Case One, where the individuals come together to solve problems and ensure the digital product they produce pushes boundaries and is creative; this is possible due to their very open approach to communication. While there are examples of creative thinking in the education and academic projects, encouraged by the openness of the project ecology, it appears that the most creative project, the gamebook of Case One, was the most open to everyone's ideas. This case is the smallest group but it was formed of the widest range of partners. The participants are also more accustomed to a different creative working culture from the game sector. For Gernot Grabher, this case would reflect a very creative project ecology (2004); it also reflects how far the participants allow divergent thinking to add to the creativity of the project (Uzzi and Sprio, 2005).

Creative project ecologies provide a system, or social process, for problem solving and cooperating; this means that while the collaboration can be creative, and can combine divergent and convergent thinking (Levine and Moreland 2004), by having some sort of structure, and a set of implicit rules for decision making, it is managing risk. Here too the theme of balance emerges as an ecology creates an equilibrium between creative freedom and project structure to ensure things can get done. The ecology itself allows the projects to take risks as it innovates.

### **Levels of success**

The final part of the process is the measurement of project success. The participants outline a variety of measures of success when discussing the projects. All the projects are concerned with creating products of value, but this is not measured only by financial success; the commercial imperative for the product is generally not rated as high as other reasons for undertaking the collaboration. The outcomes are also not always predicted ahead; Keith Sawyer notes that in creative groups ‘the outcome is not controlled by the management team’s agenda and is therefore less predictable’ (Sawyer, 2017:17), the management here referring to the parent companies: the collaborations take on their own varied sets of measures. Those participating comment that at the start they are not sure if what they want to achieve is possible: for instance in Case One, the gamebook, the publisher notes that he was not sure the gamebook could be made but was still motivated to try: ‘I just thought it was incredibly cool, and it was really ambitious and really different’ (C1P1: 3).

Producing something innovative in itself is regarded as an important outcome: for instance, the academic project (Case Three) is seen to be creating a very innovative platform; participants of the educational project (Case Two) are proud of the detailed, high quality work undertaken in relation to the text itself, as well as the way the digital text is enhanced

with rich audio and video content. One participant notes that the quality of their product has led to others following their model: 'I am very flattered, proud that they are imitating us' (C2P3:10), while another comments that they have 'a very warm feeling of everybody seeking to make something that would work' (C2P2:6).

The desire to undertake something for competitive reasons is apparent in the academic case (Case Three) where it is felt that the company must do something to stake a claim on a digital marketplace. For the consumer case, (Case One) the opportunity to work creatively with different partners is also regarded as an important outcome, as equally important as the product itself.

These projects reflect success in other way. All these products still exist and are continuing to be developed. Some have been more financially successful than the others, but they have all lasted and the relationships have continued to develop; the education project (Case Two) has continued with further editions with the arts organisation; the academic project (Case Three) continues to bring in significant new content partners on a regular basis; and the consumer product (Case One) has added more areas/stories within the app universe. What appears significant is that the application of digital technology in each of these products is also regarded as very successful. The participants take great pride in the innovative nature of the products and their critical success in terms of reviews and awards has also reinforced; in these cases, the collaboration has led to something pioneering in terms of new digital platforms for content; they have led to creative digital products. This suggests that the strategic importance of the projects for being forward thinking and innovative is recognised, even where the commercial gain is modest.

### **Learning, content and creativity.**

The measures of success go wider than the product. In working with a range of new partners there is the expectation among participants that they will learn something new from each other. This distinguishes these sorts of collaborations from more traditional transactional or functional collaborations (Kaats and Opheij 2014); the ability for an organisation to learn and be creative is an important theme for Kung (2008) and Bilton (2006). The participants state that they have learnt a lot of different things from the projects and their partners, whether about technology (all the cases), approaches to the user experience design (academic case), new ways of thinking about content (the consumer and academic case) or market (education case in terms of curriculum design, or the academic case in terms of an interdisciplinary approach to text) .

While the participants are keen to work with different people, there is a recognition in all the cases that it is important that most of the participants within the collaboration have understanding of, and expertise with, content: the right people are needed to deal with content properly. The digital developer in the academic case (Case Three), for instance, notes that detailed understanding of different sorts of content whatever your role in the project is ‘is almost essential for doing that sort of complex mix of content’ (C3P5:4); and this is supported by the project manager who says it was clear their focus always needed to be on the ‘content rather than the outer shell of the platform’ (C3P3:10). So, while there is the opportunity to learn new things, the content still sits at the centre of the project. Participants often mention their pride in the high quality of the content as a significant measure of the project’s success.

Participants also feel the collaboration has been creative; the product that emerges from the project reflects creativity itself; but, also, the participants note the creativity of the



process, often mention that the problem solving that took place as the project evolved has led to creative solutions. As one of the participants in the education case (Case Two) says, new ways of thinking are required: ‘you are all looking for new ways of thinking about something...and helping everybody to grow and think of new ways forward’ (C2P2:7).

Many of the participants are motivated by the creativity and learning of the projects; the challenges they pose are part of the attraction to join the project; the digital consultant in the academic case (Case Three), for instance, found it very interesting working with unusual and detailed content). They comment that the close-knit collaborative environment in itself is one they find fruitful and some note that this is also enhances their personal reputation as a forward-thinking the publisher.

There are some misgivings amongst the participants as they reflect up on the outcomes. There are some cases where reflection reveals some shortcomings: for instance, several mention that it was difficult to assess risk beforehand (Case One and Case Three) and in hindsight suggest that better deals could be done. In terms of creativity too there are occasions where larger, perhaps riskier, creative leaps could have been made (e.g. in terms of marketing and sales strategies for the education product). These projects are successful so it is difficult to draw a conclusion as to whether further creative leaps would have helped bring further success, or that the success achieved was because only because of the successful balance managed between the level of risk and creativity. Nevertheless, learning and creativity appear to be regarded as fundamental to the success of the projects.

## **12.8 Creating conditions to stimulate successful new collaborations**

The project cases show how certain characteristics, which reflect aspects of collaborative and network behaviour, can potentially lead to successful ways to experiment and innovate with

digital products. By understanding these, are there organisational, cultural and structural ways publishers can create conditions for these sorts of collaborations? Organisations need to be able to collaborate continuously in order to face the ‘complex issues of our day’ (Kaats and Opheij 2014:89) and so organisations need to find sustainable ways to collaborate around new ideas. As noted in the research methodology, there are not many of these sorts of digital projects but there may be ways to facilitate more of them through certain organisational changes. The fourth case offers a possible approach through its acknowledgement that collaboration and networking can be facilitated through organisational activity, whether redesigning physical spaces, creating effective intranets or instilling a culture of collaboration in its staff and encouraging new behaviours.

Case Four also reflects the importance of creating opportunity. It purposefully attempts to set up environments where connections between people might spark off ideas. New ideas can be about new products but they also see it as an important way to solve problems around increasing efficiency. This case recognises that collaboration and networking will lead to further creativity and knowledge sharing.

It is noticeable that the concepts featured in these projects often take a while to develop; the vision takes some time to evolve into something that can become a product idea; the education case, as the most extreme example, took years to become a project. New ideas need to be generated and then ideas need testing out before they might develop into a project. Case Four provides an environment where collaborative activity enables product idea to evolve and participants note how easy it is to moot an idea or pilot something in that environment.

In a wider sense, it is clear that people within the project cases are outward looking and recognise the continuous need for people to collaborate more; they are the sorts of

individuals open to collaboration. However, the manager in the academic case (Case Three), for example, states that her team needs help to think about ‘how to develop the vision and really think about these sorts of projects, because they are different from book publishing’ (C3P3:8). Case Four looks at how to get everyone in the organisation to understand importance of collaboration and break out of sort of traditional mind sets that the academic manager is thinking of. Instilling an understanding that collaboration is a way ahead is what the final case appears to have done successfully; everyone interviewed recognises both that collaboration is important and that the corporation is very focused on developing that culture. It is important that the publisher is focused on making collaboration easy, without necessarily knowing what the outcomes will be.

While it is apparent, from Case Four, that the environment can help create a collaborative frame of mind, it must be managed appropriately and supported by the behaviour and structure of the organisation. The illustrator in Case One cautions that ‘ping pong tables do not solve everything’ (C1P3:11) as he has experienced creative environments where this kind of resource is brought in to try and encourage collaboration. He notes that coming into publishing from the outside he has seen publishers try to emulate creative incubator sharing spaces simply to be disruptive; but it can be difficult to do it properly given they operate with a different sort of organisational structures; ‘it doesn’t matter how many things you put there to create that kind of cool, relaxed ambience, you keep the hierarchy the same and people feel intimidated to give an opinion to a manager’ (C1P3:12). In other words, while an organisation can create an interesting workspace, staff also need to feel encouraged to put new ideas forward, through an open and facilitating corporate culture. With regard to Case Four it appears that the workspace planning has led to changing mindsets. While structurally only limited changes have been made in terms of the overall management hierarchy, it appears that staff do feel empowered to share ideas and collaborate effectively.

## **12.9 Cultures for sustainable projects and on-going collaboration**

While organisations can put in place measures to support and stimulate new collaborations, there is another aspect to sustainability. Having outlined that these projects need to operate separately to be effective, the projects then face a difficulty as they integrate back into the publisher's organisation. The education and the academic case have both continued after the launch of the initial project; the education case has moved onto further projects while the academic case has continued a rolling programme of development. In these initial collaborations specific ways of operating are put into place that separate the project from the main publishing house; but longer terms it is difficult to maintain a wholly separate way of working. In both these cases the participants suggest that, longer term, different approaches are required to be taken which they regard as less creative but more sustainable, integrating the project into the day to day business of the organisation. In those cases, the initial project sponsors are not involved and the on-going management of the relationship is handed on to a new staff structure. However, the projects remain central to the strategy of the publishing houses; the houses therefore need to design ways to ensure continuing balance between new collaborative creativity and sustainable, integrated business practice. Examining the new structures subsequently put in place are beyond the scope of this research but the participants who had moved on from the projects hinted at the new ways of working, including organising around project teams using hybrid project management methods (waterfall combined with agile), bringing software development in-house and scheduling product iterations.

There is a dilemma here; the organisation needs to maintain some of the style of the original collaboration so as not to lose the qualities of a successful collaborative relationships, but it needs to move on and integrate the projects; the senior staff involved in the original project are not necessarily able to continue with the collaboration in an on-going way (particularly given the level of seniority and experience they may represent). Yet the creative

aspects of the collaboration that led to the original innovation may be lost if it is integrated too far into the day to day business of the business. In addition, to continue to develop innovative projects, the organisation needs to be able to move onto the next new partnership and maintain an ability to enter into new creative projects, using the staff who are experienced at collaborative work in this way.

Therefore, creating an effective environment in which to collaborate in an on-going way is also important. This means a more lasting collaborative environment needs to be created as the project continues. The education and academic case (Case Two and Case Three), as well as the workplace case (Case Four), recognise the need to collaborate over a period of time, with changing personnel and evolving project visions. The academic team see limits in using a lot of external people to collaborate to create the project; at each stage it is time consuming, while nimbleness and cost effectiveness is better achieved with some more in-house expertise. Their solution is to bring many of the aspects of the original project into their organisation; agility is achieved better with more in-house development, though there will remain a question about how innovative it can continue to be if in-house processes begin to take over. The last case also reflects a way to tackle the on-going need to collaborate; they recognise that collaboration can lead to suggestions for improvements and refinements of daily activity, as well as for development of new ideas. By creating an environment that encourages collaborative thinking they hope to integrate the benefits of collaboration into the business in an on-going way.

## **12.10 Conclusion**

These projects reflect new styles of collaborating. They are entrepreneurial and explorative, suited to the requirements of publishers looking to develop new ways to experiment, develop creative ideas and make connections with new partners. They share important characteristics

around the way they behave that suggest successful creative collaborations are ones which are small, flexible and open to different outcomes; participants share knowledge and inspire each other through divergent thinking; the projects reflect the importance of certain types of networks and brokers in their formation; and they require a balance between formal and informal ways of working as well as creativity and risk.

In addition, the projects operate autonomously as they sit outside the day to day business so do not impact on the existing hierarchies of the businesses and disrupt the main revenue generating activity of the publisher. The final case provides an example of a way to instil a culture that encourages agility and openness to connect and collaborate in a sustainable way. It is important, in particular, for creating an environment that facilitates network development which can, in turn, lead to further new ideas and collaborations.

