Crossing Boundaries

The role of cross-art-form and media venues in the age of 'clicks' not 'bricks'

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Sheffield Showroom

Foreword

The six cross-art-form and media venues discussed in this report have had an extraordinary impact on the cities where they are located. They have been catalysts for change, cultural laboratories that have developed new ways of presenting work and supporting emerging talent. They have been models of innovative knowledge transfer, taking research beyond the walls of the academy and allowing it to flourish, creating new sorts of partnership between artist and audience.

They have been amongst the unsung pioneers of culture-led regeneration, providing a bridge between the arts and the creative industries.

The challenge for us, and for them, is now to realise the full potential of digital technology in overcoming physical and conceptual barriers and so pioneer the evolution of a truly national network of new practice in arts and culture. This study is an important step on that journey.

John Woodward, Chief Executive Officer, UK Film Council
Professor Philip Esler, Chief Executive Officer, Arts and Humanities Research Council
Alan Davey, Chief Executive Officer, Arts Council England

Executive Summary

This Study by Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy **- Crossing Boundaries: The role of cross-art-form and media venues in the age of 'clicks' not 'bricks' -** was commissioned jointly in 2007 by the UK Film Council, Arts Council England and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The Study focuses on six venues – Broadway (Nottingham), Showroom (Sheffield), Cornerhouse (Manchester), FACT (Liverpool), Tyneside (Newcastle) and Watershed (Bristol) – with a view to decoding their institutional DNA and strategic offer, so that their role and purpose can be better understood and communicated. In particular, the Study explores the role of the venues, as 'cultural intermediaries' and places of knowledge exchange and transfer within their cities and regions, how that role is evolving through digitalisation, and what the potential future role of the venues could be. These venues represent an emerging type of cultural and creative infrastructure where consumption and production, art and economy, innovation and creativity come together. The Study has been commissioned to explore the ways the venues support those boundary-crossing processes that are so important to a competitive creative economy.

The Study takes three **main thematic areas** to examine the venues' current activity and future potential: **Creative Place-making, Creative Economy and Creative Infrastructure.** Within these thematic areas, the Study looks at the venues' *'physical footprint'* – the management and delivery of on-site programming and facilities – and their *'digital footprint'* – their use of digital technology on-and off-site which extends their activity far beyond the confines of their four walls. It also introduces the concept of the *'value range'* to describe the extent and reach of the venues' social, economic and cultural impact.

The Study shows that, though in need of reform, the venues are critically important cultural intermediaries for the creative economy. They are leading edge brokers, commissioners and collaborators. They have cinema at their hearts, but they work across the arts to deliver experiences and spaces where talent is mobilised, ideas are generated, and innovation is sparked. Much can be learned from these venues that is of critical value across the cultural infrastructure landscape of the UK at a time when issues of public value are paramount and notions of the 'user' or 'audience' are being realigned.

Creative Place-Making

The venues' contribution to creative place-making in each of their cities and regions is an ongoing story, reaching back over twenty years and more. They have been pioneers in the culture-led regeneration of city centre environments and are integral to future regeneration initiatives such as the Oxford Road Corridor in Manchester or the ongoing Cultural Industries Quarter in Sheffield. Their brand strength and audience-pull make a real contribution to a wider set of agendas including inward investment and cultural tourism. The venues' traditional strength in providing specialised or 'non-mainstream' film programming and developing new audiences is also a real value-adder to their places, bringing international attention and artistic integrity.

Creative Economy

The venues operate as vital, dynamic, cross-boundary spaces where different disciplines and sectors, such as science and art, can collide and collaborate. This is critical to their role in the creative economy. Research into the drivers of success and productivity for places and the economy shows that vital are spaces which encourage interaction between individuals from sectors that don't normally mix. This Study shows that the venues' active facilitation and brokering of new forms of knowledge transfer and exchange is making a real impact. Whether it is through exploring cutting-edge technology, as in the collaboration between Watershed and Hewlett Packard Labs, or managing collaborative cross disciplinary action research between different academic institutions in Nottingham, the venues are breaking down barriers and exploring the value of new interfaces and spaces. Sometimes this is proactive: they provide skills and capacity for the creative industries through non-formal learning that contributes to business knowledge and sustainability. Sometimes they simply provide space, in an environment that helps incubate and grow new ideas and business concepts.

Perhaps the strongest contribution of all made by the venues to the creative economy is through their work in showcasing and supporting new talent. For example, each of the venues has a justly strong reputation for running film festivals with international reach and status, ranging from Tyneside's Northern Lights to Sheffield's International Documentary Film Festival. These festivals, with their commitment to innovative and new film making, as well as other forms of media, act as real catalysts: sparking debate, increasing knowledge, developing new collaborations, spreading good practice and putting their cities on the cultural map.

Creative Infrastructure

The venues' contribution to new models of creative infrastructure is perhaps their least understood and publicised role. This Study shows that the venues offer and curate those porous, connected and flexible spaces which are vital to a rich creative ecology and dynamic creative economy. They operate as critical brokers, commissioners and connectors, generously linking activity, both physically and digitally, in a way that gives them a role akin to that of a curator: making experiences, using facilities, mixing collaborators and content in a way that virtually no other part of the cultural infrastructure can. The venues go some of the way to ensuring that in each of the cities there is an organisation which consistently seeks to build new and strong relationships, to cross boundaries, introduce new ideas, and ensure that those with the ideas have the platform upon which they can be expressed.

Looking Forward

In looking to the future, the Study starts by conceptualising the venues as offering a mix of 'Infrastructure *for* You' and ''Infrastructure *by* You':

- 'Infrastructure for You' is a way of defining the traditional role of the venues as providers of experience for an audience, through cinema, art or their other facilities such as bars, cafes and restaurants. It describes the way that the venues, utilising new technology and new work practices, are to a degree (and more crucially can) become places that blur traditional boundaries between consumption and production, broadening their base and reach with an emphasis on connectivity and engagement. They *crowd-in creativity* in to all their activities. Their ability to deliver this is linked to their understanding of their role as dynamic cultural brands.

- 'Infrastructure by You' refers to the ways the venues can and indeed must embrace new types of relationships with audiences, businesses, and a wider set of stakeholders. This is where audiences play a more proactive and influential role in programming, in defining meaning, and in co-designing the infrastructure of the physical and digital footprints offered by the venues. This is where 'open source' is adopted as a culture and ethic, with the venues actively encouraging citizens to influence the digital and physical footprints, whether this be through new content or shaping the overall visitor experience.

The venues are setting the pace in providing new open source infrastructure that is fit for purpose in the contemporary creative economy. However, there is also a long way to go. There are four critical areas that must be addressed:

- **Engaging change:** Organisational structure, management, capacity and vision

- **Engaging partnership:** Actively brokering new boundary-crossing relationships in innovation and knowledge transfer

- **Engaging physical transformation:** Reconceptualising, re-connecting and expanding the physical footprint

- **Engaging digital transformation:** Leading the way in programming, innovation, knowledge transfer and business.

Within each of these areas exist a set of issues that the venues need to address: such as how they are putting their users in control, the type of partner they require and the sorts of mechanism that can deliver the partnership and the degree to which any activity can be delivered across multiple digital platforms. The Study shows that the venues need to extend their collaboration as a group and consider which issues are best tackled separately and which in partnership with each other. There is a need also for the venues to market their goods and services in clearer, simpler ways with greater audience appeal and pull.

Positioned at a strategic and organisational crossroads, the Study affirms four potential barriers to successful and sustainable change: the current lack of capacity and expertise within the venues, the need for modernised management and governance, the lack of capital to effectively push forward, and the degree of cultural resistance to change. There are three critical questions here:

1. **Can a national network be established that enables the venues to work together on operational and strategic matters?** This includes joint-programming, knowledge sharing, ideas collision, and profiling/promotion.

2. **Can strategic partners effectively support the venues to become foremost hubs for a competitive creative economy?** This requires positioning the venues as lead partners in agendas such as knowledge exchange, public service publishing, regeneration, and cross-media distribution/commissioning. It also requires that the venues lead the way for other venues across the cultural sector, such as through partnership with theatres, galleries and music venues.

3. **Can the venues establish effective operational structures to manage processes of change?** This includes new management and governance structures, new partnerships across the arts and cultural sector, and a commitment to infrastructure by you.

The Study concludes that:

"As place-based centres of excellence in this field they are well-positioned to build a leading role as generators of activity; connectors between content producers, consumers and technologists; and pioneers in the education work around digital literacy. The venues are beginning to develop a ***reinvigorated and redefined cultural producer role,*** *engaging in increasingly reflexive and iterative ways with complex notions of 'audience' to elevate cultural experiences and generate new content.* ***With attention to the structural and cultural barriers introduced above, the venues could start to express the type of cultural offer demanded by changing audiences ".***

Finally, the Study raises speculation as to why such venues are absent in major cities such as Leeds and Birmingham, and therefore whether they are needed. *The extent to which this diminishes their potential to operate as successful creative and knowledge cities, or indeed to which it weakens their cultural integrity, requires consideration*. The absence of such venues also raises speculation as to whether the role, reach and impact of venues such as Watershed is undertaken by the wider infrastructure offer of Leeds and Birmingham, thus reducing the need for a specific venue of the type explored in this Study. Partners in Leeds, Birmingham and other key towns and cities, might be encouraged to consider these issues.