If the shared characteristics of these projects are indicators for success then the organisation is in a position to manage ways to encourage further innovation. The organisation needs to be flexible in order to set up innovation projects and learn from them; it needs to be able to nurture brokers inside and outside of the company; and recognise value of network to operate in new way with new types of project ecologies. Traditional structures in publishing may not be able to accommodate this activity as easily as it should. As Kung states, ‘organisational structures must move from stable to fluid ones’ (2008:193) and companies may need to shift mindsets to manage cultural change effectively (Keller and Schaninger, 2019). Organisations, therefore, need processes which support specific projects and which encourage new collaborative activity across the business.

This builds on Kaats and Opheij (2014) to take their thinking about strategic partnerships further. They outline the conditions for successful collaborative activity, but, because they focus on the collaboration itself, they do not look at the parent organisations. This research

shows how organisations can facilitate such collaborative activity through nurturing certain network behaviours and cultivating structures that support experimental projects alongside routine activity. In this way, the research develops the concept of a flexible organisation and takes it further to show that publishers can both support collaborative activity through their organisational behaviour and structure, and instil collaborative thinking throughout the company. The final chapter will synthesise the research, presenting two concepts through which organisations might achieve these goals.

## **Chapter 13 Conclusion**

### **13.1 Overview of the research**

Publishing is a complex and evolved industry. It has developed structures and processes that have allowed it to adapt and reconfigure as it faces new challenges. One of the bigger challenges it has faced in its recent history is the rapid evolution of digital technology which has led to changes at all levels, from new sources and formats of content to new ways of distributing physical and digital material. Digital technology has led to great opportunities for publishers, while also changing the competitive environment in significant ways that are proving both stimulating and demanding. Publishing is responding in part to these challenges, but it needs to respond more rapidly, looking at the sorts of things it makes, as well as the way it makes them.

This thesis focused on examining one observable response to the changing digital environment, that of collaborative activity undertaken to develop digital products; the research, therefore, centred on creative digital collaboration in publishing, looking at both the way digital collaborative partnerships work and the way publishing companies might adapt to facilitate them. While publishers have always collaborated, the survey undertaken with senior industry practitioners showed that new styles of collaboration are taking place: the thesis therefore focused on examining what these collaborations are like, how they form and operate, and how publishers perceive the outcomes. As part of that examination it also looked at the way publishers can facilitate these sorts of collaborations.

In exploring the research themes, three central issues emerged: the importance of working with the wider creative industries; the value of networks to make new connections and generate new ideas; and that certain types of collaboration are more exploratory and entrepreneurial than others. When applied to the case studies, these themes lead to the



conclusion that, firstly, there are particular conditions that facilitate successful creative digital collaborations and, secondly, that work place design and corporate cultures can facilitate collaboration.

### **13.2 Ideal collaborations**

From exploring the case studies in depth, it is apparent that collaborations for new digital product development have characteristics that make them stand out from more usual ways of collaborating. These characteristics were examined in chapter twelve (p352) where the evidence suggests that they are essential to the effectiveness of the creative digital collaboration. They can be summarised as follows:

- **Networks:** Entrepreneurial-styled networks are central to their formation, where the structure of the network is loose and allows for creative leaps to be made between new partners, so creating conditions for creative projects
- **Brokers:** A broker is commonly needed to spot opportunities, make connections, bring the project members together, formulate the project and keep it on track
- **Vision:** The vision of the collaboration needs to be clear, but does not need to be shared very widely in the initial stages
- **Range of partners:** The project team needs to include a range of different partners, people who are reasonably senior and who feel empowered to engage with the sort of creative problem solving demanded by digital projects, though with project teams kept reasonably small
- **Autonomy:** The project team needs autonomy with regard to making decisions and to sit outside the usual hierarchy of the businesses from which they emerge so as to be responsive to the project needs rather than tied to the day to day operation of the publisher; the level of seniority and expertise of the partners is therefore important

- Project management styles: The project team needs to balance formal and informal styles of working in their project ecosystem
- Types of outcomes: The collaboration then are expected to lead to a variety of outcomes that reflect not only commercial imperatives but also a recognition of the importance of learning and creativity

The first three case studies show that creative digital collaborations which exhibit these new characteristics can be very effective. Additionally, the structure of these collaborations, and the way they relate to their wider organisations, reveal that there are ways that these projects can be undertaken without distracting the business from the day to day workflow of print and ebook production; as noted by one of the participants, innovative digital development took place without ‘derailing’ the business (C2P1).

### **13.3 Work space design and collaboration**

These collaborations also show that creativity is central to their way of forming and operating, particularly in relation to developing the more innovative aspects of the digital products. If creative collaborative activity is important for future digital development, then organisations need to consider how to encourage such behaviour to ensure more new ideas emerge. Case Four provided a study of one approach to help staff think and behave in more collaborative ways. The findings from that case suggested that workspace design, and related aspects such as the intranet, can help create an environment where new sorts of collaborations can take place. In this way, an organisation can create opportunities to collaborate through the spaces its staff inhabit; this can lead to the sort of serendipitous connections that the first three cases suggest are important for forming innovative collaborations. Case Four extends the theories of network and collaboration by showing how network value and collaborative activity can be embedded into the work culture of an organisation.

### 13.4 Structural approaches to collaboration

The findings show how collaborations can be set up and managed to achieve innovative outcomes. How can publishers make structural responses to ensure these sorts of effective collaborations continue takes place? From the understanding of network behaviour and creative digital collaboration two summary concepts can be seen to emerge from the research, concepts which bring to the fore the importance of organisational structure in collaborative activity; *para-organisations* and *collaborative mindsets*.

- *para-organisations* – where publishing companies can develop an organisational approach for effective digital innovation through smaller collaborative entities, and
- *collaborative mindset* – where publishing companies can embed a spirit of collaboration in their corporate culture.

These are terms coined by the researcher and emerge from the research, though they require further testing in order to be validated. Building on the publishing cases, the concepts reflect ways in which publishers can think flexibly about their structure and workplace behaviour.

#### **Para-organisation**

The first concept focuses on process. The collaborations shown in the cases all sit outside the core business. As such they seem to exist as separate entities alongside the business. The *para-organisation* is a way of articulating this: it is a small, flexible, alternative organisation which can swiftly step outside of the day to day activity of the publisher, sit alongside it and focus on the specific innovation they want to develop. The attributes noted above, that are required for ideal collaborations, are then embedded in these organisations.

The product case studies all indicate that a smaller collaborative organisation emerges from the main organisations and exists for the duration of the project. Even where the project

is going to continue and evolve, as in the case of the academic product (Case Three), in its first defining stage the project people work separately on it until it is up and running. This means that people in the wider organisation are not specifically drawn into the project, even when they may undertake some work on it (such as rights clearance); rather the work is fielded to them at point of need. This means that the standard publishing work needed for the project is undertaken in the usual way when required, while the creative and innovative parts, as well as vision creation and development, are dealt with within the project team in their separate entity, orbiting the main organisation like a satellite.

In this way, a *para-organisation* allows the main organisation to accommodate very different projects that have different requirements (as exemplified by the varied case studies) without the need to set up a specific development arm, nor build formal procedures into the existing workflow. Developing a standardised process within an organisation for digital innovation is difficult; each new project is unique as noted by one of the participants (C1P1). But building an organisational capacity to develop concepts, and a systematic way to deal with such projects when they arise, may be possible.

Additionally, all the projects studied, because they are innovative, are seen to carry some risk; this sort of unpredictable level of risk can then to be managed separately from the business through this separate, but linked, structure.

For this sort of satellite organisation to operate successfully, it is important to be able to deploy people to effectively, leading to the implication that they are often expert, autonomous and senior people, characteristics noted above. This requires some organisational consideration on the part of the publisher; they need a structure that is flexible when setting projects up. It also indicates that the organisation needs to be able to nurture the sorts of

people that can be part of these para-organisational teams and act as brokers to connect to the wider creative sector.

### **Collaborative mindset**

The second concept focuses on people. The publisher needs to nurture the sort of people that can form collaborations effectively. Case Four created an environment where everyone was alert to the possibilities of collaboration. While there is no suggestion that people would not have collaborated before, there was a greater awareness of the opportunities collaboration brings, which the researcher terms *the collaborative mindset*: a collaborative culture is created where people are open to connecting in all sorts of ways and can conceptualise ideas and work effectively with partners – recognising the possibilities around learning and creativity that exist in such connections. This enables the sort of network behaviour that characterises entrepreneurial and creative activity.

It is important to recognise, as emerged from Case Four, that collaboration is not just about developing innovative new products but about iterating existing products, solving problems or adding improvements to existing workflows; in this way everyone has the opportunity to be collaborative internally as well as externally. A collaborative mindset, as evidenced by Case Four, can be found in an organisation that nurtures people who are open-minded, non-hierarchical, trust each other, are creative, listen well, share learning and are ambitious about ideas.

### **13.5 Publishing theory, the value chain and multidisciplinary approaches**

These two concepts reflect on wider aspects of publishing as a field of study. The structural and organisational concepts of publishing theory tend to focus on the value chain and on the functions, hierarchies and the different sort of capital found in publishing systems (as

outlined in chapter three). Publishing has evolved around these traditional forms of business structure, streamlining workflow effectively to focus broadly on producing books/ebooks and journals/ejournals. This structure however can act as a restraint on other types of activity and requires some re-evaluation. Where product and format diversity are required, (in order to build new markets and attract new types of readers) the fixed nature of the traditional structure and hierarchy appears less effective. While there is some expectation that structural models like these are adaptable (Thompson, 2012; Tian and Martin, 2011), nevertheless they have remained relatively static and may not be as responsive as they need to be to face more complex digital challenges. What this research shows is that other forms of organisational structure are required to support new types of product development within publishing. Instead of the siloes and functional approach embedded in traditional publishing organisations, flexible, adaptive structures are required, whether enabling para-organisations or supporting collaborative cultures.

Furthermore, publishing theory reflects on the systems for managing risk and profit, (including definitions of ‘value’) that are associated with the current value chain. As the research shows creative collaborations have to exist outside these constraints to be effective; but innovation also needs to be facilitated and sustained, leading to a recognition that the traditional structure is not suited to the sort of creative approaches the publishing industry needs to embrace; concepts of publishing need to move on from traditional systems.

The research also reveals nervousness around disruption of traditional business lines. Publishing has an embedded approach to risk as theorists like Hirsch show (1972). New risks require new approaches; introducing more product diversity is challenging. Here too the traditional structure of publishing is potentially limiting its opportunities to innovate and take different types of risks. The research suggests that traditional systems of publishing need to be reconsidered in order for the effective development of new business models and

innovative products that encourage new audiences and lead to diversity; this is reflected in the microcosms of the collaborations themselves which adopt more flexible and creative approaches to development and expected outcomes.

In relation to this there is an additional aspect: in creating collaborative mindsets within an organisation, it reflects the people that make up publishing remain at the heart of its creative activity. A publishing structure needs to accommodate and nurture people to recognise the value vested in them and their networks, something that combines both symbolic capital and human capital (Thompson, 2012) but goes further, beyond the traditional networks of, for example, agents and suppliers, to reflect connectivity with the wider creative sector. This requires more focus on people in-house, recognising the value of diverse work forces and the importance of building longer term relationships and sustainable networks.

This research therefore furthers the discourse around value chains and risk as well as creative labour. Publishing theory in terms of structures needs to move beyond the confines of the traditional value-chain and hierarchies, what might be regarded as closed systems, and accommodate a focus on more adaptive, flexible organisations that are capable of agile approaches innovation and risk-taking, while nurturing a creative and collaborative workforce.

As with the collaborative teams in the study, different perspectives can bring a richness to the research. Looking at concepts through a variety of lenses drawn from different disciplines can provide depth leading to insights that might be missed otherwise, particularly when dealing with complexity. Bringing aspects of theory from organisational studies and exploring concepts drawn from creativity management theory for instance, has helped this

research reach conclusions on business structures, organisational culture and effectiveness of collaborative activity as applied to the field of publishing. It has helped throw light on the limitations of the traditional publishing structure. In methodological terms, multidisciplinary research also brings a level of rigour: methodologies can be tested, validated, reflected upon to ensure results stand up to scrutiny. The multidisciplinary nature of this study has helped open up thinking and draw out emergent concepts as well as set up clear links to other disciplines such as management theory.

### **13.6 Limitations and future research**

The case study approach has proved to be a useful way to understand how collaborations form and operate. The case studies allowed the researcher to connect different views of the project, combined with other forms of data collection, in order to build a rich and detailed picture of the collaborations across their different stages; this led to an in-depth understanding of the collaborative process helping to draw out concepts of network value and emergent theories of collaboration. This approach could be used to research other sectors of the creative industries to compare and contrast different ways creative collaborations take place at a time of digital change; for instance, it could be interesting to examine this from within the museums sector, as they extend collaborations with digital partners to provide more online access to their collections and archives, and experiment with concepts of co-creation with stakeholders.

The limitations of the research centre on the limited number of example cases. When the sample is limited, there is then a related limitation in the number of participants that means the research undertaken is focused on a relatively small number of individual voices (although the number of people interviewed per case study represents a large percentage of the collaboration's total participants). While unique cases still have value for qualitative



research and theory development (Creswell: 2007), there are only a handful of digital products that are being developed in this way (although the likelihood is that more of this will take place).

Further research, therefore, would be valuable both to test the concepts of the collaborative mindset and the para organisation, and to examine how far the work spaces in the fourth case had led to new collaborative projects as a result of changing behaviours. In terms of Case Four, the speed with which the collaborative mindset developed appeared to be fast, given the research took place fairly soon after the change in work spaces had been implemented. While the project cases had run for a while and had proven track records, the collaborative activity in Case Four therefore was still relatively new so had not led, at that stage, to significant new opportunities; immediate improvements in learning and creativity were noted but it could be valuable to return to the organisation after some time to see how far collaborative activity had led to new projects.

It would also be beneficial to examine how far the sort of creativity and learning that occurs when working on new digital products can be disseminated back within the main organisation. If these projects remain isolated examples of innovation, and isolated within publishing houses, it maybe that their value is not being fully utilised; or it may be that they are too unusual to be of much benefit to the wider organisation.

### **13.7 Applications for publishers – the adaptive organisation**

As a result of the research it could be useful for publishers to look at the way they can implement collaborative activity effectively, recognising the centrality of certain collaborative characteristics to successful digital product development. As the survey showed, industry leaders are concerned with collaboration as a response to digital change;

this thesis suggests ways they can develop their collaborative activity further. Developing collaborative opportunity and encouraging people to develop wider networks could be of benefit. While some publishers do this already, with individuals tasked with looking out for new ideas, it may be valuable to consider developing staff more widely to have collaborative mindsets. Once ideas start to come to fruition, adopting strategies to create promising conditions for successful creative collaborations will be important.

With the concepts of the para-organisation and the collaborative mindset, publishing companies do not necessarily need to change their structure radically to accommodate new ways of collaborating. With an understanding of the way collaborations operate and the ability to form smaller project organisations, publishers may be able to accommodate complex digital innovation without major reorganisation. If they develop a collaborative mindset within the company and facilitate collaborative behaviour, they can create a culture whereby new ideas and connections can happen that lead to more organic innovation; this also does not necessarily require radical structural change. By understanding ways to bring experimental projects about and by recognising the sorts of relationships publishers need with the wider creative sector, the creativity and learning that such projects engender can be encouraged. This indicates that publishers need to have an adaptive organisation, whereby a structural readiness allows them to facilitate collaborative behaviour and then to accommodate new-style collaborations when they emerge.

### **13.8 Concluding thoughts**

Publishers recognise the importance of innovating across different platforms including print, audio and digital. However, the increasingly rapid changes of the digital environment bring particular challenges. Continuous innovation around digital formats are required otherwise the industry will be overtaken by competitors from other sectors. App developers such as

Touchpress and Inkle books now undertake much of their innovative activity without publisher involvement while technology companies such as Google and Apple see content as a way to drive activity on their platforms and devices. As Bhaskar and Phillips note: ‘it would be foolish not to anticipate further dramatic ruptures and shifts in the landscape of publishing’ (Bhaskar and Phillips, 2019:425).

Given the imperative to change, the question is how far existing publishing structures are able to manage this complexity. Publishing theory, when exploring structures and organisations, focuses on reviewing the value chain, and related models around managing risk, in order to understand publishing systems. These traditional models, while they have been effective in the past, require deconstructing in order to build more adaptive flexible organisations that can further publishing innovation and respond to the challenges of diversity.

Publishers have exhibited a level of resilience over the centuries, open to change and adapting to new opportunities. They recognise the need to develop new ways of working in order to compete and grow in a rapidly changing environment; they are collaborating more widely with different sorts of institutions and they are looking at redesigning their organisations and workspaces. This thesis shows that if collaborative activity is undertaken in certain ways then innovative projects will have more chance of success. The concept of the para-organisation allows for ways to develop specific projects, while the collaborative mindset required for these projects can be nurtured through space and workplace culture.

Publishers may need to think about their role differently (as with Case One, the game book case study) or look at collaborating with competitors (as with Case Three, the academic case) in order to set up successful digital collaborations. One of the bigger challenges for publishers is not to disrupt their current business activity, which they undertake very

successfully, as they experiment with new forms. Complexity around innovation often hinders the ability of the parent company to run creative digital projects easily. However, a more systematic and proactive approach could potentially reap benefits. This thesis shows that structures can be put in place that allow innovative projects to be set up and managed effectively. The research provides evidence that flexible organisational structures can be a way to accommodate and facilitate collaborative activity. Being a nimble and networked organisation is a way to achieve this. As noted by Castells, ‘The ability to reconfigure [will be] a decisive feature in a society characterised by constant change and organisational fluidity’ (2009:71). The important aspect for publishing organisations is to continue to be flexible, through para-organisation and collaborative mindsets, so they can change and adapt as new challenges surface.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX ONE: Data requirements table

Overall theme to research	Broken down to subthemes	Research strategy to examine theme
CHANGE IN INDUSTRY	Development of digital environment	Survey – plus literature and commentators  Survey asks some introductory questions about changing environment for publishing. This covers different sectors too with the understanding that some are more advanced than others.
	Speed of change	Survey – plus literature and commentators.  Survey asks time-based questions to establish this point.
	Requirement for more change (in many sorts of ways)	Survey tallies different sorts of structural change that may be being implemented in a company – from skills to reorganization of departments.
	Establishing link between collaboration and need for change	Survey then questions this specifically asking for opinion on how far structural change might be necessary in terms of collaboration
COLLABORATION	Can one identify a new phenomenon?	Survey to establish generally if new-styles of collaboration are taking place– exploring from within industry attitudes to establish observation is accurate.  The survey asks questions around characteristics of what might be regarded as

		<p>new – e.g. range of participants, project vision and parameter/structure of collaboration in general ways to establish newness.</p> <p>Contextual interviews with participants to look at their own views of change. This keeps it broader than the case studies in order to gather their views across a range of collaborations.</p> <p>Case studies will then elaborate on this much more deeply to assess type of collaboration – mapped to categories of collaboration and from there assess if new in style. This will allow the collaboration to be judged in terms of its characteristics (whereas the survey allows more for the judgment of those participating in the survey to describe the phenomenon as new)</p>
WAY THE COLLABORATION WORKS	<p>This is necessary to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempt to categorize the type of collaborations</li> <li>explore what key themes emerge around collaborations (as outlined below)</li> <li>see what measures of success in digital collaborations there are</li> </ol>	<p>Explore collaborations across different sectors Look for links and differences in the way these collaborations are set up, operate and are reviewed.</p>
This is broken down as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision for the collaboration</li> </ul>	<p>Case studies look more closely at this; this enables some consideration of the sort of collaboration it is, based on shared ambition</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure of the collaboration inc ownership issues</li> </ul>	<p>The survey begins to touch on these but the case studies will unpick this further and solicit opinion</p>

		on whether this is regarded as different.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working practices</li> </ul>	Case studies look closely at these ways of managing the project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge, learning and creativity</li> </ul>	Testing more explicitly the understanding of these with the participants in terms of expectations of outcomes and actual outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Success of the collaboration</li> </ul>	Using the case studies to examine how success is measured and attitudes to failure both to establish how far project conditions led to success and how far these measures might differ from previous collaborations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future structures and skills</li> </ul>	Case studies require an assessment by the participants of the future which is more specifically drawing the link to future structures
	<p>Need to spot patterns across the cases in terms of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Types of collaborations</li> </ol> <p>Based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision</li> <li>Structure</li> <li>Working practice</li> <li>Outcomes</li> <li>Future aims</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>which sorts are effective</li> <li>how are they measured for success and failure</li> <li>what learning comes out of them</li> </ol> <p>This establishes they are new and different in fundamental ways. Also which sorts of behaviours are successful</p>	

STRUCTURAL CHANGE	Behaviour of collaborations – do they behave in a way that requires more structural change	<p>Survey asks this in a general way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cases and commentators ask more specifically how collaborations relate to the structure of the company to start with</li> </ul>
	In order to do more of them is structural change required?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In commentators and cases, look at ways companies might feel they need to do more or less and/or change to accommodate more</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX TWO: Questionnaires

Two questionnaires are contained in this section

- The first is the main questionnaire for cases one, two and three, annotated with mapping notes – there were some slightly different versions depending on the role (e.g. freelancers were not asked company-specific questions)
- The second is the questionnaire for case four
- The third is the outline of the survey (covered in chapter four) that was used in *Opinio*

*Italics denote annotations to show how the questions draw out data related to the research questions and themes*

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### 2.1 Sample questionnaire for Cases One, Two and Three, with annotation

#### PART 1

#### INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

##### A. You

1. Name
2. Job title
3. Company
4. Type of company
5. Size of company

*This part will collect data with regard to the different companies involved in the collaboration and the size of the project*

##### B. Project

1. Name of project
2. Briefly describe what the project was:  
(e.g. product development, knowledge sharing etc.)
3. Briefly describe your involvement in the project
4. Roughly how many other people were involved from your company?
5. Roughly how many different collaborators from different companies were there?
6. Is the project on-going or concluded?

*This part provides information with regard to the project itself – the position of the product for the company, what the specific person has to do, basic characteristics about how large it is, who is involved and the state it is in. Particularly important is to establish what the project was about – product development, learning, etc. While this will broadly be product based it begins to introduce the fact the collaboration may have other facets that are recognized as part of the project. It may start to position the project on the axis improve renew; exchange share.*

### **C. Previous collaboration experience**

1. Do you collaborate regularly? (because with tech companies most likely yes – though with publishers maybe fewer)
2. Have you worked with other sectors of the creative industries?
3. Have you worked in partnership like this before?
4. If so how often?
5. Do you consider this sort of collaboration to be a new thing?

*This section aims to establish different levels of collaboration between different people – e.g. it is expected software providers will have regularly collaborated. The distinction between being a contractor and a collaborator may start to emerge here and some nuance in terms of approaches taken – experienced or new to it; or a sense of changing style may start to emerge. Sub theme here is around creative industries and the wider range of collaborators that may be involved.*

*The breadth of collaborative experience is also of importance when looking more structurally at the publishing industry and how far the wider creative industries have been considered.*

## **PART 2**

### **THE BEGINNING OF THE COLLABORATION**

#### **A. Initiation**

1. How did it start?
2. Who initiated it?
3. What attracted you to get involved?
4. What was your main motivation?
5. Did you have reservations about joining it?

#### **B. Networks**

1. Did you know some/all of the people involved?
2. Who brought you together?

#### **C. Project vision**

1. What was/is the project vision?
2. How was this developed?
3. Do you feel this is/was shared equally?
4. Were there any initial barriers that had to be overcome?

*By exploring the initiation stages one can establish who was in at the beginning and how far the partnership was there from the start – but also see the motivations of the different protagonists (e.g. individual visions – which may fit to Kaats categories). Reservations will possibly be about the fact for some collaborators this way of working may be newer – this will tie to the new phenomenon theme; it may also tease out differences of behaviour and concerns over that from different types of company; but it may also mean answers are less clear cut. Overall this really does start to unpick the*

*issues around shared ambition too in terms of the quality of the project and nature of the partnership. There are according to Kaats different types of interests that can be observed.*

*Sub theme of the way networks work in project formation should emerge too.*

### **PART 3 OPERATIONS OF THE PROJECT**

#### **A. Structure**

1. Are you equal partners? Or is there a clear hierarchy?
2. Is there a clearly defined list of roles for participants? – including a project manager?
3. The next question looks at ways in which you measure your level of engagement
  - I. Do you measure by financial targets/expectations?
  - II. Or Time each of you put in?
  - III. Or proportion of Content?
  - IV. Or other?

#### **B. Working methods**

1. Do you have rules/protocols you follow? Are they specific to this project?
2. How do you share Information?
3. Do you share learning?
4. How do you monitor progress?
5. How are decisions made? Who makes them?