Moreover, partners across the UK might consider whether their infrastructure offer – across the arts and creative industries – is as connected, open, engaged, proactive, risk-taking, collaborative and generous as the six venues featured here.

Nottingham Broadway

1. Introduction

"London can stake its claim as the world's creative capital. But it is also surrounded by world class creative cities…that don't consider themselves anyone's poor relation…(T)he lesson of the last ten years is that wanting the world of culture to be available to everyone is not, as some say, dumbing down, an artistic version of 'all must have prizes'. Far from it. The lesson it teaches is that people of every background deserve to have access to the very best, and to have help to become the very best. Because some barriers are overcome not by lowering them, but by increasing the ability of people to leap them"
(James Purnell MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, July 2007)[1].

"In the digital age, UK film has the potential to flourish as never before. Digital technology is starting to transform the way in which film and moving images are financed, produced and consumed"
(John Woodward, Chief Executive Officer, UK Film Council, 2007)[2].

This Study introduces the role of cross art form and media venues in an age where the influence of digital technology is changing the ways we produce and consume culture, and thus transforming the function and reach of 'bricks and mortar' infrastructure. It provides an overview of their existing and ongoing role, and is intended as a catalyst for their reinvigoration in the digital age. The Study also explores how such venues need to respond to change and be progressive and entrepreneurial to create change, at a time when the strategic landscape requires new and innovative types of partnership, cross-art-form practice, and an acute engagement with issues of public value. It therefore *presents a set of wider implications for bricks and mortar infrastructure right across the cultural sector and creative economy.*

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[1] 'Making Britain the World's Creative Hub', Speech to IPPR, 2005. See: www.theideafeed.com
[2] Film in the Digital Age, UK Film Council Policy and Funding Priorities April 2007–March 2010.

The Study is commissioned by the UK Film Council, Arts Council England, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. It is based upon an engagement with six venues across England, each of which is working hard to develop their position as critical brokers and innovators for the creative economy and as progressive partners in developing education, widening participation and engaging with increasingly diverse communities as a key opportunity. The venues are:

- Bristol, Watershed
- Liverpool, Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT)
- Manchester, Cornerhouse
- Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyneside Cinema
- Nottingham, Broadway
- Sheffield Showroom/Workstation

The six venues share a common role and function: *they retain specialised cinema programming at their core.* Each is developing a different approach and response to the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation and to the specific context of their host city; each has set out a unique mix of facilities, programmes and services; but each situates cinema (quality programming and the 'cinema experience') at the heart of their offer, identity and core delivery principles.

> *"The present audience of the specialised cinema was largely created by the specialised cinemas themselves – a task which required, and still requires, cinema owners and company directors who must not only be good enough business people to be prepared to create their own market (always a risky undertaking), but people to whom artistic quality and the education of public taste must appear more important objects than mere box office receipts."*
>
> **The Function of the Specialised Cinema**
> **Elizabeth M Harris, Penguin Film Review 6, 1948**

This Study sets out an overview of:

- The role, function and development profile of the six venues, including a focus on their existing positions; an assessment of their transforming role in a digital age; and thus an appreciation of how they can best develop a meaningful and value-adding role for the creative economy as well as for wider senses of community and place. This includes a focus on how the venues (individually and collectively) can be more appropriately defined, described and in turn promoted to best suit their position in the creative economy.

- The knowledge transfer function and potential of these venues, identifying the multi-level relationships with the research, learning and skills sector and business that currently exist and plotting how they can be strengthened, improved and augmented as practical models. Knowledge is also advanced regarding the ways Higher Education Institutions are working with and through the venues to develop new innovative practice that challenges the often blithely conceived notion of 'knowledge transfer'.

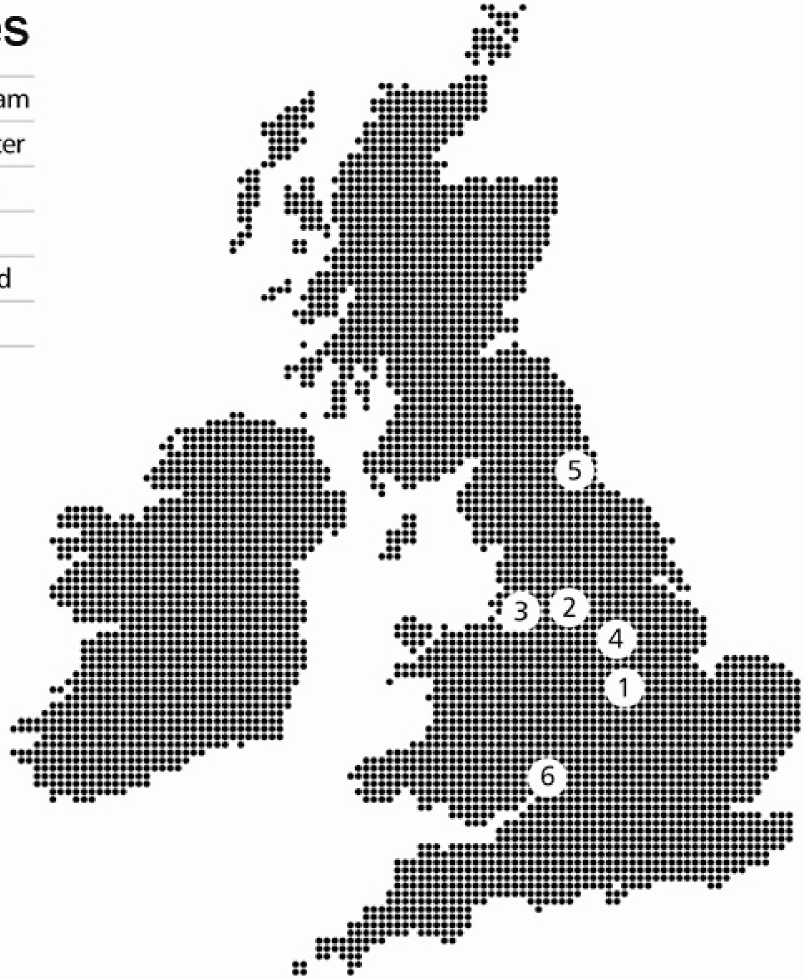
- Network development and partnership opportunities, focusing on the existing partnership commitments of the venues; and the scope for the venues to develop closer working relationship with one another, balancing their common characteristics with the promotion of their individual distinctiveness.

This necessarily involves a studied view of the *public value delivery role* of the venues as beneficiaries of substantial public sector investment. The reach and effectiveness of their operations and the ways these are conceptualised and articulated as 'public goods', are explored. Moreover, they are explored in terms of their adeptness at influencing and responding to a transforming cultural and technological landscape, where the argument for bricks and mortar infrastructure needs to be much sharper and more sophisticated given the relatively 'placeless' opportunities for cultural production and consumption delivered by digital technology.

The Study is intended to support the conceptual and strategic development of the venues, prompting a dedicated response to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The Study is also designed to inform key strategic partners of the *value range* of the venues and how, with appropriate support and investment, the venues can effectively provide such value.

Figure 1: The six venues

1	broadway	Nottingham
2	CORNERHOUSE ARTFILMBOOKSFOODDRINK	Manchester
3	FACT	Liverpool
4	SHOWROOM WORKSTATION	Sheffield
5	Tyneside Cinema At Old Town Hall, Gateshead	Gateshead
6	WATERSHED	Bristol



1.1 Three Thematic Areas

The role, function, development profile and thus *value range* of the venues are explored in this Study. We have identified three thematic areas as critical means of structuring this process:

1.1.1 Creative Place-Making

How the venues contribute to the development of distinctive communities of engagement and how they influence the identity, brand and confidence of the cities in which they are located. This relates to:

- **Audience Development.** For example, nurturing new and retaining existing audiences for cinema and other art forms; providing challenging and inspiring programming; and building a committed community of engagement from a diversity of user around the overall infrastructure offer of the venue.

- **Culture-led Regeneration.** For example, playing a prominent role in the repositioning of a city/district as an 'anchor' for wider regeneration programmes; providing a connecting and facilitating role between places, communities and cultural providers; and instilling confidence and voice to otherwise marginalised individuals and communities.

- **Cultural Portfolio.** For example, playing an active and progressive role alongside other cultural facilities and programmes (such as theatres, museums and music venues); developing programming activities beyond the venue, in different parts of the city/region; and providing for and expressing social and cultural change as the city transforms.

- **Civic Pride.** For example, featured as an asset in the brands of cities; projected as an attractor for inward investment and the in-migration/retention of 'knowledge workers'; and valued by communities as a 'feel good factor' for their city.

1.1.2 Creative Economy

How the venues provide functional facilities and cultural currency for creative business activities, and how they enable creative business practice to connect, innovate and grow. This relates to:

- **Creative Business Activity:** For example, providing appropriate workspace and activity space; brokering new relations between creative businesses across value chains; supporting innovative practice; showcasing talent; supporting networks (both face-to-face and virtual); and building new markets.

- **Knowledge Transfer:** For example, actively facilitating relationships between research, learning and skills providers and business; encouraging cultural change in institutional practice; and providing as a central premise facilities and programmes that traverse institutional and sectoral boundaries.

- **Creative Spill-Over:** For example, supporting creative businesses to engage with businesses in other sectors, with innovation key; operating as an 'attraction' for cultural tourism; and generating new products and services through the overall infrastructure offer.

1.1.3 Creative Infrastructure

How the venues provide a mix of facilities and programmes, with cinema at their heart, to be enabling and engaging across the above agendas. This relates to:

- **The Practical Infrastructure Offer.** For example, the technical quality of provision; availability of wifi and other connecting infrastructure; the number of screens and their size/spec/availability; and the availability of appropriate workspace and activity space.

- **The Retention of Cinema as the Core Offer.** For example, the essential programming offer; the ways cinema is expressed and promoted across the venue; and the promotion of cinema through other tools – such as festivals.

- **The Balance of Consumption and Production.** For example, the role of the café bar; the provision of network and showcase infrastructure; and opportunities for cross-art-form activity.

- **The Cultural DNA.** For example, the role of design in ensuring that the venues are connected and open; the curation of the venues to ensure that cultural integrity and a sense of ownership are established for a diversity of audiences/users; and the nurturing of an 'atmosphere' and 'scene' that projects and evokes *the latest* in the contemporary culture of the city without being exclusive to certain groups and debarring of others.

1.2 Two Footprints: The Physical and the Digital

Each of the above themes is explored through a focus on how the venues occupy *both* a physical and digital footprint:

- **The physical footprint** refers in the most part to the on-site performance of the venue – how facilities and a cultural programme are managed and developed as an overall infrastructure offer. This includes a focus on how the physical footprint can be managed more innovatively, effectively and efficiently; covering opportunities for expansion (on- and even off-site) and redevelopment and/or revisioning.

- **The digital footprint** refers to the effective embrace with digital technology on- and off-site, with an emphasis on how the venues are extending and can extend further their reach and role – such as through virtual business networks, on-line audience development programmes, digital programming, and digital art works.

Cross-Art-Form and Media Venues – A Brief Introduction

This report explores the role and profiles of the venues in a way that demands a reconsideration of how they are described, engaged and supported. None of the six venues consider 'cross-art-form and media venues' to be a satisfactory term. Also, there is agreement that 'media centre' is an ill-defined and confusing term used widely and somewhat indiscriminately across the creative economy.

The venues come from different but related histories, and the names they used to go by - 'arts centres' and 'regional film theatres' - have historical associations which are unhelpful and no longer cover the breadth and complexity of their activities and intentions. The first Regional Film Theatre was established in Nottingham in 1967, followed by Tyneside Film Theatre in 1968. Watershed and Cornerhouse opened in the 1980s, Nottingham Media Centre – now Broadway – opened in 1990, and Sheffield Showroom in 1995. The FACT Centre opened in 2003, but the organisation had been active as a commissioning and exhibition agency since 1988.

Each will by 2008 have three or four cinema screens, and all are part of the Digital Screen Network, the UK Film Council's initiative to improve access to 'specialised films' for audiences through the provision of digital projection and playback facilities. All are members of the Europa Cinemas network and therefore have a screenings target of 35% European films – establishing them as a key outlet for (non-national) European cultural product. All of the venues have bars and cafes. Cornerhouse and FACT present gallery programmes of artists' moving image and new media; they each facilitate moving image commissioning and production, and between them they have initiated and supported more than fifteen film and other moving image festivals. They also commission new work – including film, media, installation and 3d work.

Their relative longevity is seen as vital to their integrity, sense of purpose and range of influence:

"(T)here is a 25 year legacy; a sustained track record of delivery - and that follows through to our relationship with the public".

However it is also acknowledged that this meant they could be interpreted as out dated, quaint, archaic, even 'cliquey'. There is a concern that the venues could be interpreted as being merely the residue of the Regional Film Theatre network or as arts centres that happen to have cinemas.

Differences and Commonalities

Each venue has a distinct and particular history – embedded within the district and city in which they are located. Therefore, there is no single unifying model for the venues – they each have a specific relationship with their city.

But while being different, they also have a great deal in common. Although not a formal network, this self-nominated group is a natural alliance, connecting with parallel histories, purpose and ambition. For example, they operate across a range of art forms and bundle together a diverse range of functions and activities based on and beyond cinema. They are also part of and influential across a much more extensive constituency of arts organisations.

It is important to note that, whilst the six may be at the forefront of development, they are by no means, nor do they claim to be, representative. There are many more venues that present cinema as part of a broader cultural offer, alongside theatre, craft, performance, the visual arts, and new media: representatives from 53 venues attended an Arts Council England/British Film Institute/UK Film Council organised 'Programming Film Day for cross-arts -venues', at Watershed in May 2006. There are *peer organistions* in other British cities (e.g. Chapter in Cardiff; Nerve Centre in Derry; and Dundee Contemporary Arts), London, (e.g. ICA, Rich Mix, Riverside Studios and Watermans), and rural areas (e.g. Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal, Cumbria; and Strode Theatre/Cinema in Street, Somerset).

As will be shown, without a dedicated approach to expanding and improving both the physical and digital footprints of the venues, they will not operate as effective, fit-for-purpose infrastructure in the digital age. Critical to the *sustainable transformation* of the venues is that they proactively develop new delivery models, broker radical forms of partnership and collaboration, and embrace a culture of innovation, experimentation and risk. This is essential for them to retain or even reclaim their long-held position as trusted cultural intermediaries; as the places where contemporary cultural forms and processes collide to produce the most interesting and absorbing media, the best creative business contacts and ideas, and the tacit sense of creative belonging so crucial to a city's creative life.

Critical to the success of the venues as they seek to develop both their physical and digital footprints will be the degree to which they can respond to audience and community demand. As organisations they have to date built their success on meeting audience demand, as witnessed through imaginative programming of film and film festivals which both respond to individual and community needs and encourage demand in a manner which can be truly described as 'audience development'. This can be very much linked to the creation of bars and cafes and other facilities, which as part of an overall brand offering are different to the mainstream and aligned to the needs of often evolving and regenerating areas. Put short, the venues have had a close relationship to the lifestyles and demographics of their users.

As they develop further, the venues will need to take their inherent responsiveness to another level by becoming even more focused on meeting the needs of audiences. The model for venues to follow and study is that pursued by successful customer-focused organisations from inside and outside of the cultural sphere, as well as the newer models provided by web2.0 organisations and social networking pioneers. Initiatives such as DOTT07, launched by the Design Council in the North East, show that taking a user-led approach from across the social sphere to arrange projects and tackle issues can be highly rewarding and effective[3]. Digitalisation provides venues with some of the tools to do this – through enabling user-led innovation, debate, comment and participation – but the venues must ensure that user-led programming and infrastructure sit seamlessly across both their digital and physical footprint through combining events, debate, action and involvement across multiple platforms.

[3] See www.dott.org for details on a range of user-driven concepts and ideas including the design of new schools and health services.

Currently, as will be shown, the venues are positioned at a creative and strategic crossroads. After many years of often very challenging development, they operate as established, highly respected and widely valued 'cultural assets' in each of the cities in which they are located. For example, audiences for 'independent cinema' have steadily increased; the venues are well-patronised by 'creative class' professionals and thus have cultural integrity and renown; educational programmes have supported wider connections; interdisciplinary creative practice is given a platform; and multiple new types of partnership are being formed (such as with 'big business' and education institutions). Indeed, these very factors – possibly interpreted as 'success factors' – place the venues in position that is both opportunity-laden and challenging:

- **The Opportunity-laden:** The venues are recognised for their cultural and economic value and they are asked to deliver on a set of instrumental and institutional agendas – from growing the Creative Industries to social cohesion; regeneration to city branding. This provides an opening for the venues to situate themselves at the heart of each city's cultural, social and economic offer, with obvious resource and investment implications. In addition, the processes of creative practice are changing, with digitalisation pushing forward collaboration and appropriation in increasingly democratic and interdisciplinary ways. The venues are to a lesser or greater extent brokers of these processes and thus have the potential to have a progressive role to play in supporting and generating new ideas and content for a wider set of stakeholders.