*These two sections start to look much more closely at the way the project is structured –that can be mapped to different collaboration types. Rules about sharing, decision making and differing levels of engagement will indicate the sort of collaboration it is.*

*This is also intended to draw out issues that may reveal good practice – how far does good structure and project management technique bring about a successful project?*

#### **C. Your own organisation**

1. How do you report back to your own organisation?
2. How high on their priority list is it?
3. Are there any structural aspects to your own organisation that is helping ensure collaborations like this happen?

*This section is important for revealing the importance of the project to the organisation – in particular when talking to the publishers – how central is this to their strategy and therefore how is the learning disseminated back, acted upon and how far is structural change potentially an issue?*

#### **D. Ownership**

1. Who owns the IP on the product/project as a whole if there is any? (e.g. by content owner in proportion or a jointly owned?)
2. Were there any issues about this at the set-up phase? (e.g. any protectionist attitudes?)
3. Who gets what back out at the other end?
4. Who controls what in terms of:
  - I. the sales?
  - II. licence? (if relevant)
  - III. The piracy issues?
  - IV. The brand?

*Issues of control and sharing outcomes is the particular focus on this section which particularly relate to the categories of collaboration – not so much for the confidential detail but the principles in which the outcomes get shared around the collaboration or whether the collaboration in a sense remains extant as the project comes to an end – in terms of successfully achieving what was intended for all parties and the shared ownership of the continuing product and its success. Or if things are divided up at the end - how is this done, is it fair, is everyone still involved tacitly (e.g. branding)*

#### **PART 4 EFFECTIVENESS**

##### **A. Measuring success**

1. How did the project measure its success? (i.e. financial, timing, good product, learning?)
2. On that basis was the project regarded as a success or failure?
3. IF a success: Would it have been a problem if it had been a failure?
4. IF a failure: how much of a problem was it that it was a failure? (i.e. what attitude to failure was there?)
5. Did your company have its own objectives for project outcomes as well? (e.g. gaining knowledge or learning technical skills, testing out new markets?)
6. And how did you measure these?

##### **B. Project Management Techniques**

7. In terms of project management what worked best?
8. And what caused most problems?
9. What would you do differently?
10. What do you think you learnt most from the project overall?

*The success measures come back to project aims and shared ambitions – and how this related to different sorts of outcomes of different collaboration strategies. It also might see if things, even if they started less clearly have led to some different outcomes – and how far failure is explored – relating to the innovation needs failure – ‘fail well’ themes.*

*The project management techniques aspect features here as a tangential look at how far formal project management techniques are becoming more central to the activity.*

*NB there will also be an element of taking into account different narratives around the same story.*

##### **C. Creativity & knowledge**

1. Are there aspects that you feel have been particularly creative – maybe in development or design of content, in the behaviour of the collaboration, or design of content?



2. Do you feel you have learnt something from your partners? (e.g. in problem solving, attitudes to innovation?)

*This part is focusing on the understanding of creativity theme – which applies to some extent to the issue of entrepreneurship but also to consciousness about the term creativity and the link to creative industries as well as attitudes to learning.*

## **PART 5 FUTURE STRUCTURES AND SKILLS**

1. Would you do this again?
2. Do you want to do more things like this?
3. Do you think you need to work in a different way?
4. Did you need to use different skills –e.g. project management techniques? Technical literacy?
5. Were you already set up to collaborate effectively
6. Do you think there needs to be some structural changes in your own company to do more of these, or make them work more effectively? If so what?

*Here to test if there is a growth of this sort of collaboration and/or where it may fall short... especially where publishers may not be needed. This also gets closer to the structural questions.*

## **PART 6 FINALLY**

Any other points you want to raise?

Thank you

---

## **2.2 Questionnaire for Case Four**

### **CASE STUDY QUESTIONS FOR MACMILLAN**

#### **PART 1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT**

You

1. Name
2. Job title

Collaboration can, in this instance, mean internal or external collaboration – it does not have to be about products but can be about any sort of project.

PART 2  
COLLABORATION

1. How far do you feel collaboration is important for the company?
2. Is this more, less or about the same as in the past?
3. Is your feeling that you are you doing more than you have done in the past?
4. Do you want to do more?
  
5. What sort of collaborations are you involved in? (i.e.:
  - a) product development,
  - b) finding out about other parts of the company,
  - c) bringing internal projects together,
  - d) working with external people?
  - e) knowledge sharing?
  - f) developing new partners?
  
6. Do you feel you are collaborating in a different ways now than you have in the past?

For example in these areas?

- a) Set up
- b) Structure of collaboration
- c) Project mgt. techniques
- d) Range of participants
- e) Skills of participants
- f) Shared risk
- g) Outcome... Learning, exploration, entrepreneurship, innovation, sharing

PART 4  
FOR THOSE ACTIVELY USING THE WORKSPACES

1. How have you made use of the new spaces?

2. Have you found the workspace has helped?
3. If so can you describe in what way?
4. Is your feeling that this might have been more difficult if you had not had these spaces?
5. Are there any other points you would like to raise about collaboration and collaborative spaces?

**Thank you very much for your time.**

---

### **2.3 Survey questionnaire plan**

This is the draft questionnaires that was administered through Opinio.

This is a preliminary survey seeking to explore how far reaching you think the digital transformation within the industry is, and whether you envisage, in light of that, more structural change will be necessary.

The term digital transformation refers both to the specific production of digital products as well as the wider changes in market dynamics and consumer behaviour across publishing sectors.

#### **ABOUT YOU**

1. Your name:
2. Your company:
3. Position within the company:
4. Size of company by employees:

0-25

26-100

101-250

251-500

500+

## CHANGING INDUSTRY AND THE CHALLENGES IT FACES

5. Do you agree that there is a prevailing sense of transformation across the industry, caused by digital developments?

Yes/ No

6. What level of impact do you feel digital transformation is having on each of these particular areas of activity?

- Sales channels (little impact, some impact, considerable impact)
- Distribution channels
- Marketing
- Production
- Editorial and product development

7. How concerned are you about the following challenges currently facing the industry?

- Issues around copyright (not very concerned, some concern, very concerned)
- Developing and owning new content
- The development of technical competence throughout the industry

- Increasing need for speed to market with new products
- Requirement to find entrepreneurial approaches to business development and new business models
- Issues around legacy infrastructure and business models
- The emergence of Apple/Amazon/Google and other technology companies
- Changing consumer behaviour in light of digital technology
- Rise of self-publishing
- Other.....

8. Do you think the industry will have to make some significant structural changes in light of any these challenges?

Yes/no

Please state briefly your reasons for your answer

.....

9. Thinking of the industry, please comment on how far you agree or disagree with the following statements:

(strongly disagree- disagree – neither agree nor disagree – agree – strongly agree)

The industry needs to change and we are only at the very beginning of this change

There has been lots of restructuring in the industry

Things will settle down after a period of consolidation

The industry is still in a very early stage of exploration in digital opportunities

The arena is crowded with new ideas, pioneers and business models and this will continue

We will need to structure ourselves so we can continuously and quickly adapt to change

We are like other creative industries and need to develop new approaches to content

## YOUR COMPANY RESPONSES

10 Thinking of your company do you see changes happening/necessary for your way of working? Yes/no

11 Are you undertaking any of the following organisational activities? (tick all that apply)

Reviewing your structure

Looking at your range of people and skills sets

Outsourcing more frequently

Developing more skills in house

Carrying out more collaborations and partnerships

Reviewing our legacy

Developing new strategies for content development

Experimenting more with business models?

## COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

12 Are you carrying out any collaborations/partnerships to produce new products or business ideas?

Yes/no

13 If so, with what sort of companies are you collaborating? (tick all that apply)

- Software/app developers
- Artists and designers (e.g. animation, sound artists)
- Film/theatre companies, casting agencies
- Other content owners (e.g. museum archives, photo libraries)
- Educational institutions
- Other (please specify).....

14 Would you say you are doing more or less collaborations than, say, 5 years ago?

15 Would you say you are carrying out collaborations with a wider range of participants than 5 years ago? Yes/no

16 Would you say any of your collaborations are experimental or exploratory in character? Yes/no

17 Is this more or less the case than before? Yes/no

18 Do you think any of these collaborations differ from previous business relationships? Yes/no

If yes:

Are they with a new range of collaborators that you have not worked with before? Yes/ No

Are you working more frequently with other creative industries (e.g. animators, games designers)? Yes/No

Are you sharing the risk with them? Yes/No

Set up differently in terms of business arrangements? Yes/No

Are there any other aspects that you feel are different?

.....

FINALLY:

19 Please indicate if you are happy for you to be named: yes no

20 Please indicate if you are happy for your company to be named: yes no

21 It would also be very helpful if I could name you in research outputs where you make any comments. Do you consent to your comments being ascribed (you will have the opportunity to check any quotes)? Yes/no

If you have any further comments I would love to hear them:

.....

.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.

For further information my email is [Francesca.Hall.13@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:Francesca.Hall.13@ucl.ac.uk)



## APPENDIX THREE: Observation protocol, form and notice

### 3.1 Observation protocol

1 hour to observe behaviour in the work space

Inform those who enter the space that there will be an observer

DESCRIPTIVE	REFLECTIVE COMMENTS
Physical space described	
Project hubs described	
Number of people who enter the space	
Number of distinct groups at any one time (as noted at 15 min intervals)	
Behaviour within groups – informal, formal,	
Internal/external participants (use visitors log/badges to determine)	

#### Observation of Groups

Groups formed – each numbered according to chronology of meeting	Number of people in group	Observed group activity (eg brainstorming, planning, updating, meeting new participants)	Duration

#### AIMS

The space and how it is used is effective at creating and encouraging more collaborative work across 1) internal departments 2) external companies

- a) How much is it used – judged by numbers of people that come and go, size of group, length of meeting
- b) Who uses it – internal/external – need to consider a way to assess what department they are in/functions
- c) How the work is done in the space (group discussions, group formation, group development, project planning/management) – need to consider how to find out about what part of the project they are involved in.
- d) The way the work is done (informal, formal, notes taken, quickly, long brainstorming etc.)

Maybe choose two groups to assess in motion for c) and d) after half an hour of general assessment of a) and b) at least the internal/external side of things.

#### Tests for own coding schedule

test	comment
Focused	Not everything about each project really only stick to finding out the key issues to test how useful the space is to
unambiguous	Focus on descriptive – the reflective part is around interpretation, but the raw data must not be interpreted at point of recording. Factual info, is required and questions must reflect that. Focused on answering straight forward factual questions
Non-context dependent	In this case it is the physical context that needs testing. Not so relevant therefore to avoid – but does need care in describing
Explicitly defined	Note down some specific examples of what might be viewed in order to be accurate about the coding
Exhaustive	Ensure do have codes for any behaviour that might be seen. Use discussions from interviews to refine the questions to ensure that have covered off the options around how the space might be used
Mutually exclusive	Ensure codes are not cross overs with each other
Easy to record	Number of groups anticipated not to be very many at any one time so easy focus on noting down key facts as well as numbers

From Saunders – developed from Robson (2002). P 308

Watch out for:

- Subject error – (e.g. something non-standard about the work being done there for that time)

- Time error (not a time of day that is going to be characteristic)
- Observer effect (people distracted by observer and behave abnormally – to some extent the fact different groups of internal and external people will be mixing in the area , then the observer will not be hugely odd presence in the space as may well appear another external person working)

### 3.2 Collaboration observation form

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION

DESCRIPTIVE	REFLECTIVE COMMENTS
Physical space described	
Number of people who enter the space (total)	
Number of distinct groups (as noted at 15 min intervals)  00 to 15	

15-30	
30-45	
45-60	
Behaviour-types within groups – informal, formal, use of materials, technology etc.	
Internal/external participants (use visitors log/badges to determine)  Internal only  External/ Internal	

#### NOTES ON SPECIFIC GROUPS

Groups formed – each numbered according to chronology of meeting	Number of people in group	Observed group activity (e.g. brainstorming, planning, updating, meeting new participants)	Duration


### 3.3 Observation notice posted in workspace areas

## **OBSERVATION:**

## **RESEARCH PROJECT INTO COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY.**

My name is Frania Hall. I run the MA Publishing course at LCC part of the University of the Arts London. I also worked in academic and professional publishing for 20 years. I am undertaking PhD research based at UCL.

Please note the collaboration hubs are being observed for the period of one hour for a research project.

The project is entitled: **How are collaborative partnerships changing the structure of the publishing industry?**

### **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

As digital transformation continues to change the activity and structure of the publishing industry, some publishers are finding new ways to collaborate, with a new range of partners, sharing project development and knowledge to develop new products.

The research looks at collaboration from different angles. Today I am looking at the way work spaces are designed to encourage collaboration. I am carrying out an observation to see how many people use the hubs in the space of an hour.