- **The Challenging**: Such instrumental and institutional agendas, plus the rapid process of change in creative practice, are immensely challenging, with venues moving far beyond their principal cinema function to play a prominent role in multiple, previously unfamiliar strategic agendas. This places pressure on capacity and expertise, as well as long-held aesthetic and cultural values. It also places pressure on the venues to improve the quality, clarity, cohesiveness, scale and fit of their physical and digital footprints. The strategic and cultural landscape is changing. The task now is establishing a clear, agenda-setting, innovative role for the venues while retaining a commitment to cinema at their core.

1.2.1 Digitalisation – Opening-up the Venues[4]

Increasing digitalisation will have a profound effect on all aspects of the way individuals produce and consume culture. While the changes that digitalisation will have for cross-art-form venues over the next decade cannot be known for certain, there are already strong indications of the direction and types of effect of that digitalisation will have. However it is critical to realise that the ongoing process of digitalisation is so pervasive and fast with so many of its benefits and opportunities being taken for granted by a younger generation, that it would be a mistake to solely concentrate on facilitating technology rather than end-user benefit and agency. Technological change, profound shifts in the ways we produce and consume culture, and the convergence of previously separate forms, mediums and devices, will impact upon the venues in **six main ways**:

- **Mobile media:** While the downloading of TV and film to hand-held devices such as mobile phones is still in its relative infancy – certainly compared to music – in the future it seems clear that viewing habits will alter as the 'screen on the wall' becomes just one of many ways that consumers enjoy TV and film. This is likely to lead to even greater personalisation of viewing habits and increasingly the creation of media specifically for viewing on small screens.

- **New platforms and personalisation:** As computer processing power and broadband bandwidth grow, the computer will play as central a role in peoples' viewing habits as it does do already for many in their listening habits. One potential effect of this is that consumers will use the opportunity provided by more choice to expand their horizons. The 'Long Tail' theory contends that in a world of consumer choice not constrained by physical distribution barriers there will be greater opportunity for niche players in a market place which is more diverse, fragmented and open to new players. One study by the UK Film Council[5] showed that this effect was already in evidence, without downloading in place. It showed that whereas in traditional film viewing and video rental the top one hundred movies account for 86–90 per cent of viewing, in online DVD rental that figure was only 70 per cent. Eight per cent of online transactions are for films that achieve no 'bricks and mortar' exposure through retail or

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[4] This Section draws heavily on "Staying Ahead: the Economic Performance of the UK's Creative Industries", The Work Foundation, 2007.

[5] 'Feasibility Study of a Digital Platform for the Delivery of UK Independent and Specialised Films to the Home', UK Film Council, 2006.

video rental. While these figures may be skewed by the choices of the early adaptors taking up these services, the mainstream success of sites such as lovefilm.com indicates the potential ahead.

- **Expansion of wi-fi:** Whereas five years ago Bryant Park in New York was a novelty and pioneer in offering free internet access in a public space, many places now operate as free wi-fi zones. Any advantage currently gained by venues from offering free wi-fi will diminish and advantage will only be gained through the value added that can be given through additional content and service offerings and the sense of connection to real physical place that a consumer has. This of course has implications for venues that offer free wi-fi at the core of their offer.

- **Democratisation and consumer choice:** The relationship between cultural production (be it of film, video, art) and consumption is changing rapidly. Consumers are increasingly focused on the 'experience' of consumption of cultural products/services - a trend highlighted by the recent explosion in the popularity of live music and live music festivals. Digitalisation is allowing consumers to interact with and personalise the nature of their experience in new ways. This can be termed a 'democratisation' of consumption and production, although such open access is always likely to be open to the more affluent, literate and confident in society.

- **Public sector publishing:** Changing notions of Public Sector Broadcasting (PSB), in particular the notion put forward by Ofcom[6] for a Public Sector Publisher (PSP) to promote and stimulate non-linear broadcasting, could provide opportunities for organisations and groups which facilitate and produce innovative interactive media. The PSP proposal might see funding for community-led content projects, participatory drama and content-led media projects which engage a wider audience in cultural and other institutions.

- **Open source and open collaboration:** New models of operation based around open source models will become more common. These will encourage collaborative approaches to programme development and the 'wiki-isation' of

[6] Ofcom, PSP Discussion Paper, January 2007.

policy and strategy development utilising new technology. There will be opportunities for collaborative innovation with the most progressive organisations supported to act as specialist intermediaries[7].

[7] For more on this see NESTA, Connect, Collaborate and Innovate, June 2007 Policy Briefing.

1.2.2 Convergence: Life in the Age of Generation YouTube

"The successful application of rich multimedia products and integrated services that previously did not exist, or were provided separately, from organisations across the technology, media and telecoms sectors"[8]

A critical challenge facing all cross-art-form venues is how they adapt and respond to an increasingly convergent world where the old silos separating previously distinct art forms, media, technologies and consumer experiences have either disappeared or are rapidly changing. In terms of digital media, there are two chief drivers of this change: the rapid uptake of two way high-speed broadband and the continual evolution and improvement in ICTs (Information Communication Technologies) such as mobile phones, games consoles, handheld personal computers, and so on. The shift that has occurred most starkly in music, where traditional platforms such as stereos have been rendered close to obsolete by downloading and the use of MP3s and other portable devices. However, as yet, parallel processes are not gathering with such rapid force in the consumption and production habits of other aspects of digital media. This is changing fast. For example, the rapid rise of digital television platforms (such as Freeview) which are now the dominant platform for viewing and the knock on effect on the viewing patterns of the old, traditional analogue channels (such as BBC1 and ITV1), is but one example of the way that digitalisation is having a decisive effect on the consumption and production of media.

However, from the perspective of the venues explored in this Study, there is a far more profound change occurring in the way that consumers interact with media which is having and will have an effect on their patterns of programming, role in the community, business model, even the skills and operational systems they need in place. This is the ongoing shift in the way that audiences consume media, moving away from passive consumption to active participation and control. What this shift means in practice is summed up well by Anthony Lilley in Ofcom's 2007 discussion paper on Public Service Content:

"(w)hilst traditional media technologies primarily concentrate on the distribution of ideas, the interactive media technologies are concerned with handing active control and the ability to communicate to citizens"[9].

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[8] Deloitte, "Convergence is dead, long live convergence".
[9] Ofcom, A new approach to public service content in the digital media age", Jan 2007.

Lilley describes the change neatly as that of switch from *'mass media' to our 'our media',* and it is one that we are only just beginning to explore the consequences of.

This shift is sometimes referred to as the growth of "Generation YouTube", as it is in spectacular rise of web 2.0 internet sites such as YouTube, MySpace, bebo and wikipedia, which effectively put the user in control - allowing him/her to post, edit, comment, create and share. And this is just the tip of the iceberg: new types of participatory experience, blurring on and off line are growing hugely in popularity and influence. Projects such as Stagework, Developed by the National Theatre, which allow users to go behind the scenes and explore the making of plays and drama; and in Liverpool, FACT's Tenantspin, which has given birth to several hundred multi-media citizen produced programmes over the past few years; are just the start of a bigger shift in the way that digital media is produced and consumed.

A further example is Watershed in Bristol, which received over 1.4 million visits to its website in 2005 - over three times the 400,000 visitors who came through its doors. A good many of these online visitors made use of Watershed's dShed platform for artistic content, and played an active role in the development process for new projects. In addition, Cornerhouse in Manchester has led the way in terms of online distribution of publications and its Artradio project is a groundbreaking example of using convergent technology. FACT is continually pioneering new ways of reaching audiences, as is seen in the Video Jukebox work produced in collaboration with Sandpit/Lancaster University. Broadway in Nottingham houses a range of projects that explore new boundaries in digital media, brokered by the Arts Council England, East Midlands -supported Digital Broadway Programme. Tyneside Cinema commissioned and published its first open source films, the Light Surgeon's Chimera Project, in 2001 and had them broadcast on regional BBC in 2003.

For other cultural organisations and venues, the most positive response has been to embrace the challenge it throws up: The Royal Opera House purchase of Music and Dance DVD production company Opus Arte is one response for the need to move the relationships with audiences on to a different level. The ICA's link up with Sony Playstation portable and the production of ten minute arts bulletin for its predominantly youthful users is another.

For the venues, a set of interlinked opportunities and challenges are raised by both convergence and the potential offered by the putative PSP: opportunities to attract new and different sources of funding, and challenges in cementing their role in the cultural infrastructure of their cities and the creative economy of the UK. These include *adopting a reinvigorated and redefined producer role; operating as leaders in converged media experiences; and providing a connecting role for public service providers.* As will be shown, this requires a wholesale reappraisal of the current structure, approach and capacity of the venues, with reform for some a greater urgency than for others.

1.3 From Infrastructure for You to Infrastructure by You

The new, emergent and future opportunities and challenges faced by the venues, plus long-held opportunities and challenges such as in audience development, require the venues to reposition themselves in the cultural and strategic landscape. Their physical and digital footprints represent an enormous asset base across multiple agendas. These have been developed over what have in some cases been long histories, often based on a mix of organic organisational development concerns and periodic 'injections' of investment and development support. The venues have evolved and to a greater or lesser degree adapted to their shifting strategic and cultural landscape. That they have survived and remained sustainable is testament to their success in delivering meaningful experiences and services to audiences and a wider set of stakeholders. This is underpinned by ongoing public sector support and investment.