### **Please note:**

- I am not recording any personal data or any aspects of individual activity.
- I cannot hear any conversations
- I am simply looking at statistics of frequency of use and group sizes.
- I am at a distance that I hope will mean you are uninhibited by me. If, however you have any problems, please feel free to tell me or move to a different location.

The information will be used for my PhD thesis to show how collaboration is being encouraged and facilitated. All information about the company and people will be anonymised.

(additional contact details were supplied regarding me and the company representative who set up the observation)

Scans of filled in forms are available.

## **APPENDIX FOUR: Information sheet and blank consent form**

A slightly adapted consent form was provided to the participants of case study four.

### **INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR CASE STUDIES**

**How are collaborative partnerships changing the structure of the publishing industry?**

#### **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

As digital transformation continues to change the activity and structure of the publishing industry, some collaborations on digital projects appear to be changing in style from previous transaction-based partnerships.

With different collaborators from across the creative industries, a changing the attitude to risk and new ways for these projects to be managed, many of these collaborations appear to be more exploratory and experimental in nature.

This research wants to delve further into this phenomenon in order to assess whether the industry is changing structurally to facilitate more of this new-style collaborative behaviour. I want to understand more about how these collaborations are initiated, structured and measured and so I would very much like to work with you to develop a case study on your project.

I hope that you will be able to tell me more about:

- 1) The project you have worked on
- 2) How the project came about
- 3) What you wanted to get out of the project
- 4) How you chose and worked with your partners
- 5) How you measured the success of your project

I am primarily interested in the behaviour of the collaboration. I realise a collaboration is not always about financial or product outcomes but maybe more about learning and knowledge sharing or developing new relationships and networks; that is something I want to look at. I will not be asking for any detailed financial or legal information about the projects.

I hope that this study will be of interest to industry participants as we observe publishing through a period of significant change and look at ways to face the new challenges.

## **YOUR INVOLVEMENT**

### **What will I be asked to do?**

I will be asking you a series of questions about your involvement in your project/collaboration, your opinion of the challenges you faced and your view of the collaboration's effectiveness. The interview should take around 45 minutes.

I will also be interviewing other people involved in the same project/collaboration. They will be asked the same questions. This is so that I can build a 360 picture of the project.

### **Are there any risks in taking part?**

We do not anticipate any risks in taking part in this study. This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics committee. This research is supported by my supervisor, Dr. Sam Rayner, Director, Centre for Publishing, Department of Information Studies, UCL.

### **Do I have to take part in this study?**

All those participating in this research do so on a voluntary basis. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide now, or at a later date, that you do not wish to participate in this research you are free to stop at any time, without giving a reason.

If you would like to see a copy of the final study, I will be happy to provide one (and/or do a presentation for you and other relevant participants).

### **How will the information be used?**

The information you provide is purely for research purposes. As such it will be available, in the long term, as part of a Ph.D. thesis as well as potentially disseminated in academic book or journal article format. In this sense the results of the case studies will be made public. However, any commercially sensitive information will be kept confidential and we can discuss any parts of the study you would not like disclosed.

I would like to be able to reference you and your company as a participant in the research. If you do not consent or if you prefer only the company to be named, there will be an opportunity to indicate this on the consent form.



**Data protection**

Some personal information (Eg name and job title) will be collected for the purposes of this research study; the data will be held in a secure way in accordance with the provisions of the data protection act 1998,

**How to contact the researcher**

The research is conducted by Frania Hall and supervised by Dr. Samantha Rayner (s.rayner@ucl.ac.uk) and Dr. Oliver Duke-Williams ([o.duke-williams@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:o.duke-williams@ucl.ac.uk)).

You can ask any questions that you have about the study at any time during or after the interview. You can contact me at by email at [Francesca.hall.13@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:Francesca.hall.13@ucl.ac.uk).

## CONSENT FORM

Please tick (✓) appropriate box: (*please note: I will add in boxes*)

I am happy to participate in this study and have understood the purpose of the project.

If Yes, please complete the following:

I have read the Information Sheet.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I wish to ask.

**Use of your information in the research (please tick which apply)** (*Please note I will talk the individuals through this*)

I am happy for my name and job title to be used in the research Yes/No

I am happy for my company to be named in the research Yes/No

I am happy to be quoted within the research (subject to my approving the quotes) Yes/No

I would prefer my name to be kept anonymous in the presentation of the research findings.

In this case, I can be quoted but quotes will be anonymised. Yes/No

I would prefer to be anonymous but I don't mind my company being named. Yes/No

I understand that I need to indicate any information provided in the interview which is commercially sensitive and is not to be disclosed publicly. Yes/No

Name:

Signature:

—

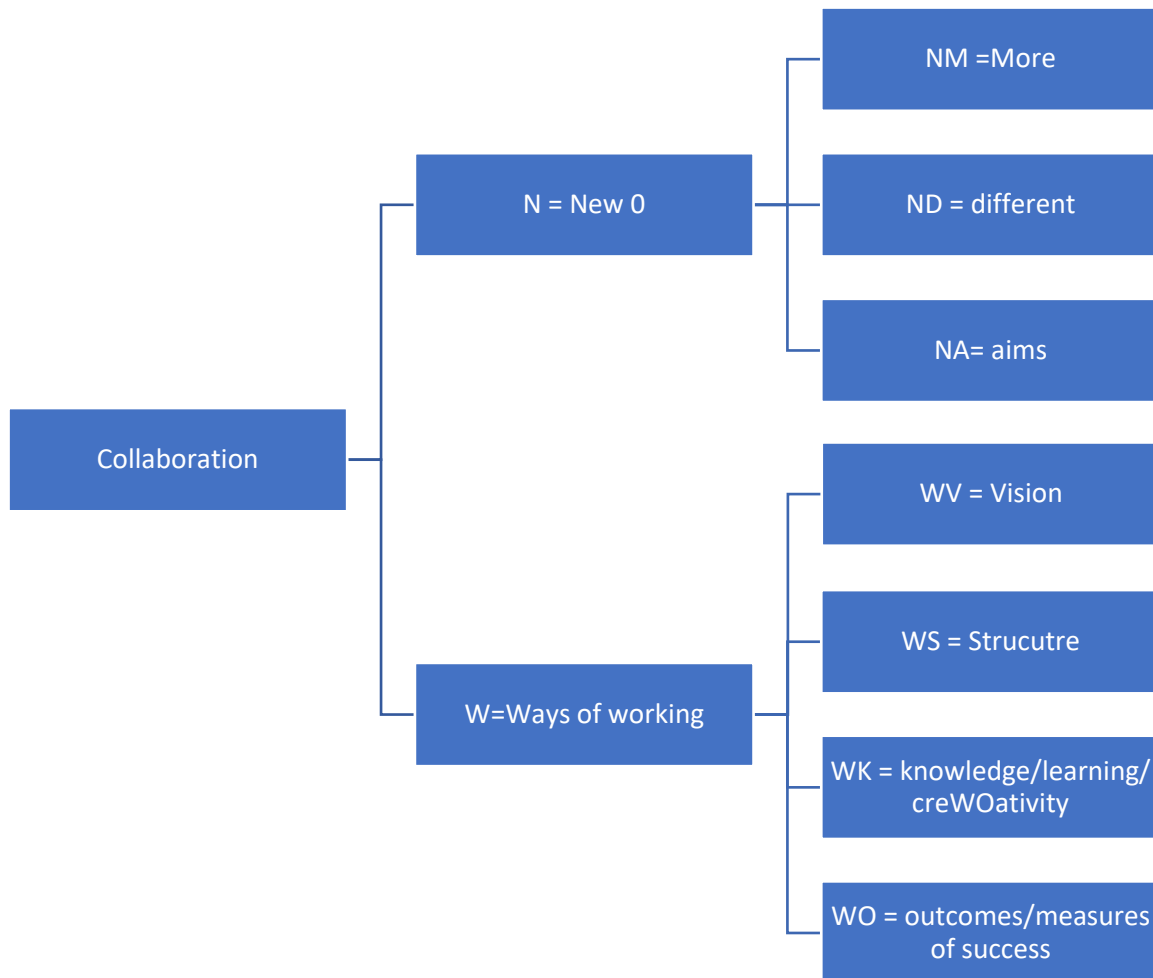
\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Thank you

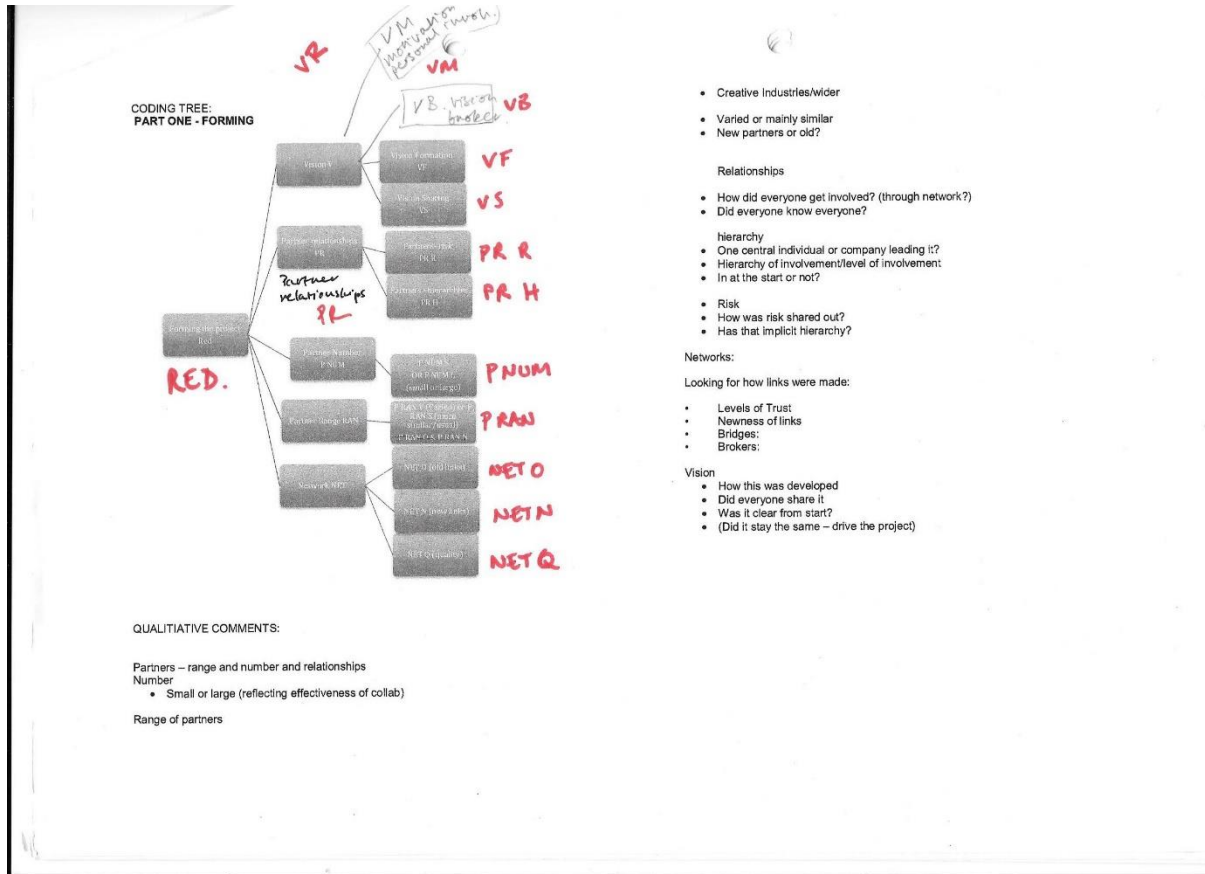
## APPENDIX FIVE – Coding Trees

### 5.1 Sample of coding tree for survey – codes for ‘collaboration’

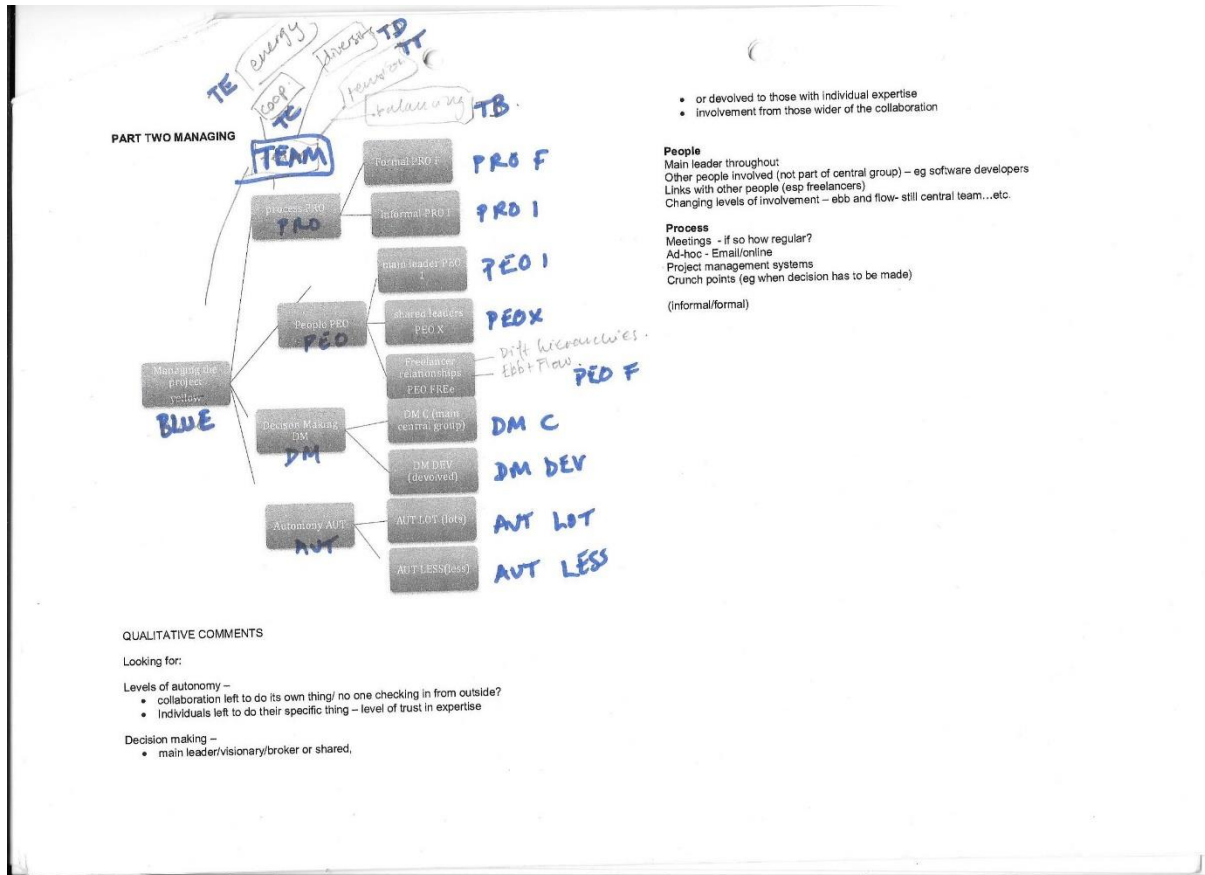


## 5.2 Coding trees for cases one, two and three – showing on-going adaptations

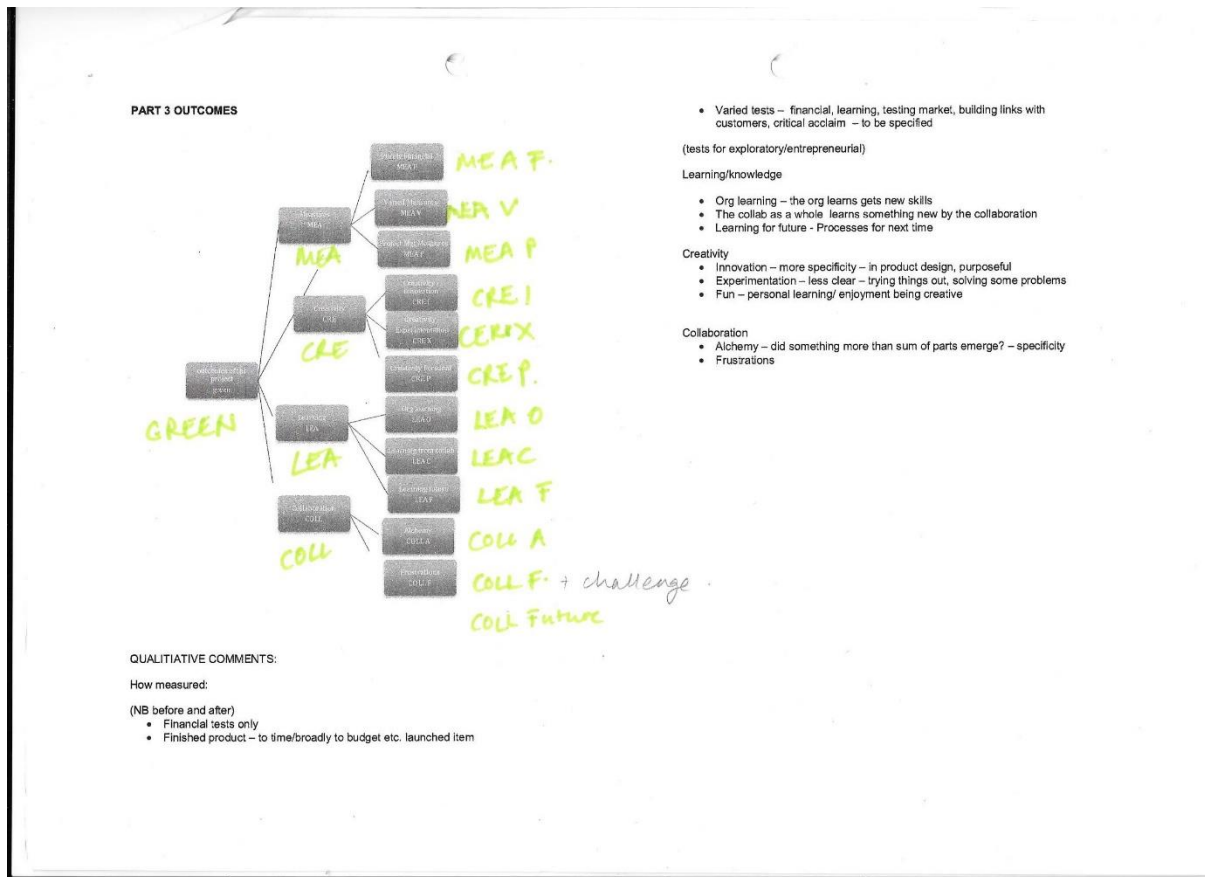
### Coding tree part one - Forming



# Coding tree part two - Managing



# Coding tree part three – Outcomes



## APPENDIX SIX: Tables of case study participants reference codes

These tables appear in the text but are repeated here for ease of reference. They have not been consolidated into one table as slightly different issues are being examined in each case.

### 6.1 Case One

Title	Organisation	Role	Reference	Reference as used in chapter
Publisher	Publisher	Digital director; they published the app under their imprint and invested in the project proposed by the digital design company	C1P1	Publisher
Composer	Independent	Composed the music that played on the app	C1P2	Composer
Illustrator	Independent	Provided illustrations for the project, including a digital toolkit to make up other illustrations where required	C1P3	Illustrator

## 6.2 Case Two

Role	Organisation	Reference number (for transcripts and reference link)	Reference as used in chapter
Publisher & digital lead	Publisher	C2P1	Publisher
Education specialist	Freelance	C2P2	Freelance
Education department lead	Arts organisation	C2P3	Arts educationalist
Business developer	Arts organisation	C2P4	Arts project manager

## 6.3 Case Three

Participant	Organisation	Role	Reference	Reference as used in chapter
Publisher	Publisher	Oversaw content for key imprint of texts sited in the resource and carried out research in the development of the project	C3P1	Publisher



Content Engineer and Digital Publishing Consultant	Independent	Designed content specifications for the texts and carried out research	C3P2	Content engineer
Digital Development Director and digital project manager	Publisher	Managed the digital development including the freelancer consultants and software developer	C3P3	Digital Manager
Publishing Consultant	Independent	Involved at the very start to support the first financial plan for the project and present the initial case	C3P4	Publishing consultant
Digital Publishing Consultant	Independent	Designed content specifications for the scholarly monographs	C3P5	Digital consultant

## 6.4 Case Four

Role	Level within the company	Reference for transcript	Reference in chapter
Personal Assistant to business head	Entry level	C4P1	Personal assistant
Bibliographic manager	Middle manager	C4P2	Data manager
Business head	Senior manager	C4P3	Senior manager
Internal communications	Middle manager	C4P4	Communications manager
Sales coordinator	Entry level	C4P5	Sales coordinator
Publishing services manager	Middle manager	C4P6	Editorial manager
Designer	Middle manager	C4P7	Designer
Editorial Assistant	Entry level	C4P8	Editorial assistant
Journals manager	Senior manager	C4P9	Journals manager
Production and Design head	Senior manager	C4P10	Production head

## **APPENDIX SEVEN: Transcript preparation and NVivo codes developed for interview transcripts for case study four**

### **CODING FOR NVIVO**

#### **TRANSCRIPT PREPARATION**

Take out FH intro comments

Take out initials and time notes

Tidy up/italicise interviewer

#### **INTERVIEW STRUCTURE**

##### **Collaboration**

In general

Collaboration change

Type of collaboration

##### **Workspace**

Do you use them ?

How?

Has that changed your way of working

#### **EMERGENT CODING**

##### **COLLABORATION**

- Culture of collaboration in company
- Individual attitude to collaboration
- Newness
- Internal (collaboration)
- External (collaboration) inc product

##### **WORKSPACE**

- Use internal
- Use external
- Usefulness
- Space and collaboration
- Knowledge
- Relationships
- Ideas/creativity
- Motivation
- Formal vs informal
- Day to day decisions

## APPENDIX EIGHT: Units of Analysis in the documentation

<b>To note for each case individually</b>	<b>Units counted</b>
Mention of collaboration (Quantitative)	Number of mentions
Set up of collaboration	Number of partners
	Indication of lead/hierarchy
	Indication of management style
	Indication of risk
	Vision/motivation
	exploratory
	entrepreneurial
Process of collaboration	effectiveness
	Actual outcome
	challenges
	successes
	Structures necessary
	Skills issues
Use of specific words:	New
	Innovative

	Learning
	Creativity
	Other words to gather
Type of information and context of that information	This focuses on where the product is listed (for instance for reviews it may be a book app is reviewed as a game)

## **APPENDIX NINE: Commentary on the marketing pieces for Case Two**

This briefly outlines the difference between the vocabulary used to refer to the textbooks in the marketing and PR documentation analysed as part of the content analysis for Case Two, the education case, in chapter nine. The arts organisation was more creative when describing the project; they use terms such as ‘bold’, ‘vibrant’ and phrases like: ‘Students can experience the same process of exploration and discovery’, ‘It’s true understanding - and enjoyment!’. This copy is not necessarily as tailored to attract the education market.

Meanwhile the publisher adopted ways to communicate the project for their market place that enhance the recognisable attributes for a curriculum-based project: ‘Targeted activities including presentations with extensive examiners’ comments’ ‘Photocopiable PDFs and PowerPoint tutorials’ ‘Comprehensive teacher support and assessment notes’. This provides supporting evidence for the fact the arts organisation felt the publisher did not do full justice to the texts when marketing them.

## **APPENDIX TEN: Tests for research design and quality**

This section outlines a series of tests for the research that were undertaken during the research design process to ensure appropriate research choices were made and that it was good quality and therefore reliable and valid. These tests were undertaken at the appropriate parts of the research process and reflect an attempt to ensure the research was thorough and rigorous, as well as double check the right decisions around the research design were taken. The text references all occur in chapter two on research methodology.

10.1 The first test is for characteristics of Qualitative

10.2 The second is for testing quality of qualitative research

10.3 The third is for testing validity of qualitative research

10.4 The fourth test is for assessing appropriateness of case study methodology

10.5 The fifth test is for testing theory development from case studies

10.6 The sixth test is for reliability of interpretation.

### **10.1 Characteristics of qualitative enquiry – Flick’s tests**

To further test this thesis’s approach to qualitative research, this section uses Flick’s preliminary list of four qualitative research features (2008:14) to ensure this research reflects the characteristics of qualitative enquiry. His list consists of the following:

1) Research ‘*selects appropriate methods and theories*’ - in other words it understands research design will need to adapt to accommodate complicated contextual conditions, adopting multi-level analysis, while understanding that it should also not shy away from researching ‘complex and rare phenomena’ (Flick, 2008:15). As Flick states qualitative research allows objects of study not to be ‘reduced to single variables but represent

(themselves) in their entirety, in their everyday context (2008:15). Qualitative research is often about developing new theory that is empirically grounded. To be effective it is imperative methods are selected and applied appropriately in order to do this.