However, the venues today face their most significant set of challenges and opportunities to date. The extent to which they respond positively to both will determine their future success, even their existence. This demands a positive step change in the ways the venues are conceptualised, managed and supported. The venues need to fulsomely embrace the challenges and opportunities of change and do so with a focus very much planted on the digital footprint:

- **Infrastructure *for* You:** The venues have been innovators in providing infrastructure for an audience. These are the conditions that have historically enabled creative consumption and production to flourish. They include the quality of the cinema programming and wider 'cinema experience'; the workspace, showcase and network offer; and the design and 'feel' of their public realm. Until recently, these have very much focused on the physical footprint.

- **Infrastructure *by* You:** Although there are marked variations between them, the venues have been less adept in providing infrastructure that has the signature of a diverse range of shifting audiences and communities. While historically the venues have thrived on a relationship with a relatively niche audience of cultural producers and consumers in each city, and while this audience has played a signature role in making the venues 'their own'; there is a need today, with digialisation a key engaging mechanism, to broaden the base of this ownership and to do so in ways that enable cultural producers and consumers to introduce multiple signatures of ownership and divergent senses of place. By developing an open source structure and culture – to management, programming, cross-art-form practice – the venues can become 'Infrastructure by You'. This is the proactive pursuit of creativity and innovation *as an outcome and process*, with an emphasis on connectivity: of audiences, businesses, art forms, technology and content, and strategic partners. It is based upon the direct brokerage of new relationships and interactions, on the deliberate staging of boundary-crossing activity, and on the purposeful programming of activities that extend far beyond the physical footprint of the venue.

Digitalisation forms a key part of a shifting cultural and strategic landscape which requires that the venues to be recast as *Infrastructure by You*, launching activities and services beyond the physical footprint to operate as *contemporary cultural intermediaries* for their cities and regions. It is no longer sufficiently meaningful or sustainable for the venues to *simply* provide infrastructure for cultural producers and consumers: just as the boundaries between cultural production and consumption have diminished to, in some cases, be almost negligible, the venues need to operate as *cultural intermediaries and producers in their own right*: of content, dialogue, ideas and cultural intelligence. By providing the "*'spikes' in the otherwise flat earth of digital culture",* they can become the physical and digital gathering and translation points for creative content, where the physical and digital footprints are interdependent, and the content and meanings are user-driven.

1.4 Cultural Intermediaries

Currently, the venues provide a mix of infrastructure that places them in a unique position at the cross-roads of cultural and strategic change. Each of the venues has provided for this Study a SWOT analysis that covers their existing and potential role. These have been abstracted in relation to the three themes introduced above: **Creative Economy, Creative Place-Making, and Creative Infrastructure.** Accepting the marked differences between the venues and the contexts in which they operate, an overview SWOT is presented over:

Strengths

- High quality cinema programming – diverse films to diverse audiences – a 'passion for cinema'
- Distinctive cinema experience – an 'aspirational good'
- A wider cultural programme – festivals, talks, exhibitions, conferences
- Centres for social and business networking with a cultural integrity
- A generosity and openness of spirit – offering a comfort zone for connecting and creating
- Innovative education programmes
- Leaders of culture-led regeneration.

Weaknesses

- There is a sometimes unproductive tension between protecting the current status and embracing change
- There is a lack of capacity and in some instances expertise to drive from an enabling to an engaging agenda
- Entrepreneurial culture is underdeveloped
- Clarity of offer and purpose is not always forthcoming; the trajectory of change has not been mapped.

Opportunities

- To operate as innovative cultural intermediaries with an expanded physical and digital footprint that sits at the heart of and drives change for the city's/region's cultural offer
- To develop a network of venues that develops delivery partnerships and offers leadership for culture-led change
- To deliver across multiple agendas as critical brokers of partnership and activity; and to establish an openness that is embraced by a far wider mix of 'users' and 'beneficiaries'
- To lead innovation in cinema exhibition and audience development, with digital technology a key enabling tool

Threats

- Failure to adapt from an enabling to engaging infrastructure offer
- The emergence of new platforms for exhibiting cinema 'beyond the cinema'
- An improved cultural offer elsewhere, coupled with ever increasing demands on people's leisure time/expenditure
- Revenue depletion – e.g. due to new competition from workspace providers and bar operators; smaller audiences; and public sector funding reviews
- Weak partnership – with corresponding weakness of vision and voice.

This signals a clear set of opportunities and challenges for the venues as they seek to redefine their role in sector development and continue to feature prominently within the cultural portfolios of their respective cities. This Study is intended to ease the process of transition and offer ways forward for the venues – and others like them – to **offer the type of Infrastructure by You that the UK creative economy requires.**

Cinema at the Core

"Film has the power to inspire us. It allows us to inhabit new identities, hear new voices and to see the world from many different perspectives. Film brings us news of other cultures, other mores, other values. The apparently universal ability of film to excite and enthral audiences, to make them think, to encourage empathy and compassion, to provoke laughter and tears, makes it the most pungent, mysterious and international of art forms. Such a significant and popular medium should be accessible to all communities in its most potent form, which is the cinema."
Anthony Minghella (Foreword, Study on the Impact of Local Cinema, 2005, UK Film Council, Film London, EM Media).

Each of the venues featured in this study has cinema at its core. Cinema offers a unique diversity of cultural representation. It is accessible and engaging; it is the artform that engages with the broadest interests in the community. Indeed:

"In an age of global communication, film has become one of the most potent means through which nations and communities project their values and identities and learn about one another. Moving image technologies have become a key factor in everyday living."
(Film in the Digital Age - UK Film Council Consultation on Policy and Funding Priorities, April 2007 – March 2010).

Cinema is also central to contemporary creative consciousness – the touchstone for new forms, influencing new forms – games, fashion, design – and also increasingly reflected in traditional art forms – literature, the visual arts, opera design and direction (Atom Egoyan, Anthony Minghella), the opera version of David Cronenberg's *The Fly*, and many theatrical versions of films (e.g. *A Matter of Life and Death at the National Theatre, Mary Poppins, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Lord of the Rings, Billy Elliot, All About My Mother, Hairspray*).

The venues advocate the importance of cinema, but not in and of itself. Critical to the identity, market position and cultural integrity of the venues is a distinctive programme unavailable in such abundance via mainstream commercial cinema; and a mix of surrounding programming and supporting infrastructure that operates cross-art-form, and engages in different ways: e.g. education programmes, festivals, art exhibitions and business clubs.

"We probably have about 80% of our programme in common with Picture House, but it's the other 20% that makes the difference."

Stakeholders: Connecting Strategic Agendas

This Study is developed for the UK Film Council, Arts Council England, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), with the purpose of establishing a shared strategic agenda with regard to cross-art-form and media venues. Below provides a brief introduction to their current strategic position:

UK Film Council

The UK Film Council (UKFC) was established in 2000. Previously, public policy and funding responsibility for the film was shared by Arts Council England and the British Film Institute (BFI), funding Regional Film Theatres and arts centres with cinemas, via the Regional Arts Boards. When UK Film Council was established, it took over the BFI's funding role. Arts Council England/BFI funding was disaggregated, and UK Film Council delegated funding decisions in England to the newly established Regional Screen Agencies. UK Film Council is the lead agency for film in the UK "ensuring that the economic, cultural and educational aspects of film are effectively represented at home and abroad". It invests £7.5 million a year into regional film activities through the Regional Investment Fund for England (RIFE). A RIFE objective is:

"(T)o contribute towards the development of film culture in the UK by improving access to, and education about, film and the moving image by ensuring that the public has access to: a broader range of British and world cinema; opportunities for learning about film; access to the UK's film heritage; and opportunities to participate in film production."

In 2004/2005 the Regional Screen Agencies invested more than £600,000 in cinema and media venues. The value of what the venues do is acknowledged in UK Film Council's setting as a priority for 2007-2010: the development and enhancement of regional "film centres" as cultural and creative hubs:

"Regional film centres – often cross-art-form venues – play a very important catalysing role, as well as filling gaps in provision and creating dynamic cultural hubs in a locality. We will explore with arts organisations how best we can collaborate to develop 'cross- arts- venues' which increase choice for audiences and stimulate creative enterprise." (UK Film Council)

Arts Council England

The Arts Council has retained a remit for artists' and arts related moving image, and in 2004/2005, Arts Council England revenue supported some 38 'cross-art-form and media venues'. Arts Council Lottery Capital has supported many projects where cinema is part of the offer, including FACT, Watershed, Cornerhouse, Broadway, Showroom, Arnolfini (Bristol), Rich Mix (London), Cinema City (Norwich), Quad (Derby), and others. Arts Council England's current policies don't mention cinema specifically, but do prioritise support for cross-arts-centres and for digital and media work:

"The multi-space, multi-artform culture of these organisations makes them accessible for both artists and audiences…digital and new media work has become a core function of arts centres… to reflect the more personalised cultural experience which many arts centres seek to provide…(W)e will prioritise investment in organisations that are embracing new ways of creating and distributing work through the use of digital technology…"

Arts and Humanities Research Council

AHRC is not a revenue stakeholder, but aims to "…develop(ing) strategic partnerships to promote the interests of arts and humanities research and its value to our social, economic and cultural life…" AHRC's priority is to exploit fully the new knowledge and learning that are generated in higher education institutions, and it is increasingly broadening the scope of its activities, and engaging with external partners, most particularly through its Knowledge Transfer programmes. Included in AHRC's definition of ICT is:

"(T)he potential for knowledge transfer in high-quality content derived from arts and humanities research for print, film, digital and broadcasting media, as well as experiencing the outcomes of research through contemporary exhibitions and performances. This broader definition thus encompasses public engagement and understanding."