2) Flicks' second characteristic is that research reflects the *perspective of the participants and their diversity* – as outlined above this research is focused on understanding how different perspective on the same collaboration reflect on the effectiveness or otherwise of the collaboration: rather than focusing on quantitative measures therefore, effectiveness is measured in more subjective ways and from these different perspectives it is hoped characteristics will emerge.

3) The third feature is *reflexivity* of the research, already mentioned in chapter two and which will be explored further in the analysis stage

4) The final feature of qualitative research is acknowledging and selecting from the variety of approaches and methods that exist. The emphasis here is on careful choices of research design in order to reach the data required. This research is taking a case study approach and the reasoning for this choice will be examined later in the chapter.

## **10.2 Good qualitative research – Creswell's tests**

Creswell presents characteristics that are important to adopt to ensure the quality of research and research design is good. This research is tested against these characteristics. Using studies such as Eisenhardt, Lincoln, Marshall and Rossman (Creswell, 2007) he summarises his list as follows:

1) Rigorous data collection procedures are critical. The specifics of data collection will be covered in chapter two.



- 2) Researchers must recognise throughout the study the central characteristics of qualitative approach, such as the multiple realities of participants and the researcher as instrument of data collection; situating the research clearly, throughout the explanation and execution stages, is key for ensuring the analysis is conscious of these aspects when applied; this then means the findings will be understood properly.
- 3) The research starts with a single focus – even if it later expands out to accommodate further questions.
- 4) The methods used are detailed and thorough, not vague and loose. The data collection section clarifies the methods used.
- 5) The analytical phase uses multiple levels of abstraction – a process that Creswell (2007) outlines as the analytical spiral and which ensure the active involvement of the researcher in refining the findings. This is covered in chapter two.
- 6) The writing is persuasive and engaging – this point emerges from the understanding that qualitative research needs to present the depth of the data it has uncovered. By doing so it differs from positivist or quantitative research to the extent that it is freer to present and tell the stories that it has found in an engaging way, allowing space to ruminate and be, as he says, ‘full of unexpected ideas’ (Creswell, 2007:46); the write up of the case studies it is hoped will lead to connections that emerge from the participant’s narratives.
- 7) There is an element of the researcher’s presence in the work – this is an interesting point not just about the researcher’s inevitable position as an interpreter (as outlined in chapter two) but from the point of view of showing how the research has been filtered by the researcher and includes the impacts of the researcher’s own context and the results of their thinking: ‘in some way –such as discussing their role, interweaving themselves into the text

or reflecting on the questions they have about the study – individuals position themselves in the qualitative study’ (Creswell, 2007:47). In this way the researcher’s role is explicit and the research process as a media itself becomes embodied in the text.

8) The whole research has been conducted according to ethical guidelines at every stage.

This research design has been tested against these eight checks in this thesis; it has provided an important guide to the execution of the research to ensure reliability and validity.

### **10.3 Validity of qualitative research – Maxwell’s tests**

There is an on-going debate about the nature of validity in qualitative research (Maxwell, 1992, Rapley, 2009). This debate leads Maxwell to examine a more fundamental issue about how qualitative researchers ‘conceptualise validity’ (1992:38); He considers Mischler who reflects that taking a technical approach to testing validity is not appropriate because ‘validity assessments are not assured by following procedures but depend on investigations’ (Mischler cited Maxwell, 1992:38). Maxwell continues to cite Brinberg and McGrath: ‘validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques’ (Brinberg and McGrath cited Maxwell, 1992:38); here he emphasises that validity has to underpin research as a whole; it does not automatically occur just as a result of following a process.

Rapley (2009) as noted in chapter two questions the terms ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ in themselves as he feels they are somewhat out dated. As he is a researcher embedded in discourse analysis, knowledge for him is produced via the researcher and the participants; and because of this it will always be unstable as there are ‘multiple possibilities for the real’ (2009:128); for him words such as validity are not really appropriate, with their connotations of objective fact and knowledge.

Perhaps a more convincing approach to validity is offered by Maxwell's five styles of validity which provide a more nuanced, context-based approach rather than a tightly procedural approach (Maxwell, 1992). He takes a way of thinking that accommodates the researchers' mind and which acknowledges the centrality of the research participants. With participants firmly at the centre, the closer to reality the research can get. The research in this thesis has been conducted with these five styles, or stages, in mind and the following list shows the stages in theory development adopted:

1. Descriptive validity –the accounts of the participants will be accurately recorded reflecting how they present their own stories through in depth interviews.
2. Interpretative validity – This research also recognises that those questioned will have their own interpretations; the data needs to be aware of what these collaborations and their behaviours '*mean* to the people engaged in and with them' (Maxwell, 1992:48). This research works on interpreting the testimony of participants using the right terms and understanding their own interpretation of their context and experience. This does require inference but also accommodates the researcher's prior understanding of the context of publishing – which may help construct a more accurate picture from the data (and recognise unreliable evidence from participants, so no misleading constructions are made).
3. Theoretical validity 'goes beyond concrete description and interpretation and explicitly addresses [the] theoretical construction that the research brings to, or develops, during the study' (Maxwell 1992:50). This moves the research onto an abstract stage which begins to apply and examine theory in relation to the first two stages, so the research moves beyond the description and interpretation. Through theoretical validity explanations start to emerge from the examination of the

phenomenon. This third stage is a result of the first two combining so that theories start to emerge or ‘transcend’ (Maxwell, 1992:50).

4. Generalisability is how far one can apply the findings from the individual cases more widely – a tricky stage when, as mentioned, there is not a large sample or a breadth of collaborative activity in publishing projects. As Maxwell states, sampling must be purposeful (1992:53). And generalisability can be internal – in other words relevant to the community under scrutiny so this research, it is hoped, is both applicable to the industry in terms of the importance of collaboration but also within a collaboration presents generalisations that can be of use for other collaborations.
5. Evaluative validity is the final stage where the researcher goes through a final stage of evaluation or critical interpretation to draw final conclusions.

This research therefore will be presented following these stages: four chapters will present the case studies, adhering to descriptive and interpretative validity. A chapter analysing the findings of the cases altogether will develop the thinking and lead to a final chapter that outlines theory as developed from the findings.

#### **10.4 Tests for Case study methodologies – Yin’s tests**

Yin also uses tests to ensure the case study design is valid (2013:45). For instance, planning the process with care ensures that the research design is robust. His tests are outlined in the table below (table appendix 10.1). He takes each test for purposeful research and examines the way a successful case study design can achieve this. In the table the final column provides responses to those tests in relation to the research in this thesis.

<i>Tests</i>	<i>Case study tactic</i>	<i>Commentary in relation to the research at hand</i>
--------------	--------------------------	---

<i>Construct validity</i>	<i>Use multiple sources of evidence; Establish chain of evidence;</i>	<i>Internet data, interviews and observations are all used with different participants while clear protocols are used to ensure the process at each stage is transparent</i>
<i>Internal Validity</i>	<i>Pattern matching, explanation building and rival explanations are all key to this process</i>	<i>The care over the analysis stage is key to ensuring these aspects are acknowledged; Creswell's analysis spiral is used as outlined below</i>
<i>External validity</i>	<i>Replication logic in multiple-cases</i>	<i>The analysis strategy takes this into account</i>
<i>Reliability</i>	<i>Protocols and data collection tools/databases</i>	<i>This research follows formal data collection procedures and data management</i>

**Table Appendix 10. 1 Tests for Case Study Research Design, after Yin (2013)**

### **10.5 Good theory development from Case study methodologies: Eisenhardt's test**

Eisenhardt's test for good theory development is another useful check that was used for this research (1989). Once theory emerges, the tests for it are that:

- 1) It is a good theory –i.e. that is testable, logically coherent and thrifty/ economical (parsimonious as she calls it) which are tests for any good theory
- 2) It is theory that has emerged from the application of a strong method and with good evidence to ground the theory

- 3) It brings new insights

This list appears to satisfy the requirements for evaluative validity as outlined by Maxwell (1992). The analytical approach taken and described in chapter two had these test in mind as the findings were interrogated. Theory developed from case studies the researcher felt could be seen to conform to good qualitative study.

### **10.6 Tests for reliability of interpretation – Alvesson and Skoldberg's tests**

Building on Eisenhardt, as one final test of the reliability of interpretation, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2013) identify four ways layers of interpretation that mean rigorous reflection has taken place:

- a level of interaction with the empirical methods (so in terms of interviews these might become more like discussions, while observations were undertaken with an well-established understanding of the environment)
- interpretation (bringing out the underlying meanings)
- critical interpretation (aspect of the wider research framework – e.g. around social construction - where questioning happens around what the data can really show, to check the research framework continues to be appropriate in terms of epistemology)
- reflection on text production/presentation of the data – as a mediated method of communication – (which focuses on the writing up stage which is critical also for Creswell (2007) and other qualitative researchers)

Reflection therefore leads to a level of validity in knowledge creation in that these processes that a researcher goes through to ensure what is said about the data has been thoroughly considered.

Alvesson and Skoldberg go on to add that there are specific methods or styles of reflective activity that can be brought to bear on data – ways of thinking such as creative thinking or employing theoretical breadth and depth (2013: p273). Eisenhardt similarly notes that, when specifically considering cases a ‘constant juxtaposition of conflicting realities unfreeze thinking’ (1989:13). The process has potential to generate theory with less researcher bias. These are ways to process data and ensuring a level of objectivity. Yin too comments on that fact that prior knowledge of the field from reading or from direct experience can play a part in refining data effectively but it is important to all the evidence is properly attended to, that the rival explanations are explored.

For these theorists, the researcher’s position is one of mediation at various levels, between the theory, movement back and forth between interpretations and data (suggestive of abductive approach as outlined above), as well as between reality of those researched and the researcher’s own reality. As Eisenhart also states: ‘the research constantly compares theory and data - iterating towards a theory which closely fits the data’ (1989:20). For her this is important as it means the researcher can move forward, develop thinking further and take advantage of new insights, rather than stay still. The researcher in their words has a repertoire of interpretations and by using these various approaches the data is refined; negotiating the tensions that might arise add to the quality of the findings is part of reflective thinking. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2013) envisage a researcher gliding between theory and data and interpretation – the process which for them is essentially this reflexive stage. This avoids what Eisenhardt would regard as problems when theory does not fit evidence: the researcher needs to ‘understand why or why not emergent relationships hold’ (2013:21) and this forms part of internal validity.

## APPENDIX ELEVEN: NVivo Queries lists

This section includes a sample only of the queries run in NVivo. They relate directly to the text of chapter 11 and have been numbered accordingly.

### Appendix 11.1 Total number of references and sources in relation to each node (sorted by source).

This table shows the total number of sources (people) who raised the theme that is identified by the nodes were coded. The total number of references shows how much the node was mentioned across all the sources. So, for example, 10 people talked about the newness of collaboration and across those 10 sources there were 21 mentions.

Name	Sources	References
email	1	1
day to day decision making	3	3
collab importance to individual	3	4
innovation	4	7
workspace use external	4	6
workspace use internal	6	13
external c	6	11
knowledge & knowledge sharing	6	16
ideas and idea development	7	17
relationships	8	14
motivation and well being	8	13
culture collaboration & strategy	9	30
internal c	9	18
communication inc intranet	9	19
informal and flexible	10	24
newnews of collaboration	10	21

### Appendix 11.2 Nodes and references by business role

This shows how many nodes each job title referred to as well as the number of references that linked back to a node of some sort. For example the sales coordinator only talked about 6 of total number of nodes and only made 8 references to any of the themes under exploration



while the editorial assistant referenced 11 of the nodes and made 18 comments specifically linked to the key themes.