The AHRC and BBC Knowledge Exchange pilot programme supports arts and humanities researchers and BBC Future Media and Technology staff to work together on collaborative projects, and the Knowledge Transfer Fellowship scheme is designed to support academics to undertake a programme around arts or humanities research which has the potential to make a significant difference beyond the world of academia.

Liverpool
FACT

2. The Role and Impact of the Venues

The six featured venues differ significantly in history, profile, structure, and context. However, as this Study shows, they share a set of challenges and opportunities as they seek to be fit-for-purpose infrastructure in the digital age. Their commonalities and differences are explored here through a focus on the three themes of **Creative Place-Making, Creative Economy and Creative Infrastructure**, with emphasis on the implications here for the sustainable transformation of their physical and digital footprints.

First, the six venues are introduced in brief below:

Broadway, Nottingham www.broadway.org.uk
Based in the heart of Nottingham's Lace Market district, with its mix of independent retail, cafes and bars, Broadway provides a mix of cinema, workspace, exhibition space, and a vibrant café bar. The building has recently undergone a £6 million redevelopment programme, introducing two new screens (bringing the total to four), one of which is designed by prestigious Nottingham fashion designer, Paul Smith. Part of the Digital Screen Network, the cinema mixes 'art house' and cross-over titles, plus a more recent shift to introducing more mainstream 'gateway' films.

Broadway manages and hosts three festivals plus a range of events: **British Silent Cinema Festival** – silent cinema and live music; **Bang** – short films; and **Big Grin** – cartoons and animation. Broadway also hosts partnership festivals such as **Trampoline**, **Radiator**, **Now**, **Resfest**, and **After Dark** (AD) In addition, it also works with partners such as Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Bonnington and Angel Row to secure and present digital and new media artwork in Nottingham. It has an Arts Council England, East Midlands post located in the building to help facilitate such connections (as a Digital Arts Coordinator) – managing the Digital Broadway Programme.

The redevelopment has introduced a **medialab** facility and **flexible studio space**, which increases Broadway's capacity to develop new production activities and work with a non-linear narrative or digital arts.

Broadway runs a **media education programme,** including work with schools in areas such as Media Studies, History, Languages, Citizenship and English Literature.

Cornerhouse, Manchester www.cornerhouse.co.uk
Cornerhouse was opened in Manchester in 1985. It was conceived by the Greater Manchester Visual Arts Trust who saw the need for a arts space within the city and region. Today Cornerhouse has three floors of contemporary art galleries, three screens showing the best of independent cinema, a bar, café and bookshop. It also operates Cornerhouse publications, an international distribution service for visual arts books, catalogues and DVDs. The venue has a footfall of 500,000 visits per year and rising.

Education: Events are both formal and informal, and activities include film introductions, talks, guests, programme notes, information packs, discussions, debates and exhibition tours. Activities include **Projector**, Cornerhouse's programme for schools and colleges and **Livewire**, Cornerhouse's free informal education programme for 14 -18 year olds.

Cinema: The programme is international in scope and offers new and innovative film and video alongside more familiar work. Cornerhouse originates two film festivals each year: **¡Viva!** Spanish Film Festival and **Exposures,** which is a four day student film festival that showcases the best student film produced in the North West and nationally.

Gallery: Cornerhouse galleries bring the best in contemporary visual arts to the city, exhibiting work of international significance, initiating and receiving touring exhibitions while also identifying opportunities to support and promote artists based in the North West.

Website: The Cornerhouse website received ten million page viewings and 50,000 downloads in 2006/07, and is playing an increasingly important role as a space for cultural showcasing, expression and dialogue.

FACT, Liverpool www.fact.co.uk
FACT was founded in Liverpool in 1998 and can justly claim to be one of the UK's leading organisation for the commissioning and presentation of film, video and new media art forms. In addition to its cinema, which is managed by City Screen, FACT has a multi-purpose media box space, two galleries, a café, bar and bookshop. It also has educational spaces, an archive, workshop rooms and space for artists in residence. FACT has three main programmes of activity:

The Exhibition Programme: This consists of projects, presentations, commissions and initiatives. This includes projects which are presented in the FACT Centre's galleries and Media Lounge as well as with partner organisations in the UK and abroad.

The Collaboration Programme: Established in 1992 as a new and distinctive framework for artists and community groups to work together, this develops strategies that engage participants as producers rather than consumers of the moving image and new media; creating new forms of collective learning and expression, tools and platforms for self-representation.

The Structural Programme: This provides projects and services to support and develop the national infrastructure for artists and exhibitors working with video and new and emerging media forms. Activities include **MITES -** the Moving Image Touring & Exhibition Service; **The Digital Mastering Service**; **New Tools** – a programme of courses for skills development within a creative context; **ITEM -** a pilot research and development programme; and **The Medialab -** the production and workshop facilities at FACT.

Showroom, Sheffield www.showroom.org.uk
The Showroom / Workstation is an integrated cinema, café/bar and creative industries managed workspace complex utilising profits generated by commercial trading to support the cultural role of the cinema.

The Showroom cinema was developed in a converted 1930's building close to Sheffield railway station. Over a ten-year period a committed and growing audience has developed for a diverse range of new and historic film screenings. It has also developed an annual programme of film festivals and industry events including the high profile **Sheffield International Documentary Festival**, and **Showcomotion** (young people's film and media festival). External partners such as **Lovebytes** (digital arts and media festival) and **ShAFF** (Sheffield Adventure Film Festival) are based at the Showroom. In recent years the Showroom has secured investment in new digital projection equipment and is developing a programme of new media screening and creative industries showcasing (**D-Space**). The **education and outreach programme** has contributed to the year on year growth in attendance, particularly for non-mainstream and foreign language films.

The Workstation is a specialised creative industries managed workspace building (perhaps the first of its kind in the UK) housing around fifty companies in over 5,000 square metres of space. Units range in size from 25 to 200 square metres. Tenants include film producers (e.g. **Warp Films**), designers (e.g. **The Designers Republic**), architects, IT providers and theatre companies. Childcare is an integral part of the 'Workstation community' with a 50 place workplace nursery and crèche within the building. A major IT upgrade is currently on progress supported by ERDF funding.

Plans are underway to develop the **Sheffield Festival Centre** on an adjacent site. This will be a distinctive, landmark building facing Sheffield station. It will house a flexible auditorium (seating up to 200 people), a smaller mediateque, additional managed workspace and a rooftop restaurant. This is identified as much-needed new infrastructure to showcase film and media as a real Sheffield strength, provide new capacity and profile for the city's events and festival programme and introduce a fresher workspace offer for growing creative businesses.

Sheffield Media Centre (i.e. Showroom/Workstation) has recently acquired a management contract for **The Cube**, a work/live space for creative businesses, located in a different part of the cultural industries quarter. This expands the physical footprint by offering workspace and residential space designed for project work, with a strong focus on film and media activities.

Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle-upon-Tyne www.tynecine.org
Tyneside Cinema opened as the 'Bijou News-Reel Cinema' in 1937. The British Film Institute-supported Tyneside Film Theatre opened in 1968, closed in 1975, and after a public protest, re-opened in 1976.

Temporarily relocated from Newcastle city centre to Gateshead Old Town Hall, a Heritage Lottery Fund grant and One North East (the Regional Development Agency) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) investment is supporting the restoration and extension of the cinema to create three screens, a new version of its innovative 'digital lounge' two floors of networked meeting and incubation space, production and post production training facilities and three cafes. Tyneside is one of two Media Enterprise Hubs (along with Teesside's Digital City) identified by One North East to host the new super connectivity proposals for developing the creative industries across the Northern Way. Tyneside is supported by the Digital Screen Network and its new venue will enable digital screenings in all of its screens. Its core film programming is done in partnership with City Screen. The new venue will also host and exhibit archive newsreel material as part of a new national screen heritage project.

The Cinema's education and Outreach programmes have grown exponentially in the last four years with rise of digital technologies. From a small number of passive cineliteracy events, it now works with over 6,000 people per year in courses and events of which over 60% are now practical media skills based.