Name	Nodes	References
NT C4 P1 PA Bus heads	10	20
NT C4 P2 Biblio mgr	9	15
NT C4 P3 Exec Dir	11	37
NT C4 P4 Intl Comms mgr	11	23
NT C4 P5 sales coord	6	8
NT C4 P6 Pub Serv mgr ed	13	31
NT C4 P7 designer	8	12
NT C4 P8 Ed Asst	11	18
NT C4 P9 jnls mgr	10	22
NT C4 Pten 10 head of d	14	31

**Appendix 11.3 Section of the chart showing each business role and the themes they talk about**

	collaboration to individual	comms inc intranet	culture collaboration	day to day
NT C4 P1 PA Bus heads			X	X
NT C4 P2 Biblio mgr	X	X	X	
NT C4 P3 Exec Dir		X	X	X
NT C4 P4 Intl Comms mgr		X	X	
NT C4 P5 sales coord		X	X	
NT C4 P6 Pub Serv mgr ed		X	X	X
NT C4 P7 designer	X	X		
NT C4 P8 Ed Asst		X	X	
NT C4 P9 jnls mgr		X	X	
NT C4 Pten 10 head of d	X	X	X	

## Appendix 11.4 The text search criteria for word-based queries in NVivo

Exact and stemmed words for:

- Collaboration
- Campus exact
- New
- Relationship exact
- Partner
- Communication
- Informal inc synonyms
- Flexible (inc synonyms)
- Know (inc synonyms)
- Ideas (in synonyms)
- Share
- Creative
- Innovation
- knowledge

Word frequency search

All case 4 sources

500 words

4 letters min

## Appendix 11.5 Consolidated charts of approaches to collaboration by different job roles

Lower job hierarchy

	A : culture collaboration & strategy	B : ideas and idea development	C : innovation	D : knowledge & knowledge sharing	E : newnews of collaboration
1 : NT C4 P8 Ed Asst	1	0	1	2	1
2 : NT C4 P5 sales coord	1	0	0	0	1
3 : NT C4 P1 PA Bus heads	3	7	0	0	1
Totals	5	7	1	2	3

Mid-level job hierarchy

	A : culture collaboration & strategy	B : ideas and idea development	C : innovation	D : knowledge & knowledge sharing	E : newnews of collaboration
1 : NT C4 P2 Biblio mgr	1	2	0	0	1
2 : NT C4 P4 Intl Comms mgr	1	3	1	2	2
3 : NT C4 P6 Pub Serv mgr ed	3	1	0	4	3

4 : NT C4 P7 designer	0	1	0	3	2
Totals	5	7	1	9	8

Higher job hierarchy

	A : culture collaboration & strategy	B : ideas and idea development	C : innovation	D : knowledge & knowledge sharing	E : new news of collaboration
1 : NT C4 P3 Exec Dir	10	0	2	0	3
2 : NT C4 P9 jnls mgr	6	1	0	1	2
3 : NT C4 Pten 10 head of d	4	2	3	4	5
Totals	20	3	5	5	10

### Appendix 11.6 Word Frequency query

Word Frequency Query

people	collaboration	things	company	know	much	something	together	might	around	kind	external	internal	table	rooms	some	still	building	develop	editori
							collaborat	past	collabor	open	product	need	digital	knowle	obviou	rather	done	necess	parts
	work	just	different	quite	spaces	want						sharing	ideas	anythin	project	absolut	area	depart	envir
			feel	really	sort	important	good	definitely	less	part	interest	time	probabl	find	teams	project	diff	else	exampl
think	like	space	meeting	well	working	thing	involved	team	terms	always	meeting	made	talk	looking	used	type	great	role	campu
							actually	come	also	areas	going	make	room	mean	ways	chang	last	design	helped
																	office	easier	making

Appendix 11. Word frequency query for top 30 words shown as percentage of total transcripts

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
people	6	220	2.26
think	5	171	1.76
collaboration	13	109	1.12
work	4	93	0.96
like	4	88	0.90
things	6	82	0.84
just	4	78	0.80
space	5	73	0.75
company	7	70	0.72
different	9	68	0.70
feel	4	67	0.69
meeting	7	66	0.68
know	4	61	0.63
quite	5	60	0.62

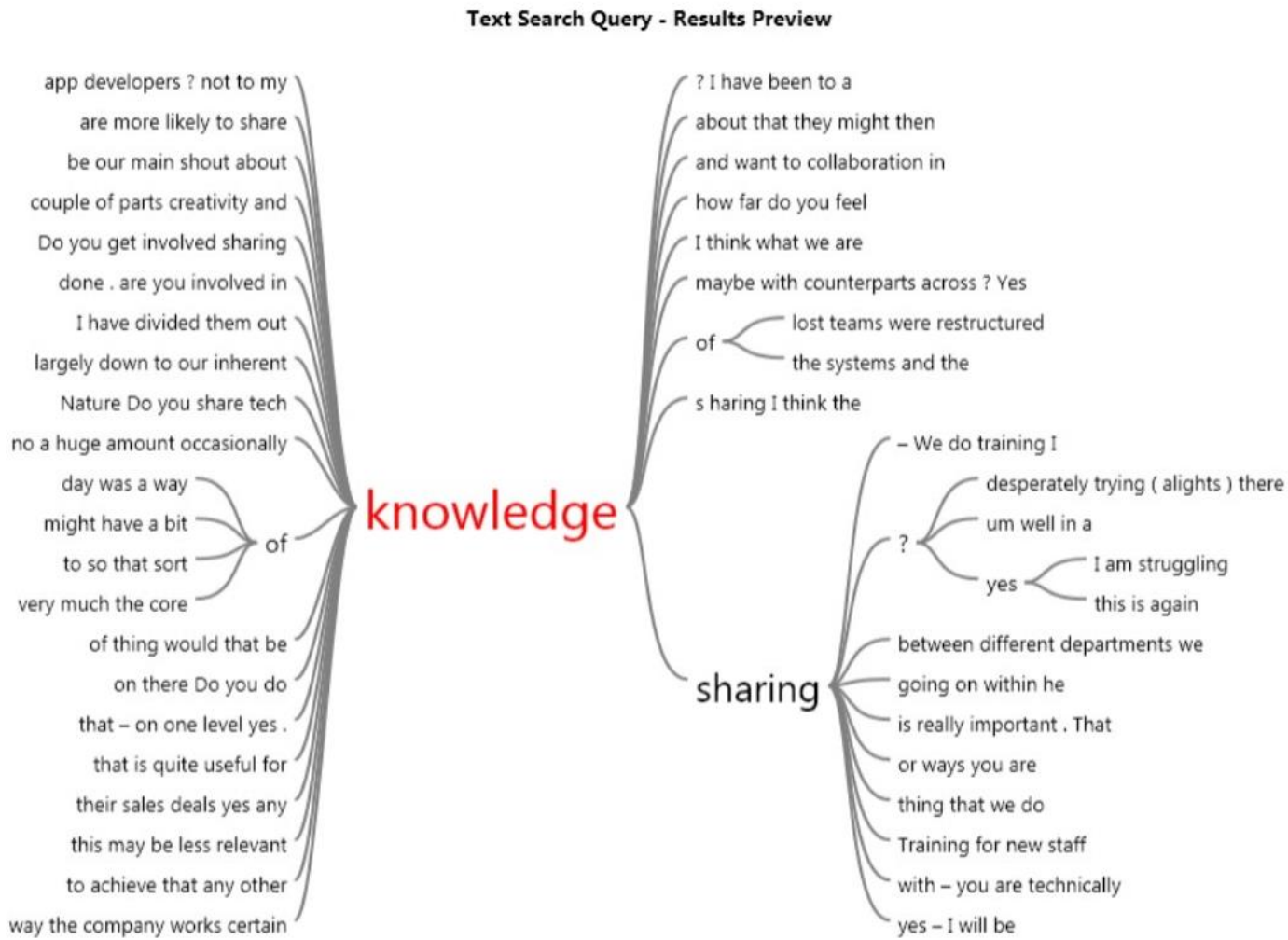
really	6	60	0.62
well	4	60	0.62
much	4	58	0.60
spaces	6	56	0.58
sort	4	53	0.54
working	7	52	0.53
something	9	50	0.51
want	4	47	0.48
important	9	41	0.42
thing	5	39	0.40
together	8	39	0.40
collaborations	14	38	0.39
good	4	38	0.39
involved	8	38	0.39
actually	8	37	0.38

**Appendix 11.7 Number of references to the word collaboration across all the sources (i.e. people)**

This is an example of the query done in relation to a word.

Name	References	Coverage
NT C4 P1 PA Bus heads	16	2.01%
NT C4 P2 Biblio mgr	14	1.47%
NT C4 P3 Exec Dir	36	1.95%
NT C4 P4 Intl Comms mgr	12	1.89%
NT C4 P5 sales coord	8	1.51%
NT C4 P6 Pub Serv mgr ed	16	1.64%
NT C4 P7 designer	13	2.70%
NT C4 P8 Ed Asst	30	2.95%
NT C4 P9 jnls mgr	31	3.49%
NT C4 Pten 10 head of d	34	2.90%
Total number of References	210	22.52%

## Appendix 11.8 Word tree for word 'knowledge'



## **APPENDIX TWELVE: Flew's four models of the creative industries**

The four models that Flew (2013) outlines are as follows:

1. Department for Culture Media and Sport model (DCMS)— this model, established in 1998, by the UK government is regarded as 'ad hoc' by Flew (2013) because the characteristics and links between these industries are not very clearly defined; the focus of the government department when mapping them was on creating a list of sectors and a single definition of creative industries in order to make some sort of monetised assessment of value to the economy (so intellectual property is one defining characteristic). This definition says that all the sectors involved have to reflect individual creative activity that also provide the opportunity for wealth creation. The area of government policy in relation to the creative industries is one that is beyond scope for this research. The DCMS definition evolved over the following decade and publishing, in this model, is regarded as a creative content producer (NESTA, 2006).
2. Concentric circles model developed by Throsby (2008) attempts to tackle the issues of creative activity, placing creative inputs at the centre of the model, with layers radiating out for those involved in wider production (or reproduction) and distribution of the creative works. This attempts to deal with the issue of value around the created cultural content, while placing the more administrative activity of distribution in the outer circle. Publishing here fits into an outer ring of wider cultural industries alongside, for example, sound recording and heritage (Thosby, 2008); this might make sense by placing art and literature (creative product) for instance at the centre, but does not necessarily allow for the complex relationship between, for example, literature and publishing or individual authors and the mass-distribution of their works.

3. World Intellectual Property Organisation, (WIPO, 2015) takes the approach which focuses on intellectual property (IP) as the embodiment of the creativity: there is value in the created product, rather than in the creating source, which is economically clear cut, so producers like publishers and film companies become much more central in this model as they are important to the making of the created product. However, this model appears to emphasise one of the key issues that some commentators find problematical: this model centres on the perception that IP reflects a certain level of control and limitation which runs counter to a view of the internet where sharing and free access are important precepts (Jenkins, 2008, Lanier, 2011, Naughton, 2012). While IP does not necessarily have to mean that there is actual economic value attached to it, nevertheless the centrality given to it for the WIPO model can be a problem.

4. Symbolic texts model as outlined by Hesmondhalgh (2011, summarised by Flew, 2013) focuses on the importance the cultural industries and the industrial production and circulation of symbolic texts in being central to our understanding of ourselves; here the media industry is at the core in this activity as it spreads the cultural product. By focusing on the content, this model moves away from the problems some models have where they place the creative activity itself at their centre. It allows for a distinction to be made by creative industries in terms of their outputs; creative work, including design and innovation, happens in all sorts of industries but not all those industries would be considered as creative industries. This model focuses avoids that confusion as it focuses on the products, and specifically those that create social meaning. In this model publishing features as a core cultural industry and the model also side steps the financial imperative, the IP issues and the creative act that are central to the other definitions.

As can be seen these models emerge from different disciplines most commonly taking economic, organisational behaviour or cultural studies standpoints (Hesmondhalgh and

Baker, 2011). These models all accept the difficulty of defining and convincingly linking various aspects of creativity (Flew, 2013). In publishing this is particularly apparent as it provides a link between the creator (e.g. author) to the wider activity that supports distribution (e.g. publisher). With digital transformation across these industries, however, this link is becoming more tenuous as authors can publish without the need of traditional publishers, (Bhaskar, 2013); this suggests pursuing definitions that disassociate aspects of publishing from creative output of authors is not useful as the publishing climate changes and boundaries become more blurred (Baverstock, 2015). Digital transformation is, in this way, disrupting traditional models of creative industries.

In all these models there is the inclination to draw lines either between different creative industries (e.g publishing and graphic design) or between different activities (e.g. author and publisher). These lines can be artificial and do not very well depict the connections between various aspects of the creative industries, particularly in an digital environment of increasingly blurred boundaries; they may also be detrimental, in making it apparently easy to cut a player out of the picture: if the publisher becomes defined as distributor of cultural product (Throsby, 2008), then it becomes easier question why they are necessary when creators (authors) can go to the market direct (enabled by the tools now available on the internet). The digital environment, as shown in chapter four, has led to the publishing industry considering how to define its role and direction. While definitions of the creative industries tend to lay out a silo approach to the different creative sectors, in fact, the blurring of boundaries due to digital transformation should lead to looser definitions; this porousness between sectors then makes it both easier and more compelling to collaborate across these boundaries.