Its outreach screening projects such as **Doorstep Pictures** and **Tyneside on the Toon** bring film to communities across the North East.

Tyneside hosts two important international festivals: **Northern Lights Film Festival**, launched in 2003, presents UK, Baltic and Northern European moving image; and the biannual **AV Festival** is the UK's largest international festival of electronic arts, and uniquely commissions and exhibits with partners across the three urban centres of the North East and globally.

Watershed, Bristol www.watershed.co.uk

Watershed, housed in former industrial premises on Bristol's waterfront, and the UK's first dedicated media centre, opened in 1982. It stands the at the gateway to Harbourside – a major cultural, commercial and residential regeneration development in the heart of Bristol UK.

Watershed has three cinema screens, is part of Europa Cinemas and the Digital Screen Network, and regularly hosts industry events, such as South West Screen's **'Funding You Feature'**, last year's **Cinema Programme in Arts Centres conference, and networking forums such as Cineformation, Scriptwriter's Group and West of England Design Forum.**

Watershed has been key in developing and programming **Encounters International Short Film Festival**, the UK's premier short film festival. Other festivals it plays a significant role in supporting, developing and hosting are **Slapstick Silent Comedy Festival**, **Wildscreen**, and **Bristol Latino Film Festival**. The cinema programme regularly profiles national cinemas (such as Albanian, Portuguese and Polish) and represents the history of cinema for contemporary audiences (e.g. silent films with live music). Watershed develops and supports many other projects, such as the annual **Clark Bursary Digital Art Award** and **Bristol Stories** – an online archive of Bristol people's personal views and experiences. An ongoing relationship with **HP Labs** was initiated in 2004.

dShed is Watershed's online platform for digital creativity, and **iShed**, a separate Community Interest Company, has recently been set up to work with academic, commercial and cultural partners, and to identify new opportunities, support talent and incubate ideas with a focus on digital media and technology. Watershed is also home to Futurelab, UWE eMedia Incubator, ArtsMatrix and Bristol Investors in Learning.

2.1 Creative Place-Making

"There are at least three separate channels by which the Creative Industries can improve the well-being of regions: first, they directly generate value added for the local economy; second, their presence may make a city a more attractive location for non-creative businesses; and, third, they may instil and reinforce a sense of community identity and vitality" (Throsby 2001)[10].

Over the past twenty years, economic restructuring, periodic crises in government and finance, and an increasing realisation that the convergence of technology and content provide high growth and distinctively competitive market positions, have made culture and creativity an increasingly key focus for UK regions and cities: providing the leading edge for their tourist industries, offering a 'creative brand' to attract inward investment, and providing new skills and identities that are hoped will bring with them a unique, competitive edge.

This creative focus accelerated during the 1990s, as the 'network society', 'experience economy', 'creative cities' and 'globalisation' were used to define new modes of production and consumption within the 'new economy'. Today, the availability and quality of the local cultural resources and offer can determine whether or not people think their area is a 'good place to live'. This is why culture is increasingly associated with *quality of life*. In addition, place-making strategies tend to focus on their cultural offer and on the presence of cultural infrastructure and a dynamic Creative Industries sector. This means that by helping to create positive images, the cultural sector has a direct impact on inward investment and the attraction/retention of skilled 'knowledge workers'.

For example, c*ulture's role in tourism* is key, with tourism offers now increasingly focused on what is distinctive in a place. Tourism is one of the main sources of economic growth for some regions and cities, with evidence suggesting that tourists are increasingly interested in niche destinations and activities[11]. So today we can say that it is the distinctive environmental, leisure, cultural, ethnic and life style features of a place that tend to attract visitors. More and more destinations are using the label 'cultural' to highlight their offer and cultural tourism represents an average of six to eight per cent of national GDP in Europe.

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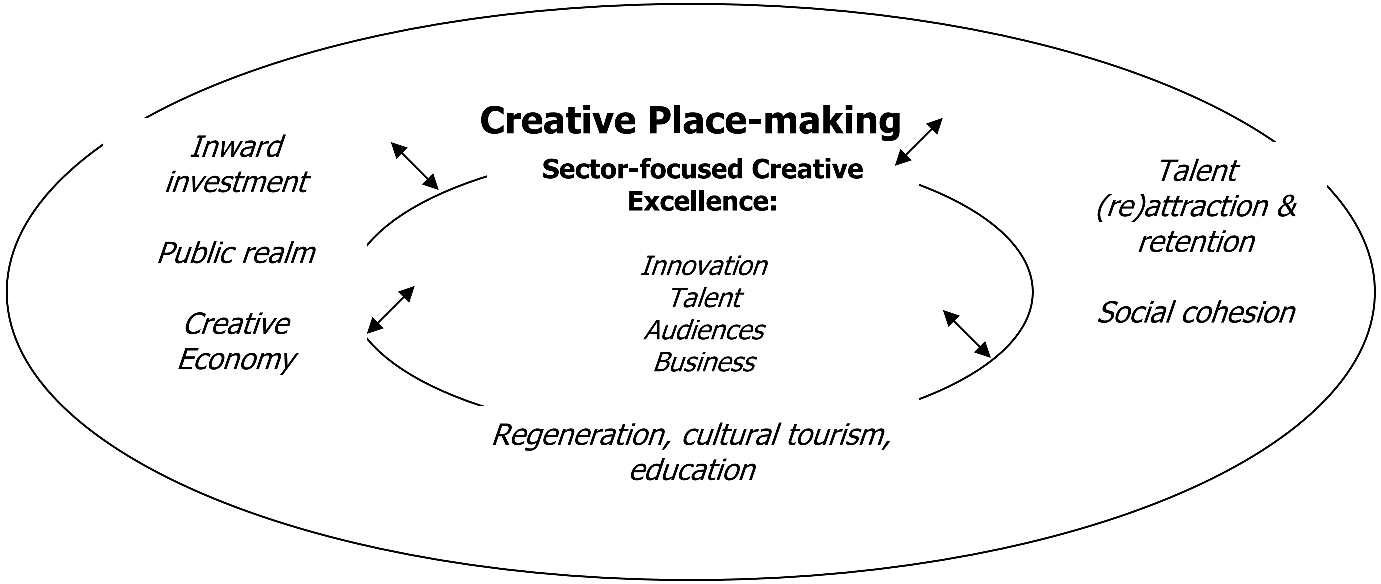
[10] Throsby 2001, 'Economics and Culture', Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
[11] See Alan Clarke (2006): The Cultural Tourism Dynamic - http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ttri/pdf/conference/alan%20clark.pdf

From a public policy and investment perspective, the burden of expectation is today firmly placed on culture – its processes and infrastructure – as a key means of simultaneously satisfying social, growth and of course cultural agendas. This is expressed nationally, such as through the ongoing debate surrounding the public value of culture; and regionally/locally, where partners such as Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and local authorities are seeking to maximise the added value of cultural investment across mainly economic and social agendas. If we add to this the expectation from sector-specific partners such as the Regional Screen Agencies and Arts Council England, that cultural infrastructure must perform to deliver excellence, innovation, talent generation/development, and audiences/markets; then the pressure on culture – and cross- art-form and media venues in particular – becomes acute.

Figure 2: Instrumental Pressure?



The reason this pressure seems particularly acute for cross-art-form and media venues is that they have developed infrastructure and interventions that cut across the agendas highlighted above. The continued innovation and adaptation of the venues over their lifetimes has introduced them to a wide range of strategic agendas, while in some cases the venues have helped to explore and delineate new strategic agendas as policy innovators. For example, it can be argued that the development of Showroom and Workstation as critical 'anchors' for Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter was an early-stage innovation in culture-led regeneration that has led the way comparable schemes ever since. Equally, it is clear that the Watershed has given a distinctiveness and integrity to Bristol's Harbourside as a cultural tourism destination as an *indirect outcome* of its location, while being a lead partner for creativity and innovation agendas in Bristol as a *direct and purposeful input* towards establishing the city as a dynamic and distinctive 'creative place'.

It is therefore part accident and design (often a mix of the two) that the venues are currently poised on the edge or established at the heart of public policy concerns across a range of agendas. The pursuit of establishing cities and regions as 'creative places', with all that this entails, has promoted the venues as key delivery tools and matters of competitive advantage. Indeed, the absence or under-development of such venues in certain cities and larger towns is, for some policy-makers, a matter of concern: the venues are symbols of cultural ambition; they are aspirational tools that have symbolic as well as delivery value. This introduces a strategic challenge to the venues: their appropriation by policy-makers can lead to opportunities (such as in resources), but it can also distort the central activities of the venues and prompt them to directly pursue instrumental concerns that may best be attended to through as indirect outcomes from their central activities.

The extent to which the venues are able to drive the policy agendas through their central activities, and thus maintain a venue-led clarity of purpose, provides a critical tension and requires an entrepreneurial response. This includes establishing a clear role alongside other parts of the cultural and institutional portfolio in the city/region. The ongoing DCMS Creative Economy Programme identifies a coherent landscape of intervention as key for sustainable and successful cultural infrastructure. Here, emphasis is placed on establishing a *fabric of cultural infrastructure*, with key parts of the infrastructure offer working together to build a coordinated approach to creative place-making [12]. This requires that the venues proactively connect and partner across the cultural

[12] See: www.culture.cep.gov.uk

infrastructure landscape, linking for example with infrastructure in theatre, visual arts and music, as well as in education, business and the public realm. Of course, this also requires that public sector partners support the venues to take on this role and support them to provide purposeful, entrepreneurial, engaging infrastructure for a creative place.

In this sense, for example, the physical and strategic location of Cornerhouse in Manchester's 'Oxford Road Corridor' represents a key opportunity: the district has been designated as the heart of Greater Manchester's 'Knowledge Capital Programme', drawing together the knowledge assets of two universities, the BBC, the Palace Theatre, Whitmore Art Gallery, the Royal Northern College of Music, and multiple smaller partners. If it is to succeed, the Manchester Knowledge Capital Programme[13] will need to emphasise the interdependence of creative content infrastructure with technology and innovation infrastructure. Equally, the holistic approach to creativity being developed by Creative Sheffield[14] requires a close relationship between cultural infrastructure such as the Showroom and new growth-orientated knowledge economy infrastructure, such as the forthcoming Digital Campus, if it is to benefit from a richly-hewn fabric of infrastructure upon which competitive economies depend.

An additional issue here is the absence of comparable venues in major towns and cities other than those explored in this Study. For example, Leeds and Birmingham do not have a venue that compares with, for example, Watershed or Showroom. *The extent to which this diminishes their potential to operate as successful creative and knowledge cities, or indeed to which it weakens their cultural integrity, requires consideration.* The absence of such venues also raises speculation as to whether the role, reach and impact of venues such as Watershed is undertaken by the wider infrastructure offer of Leeds and Birmingham thus reducing the need for a specific venue of the type explored in this Study. Partners in Leeds, Birmingham and other key towns and cities, might be encouraged to consider these issues.

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[13] Through a partnership of all ten Greater Manchester authorities, four universities, the strategic health authority, other key public agencies and leading businesses, 'Manchester: Knowledge Capital' is working to stimulate and support increased business innovation from research, science and knowledge; engage with the people of Manchester in securing this future, through dialogue, debate, education and employment; support the growth of a city-region environment which facilitates business success, provides an outstanding quality of life and is open to all; and champion and trying new ideas and new ways of living and working. See: www.manchesterknowledge.com

[14] Creative Sheffield is the new city economic development company set up to spearhead efforts to transform the economic performance of the city. It will seek to deliver higher levels of economic growth and enhance the competitiveness of the city. See: www.creativesheffield.co.uk

Moreover, the extent to which similar venues exist or indeed are needed in London requires consideration. Venues such as the ICA and Rich Mix might be interpreted as playing comparable roles, but it is not clear as to whether they play such a prominent role in creative place-making or indeed if they are such critical brokers and drivers within the wider fabric of infrastructure that the DCMS recognises as so essential for a strong creative economy[15]. It may be that the reach and influence of the venues is at its most pronounced within smaller, regional cities: where they can make a palpable difference to both city-wide civic agendas and local community considerations.

2.1.1 Creative Place-Making: Leading the Change

"Creative, digital media are increasingly important in delivering our agenda – across social inclusion, regeneration, education. The idea that a website can be an effective portal to government services is rubbish; you need local interpretations. And connections and links between Watershed and neighbourhood initiatives enable us to meet this challenge. It mustn't be top down; Watershed is trusted, and allows people ownership of the process. Our public agenda is all about the transformational impact of what we do. And that demands that local government finds new way to deliver its priorities – education, health, the built environment. Watershed is where you find those answers. They're not coming from anywhere else."
(Stephen Hilton, Corporate Consultation Manager, Bristol City Council, Project manager, Connecting Bristol).

The following illustrates the ways the venues are contributing to the 'creative place-making offer' of their respective city or region and identifies the challenges and opportunities that this presents:

Getting a Physical Foothold: Culture-led Regeneration

The relationship between the venues and the economic life of their cities and regions beyond the creative economy is demonstrated in the way that their impact reaches beyond the narrow traditional bounds of what defines a cultural organisation.

[15] See the Infrastructure Working Group Paper: www.cep.culture.gov.uk

They each engage with wider political and economic agendas which mean that they embrace social and economic areas normally unconnected with cultural institutions. For example, the reinvigoration and repopulation of the inner-city has been one of the most obvious symbols of urban regeneration in the UK. While the main drivers for this have been the availability of suitable buildings, imaginative property developers and fresh planning approaches, the relevant venues have played their part in creating an aspirational, trendy and youth-orientated milieu that has been important in making the inner city attractive. In addition to providing the workspace and networks that stimulate and encourage the creative activity engaged in by many of the young urban professionals the venues' core activities also reflect the changing nature of their surroundings. The fact that the venues now do regular showings on Sunday Mornings is an example of how they have joined in and reflect the new demographics of the inner-city.

The physical footprint of the buildings have operated as the anchors for new processes of culture-led regeneration over recent years, and their (close to) city centre locations are critical to their success – in building audiences and playing a key role in the popular imagination of the city. Showroom/Workstation is the anchor development of Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter; Broadway is at the vanguard of the regeneration and ultimate creative success of Nottingham's Lace Market; FACT sits at the heart of a transforming Ropewalks area; and Watershed, with Arnolfini, was open long before the many bars, restaurants and wider cultural offer of the city's Harbourside clustered to establish the *destination* that exists today. Tyneside Cinema's restoration project responds to, and seeks to re-harness public affection and civic pride. The venues have worked to animate otherwise marginal areas, to give a cultural integrity to face-less or denigrated districts, and as direct attractors of new creative production and consumption (from their bars to their workspace).

The role of the venues in local (and at times city-wide) culture-led regeneration remains compelling. For example, Showroom/Workstation is driving forwards plans for a Festivals Centre alongside its current footprint, establishing a landmark building in the immediate sightline of Sheffield railway station that houses workspace, archive space, exhibition and conference space. The success of the existing physical footprint gives this proposition the required cultural and political legitimacy to play a major role in the wider city's renewal.

Indeed, such is the brand and expertise of the venues that they are being approached to operate as pioneer developers in other parts of the city – providing opportunities to expand their physical footprint off-site while connecting activities through the expansion of their digital footprint (such as through virtual business clubs). This applies particularly where there is no space to develop on the existing physical footprint, demanding that the venues look elsewhere for expansion. Here, opportunities exist for the venues to provide *regeneration and development projects with legitimacy*, offering their brand – their 'trust offer' – to attract otherwise cautious tenants.

However, the ongoing regeneration impact of the venues is not guaranteed. For example, the 2003 Licensing Act has challenged the 'late bar' ascendancy of some of the venues, with many more late bars available across the cities. Moreover, the quality and appropriateness of the bar and workspace offer has improved significantly in each of the cities, providing new competition for something that was once exclusive and in some cases is today rather 'tired' and in need of refurbishment. The venues can no longer expect loyalty and ownership, with physical and virtual spaces increasingly open to the demands of consumers and producers. The ability of the venues to adapt to a changing market for workspace, to provide the quality of design and atmosphere offered elsewhere in the cultural landscape and marketplace (from Starbucks to a revitalised museum offer), and to continue to offer that buzz and cultural integrity so required for a regeneration initiative to 'fly'; is and will continue to be tested. Indeed, it is clear that in some cities the venues are no longer considered at the vanguard of regeneration opportunities: there is a call for the venues to be more proactive in offering their value to regeneration initiatives – whether they be in the physical proximity of the venues or across the wider city. With public and private partners increasingly skilled in fashioning new types of drivers for regeneration and place-making, the venues are no longer guaranteed their celebrated status.

Watershed is taking a lead here by continually challenging itself to develop a new role. Its harbourside physical footprint – combining cinema, workspace, activity space, a vibrant and welcoming bar – projects itself as a cultural asset for Bristol and sits within an increasingly connected fabric of cultural infrastructure in central Bristol. Its digital footprint – such as with dShed profiling Bristol talent commissioned to develop innovative collaborative work – projects contemporary Bristol culture to the world. This cross-over between technology and creativity is underpinned by and transforms place because it depends on the dynamic between a growing ICT sector and the city's contemporary creative sector. This is a dynamic which introduces new, relevant identities for the city; and a dynamic which is driven *and owned* by much of the city's creative and technology sector.

Showroom also plays a leading role in connecting different partners across the city, operating as a host and broker. In any week, it hosts events such as Sheffield Hallam University's student screenings, a chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting, a Café

Scientifique networking event, a church group on a Sunday morning, and a major conference – such as the annual conference of the Town Planners Association. Of course, these provide important revenue, but they also illustrate the venue's role as a broker and host of multiple cultural and civic processes and activities.

Adding Value: Inward Investment and Cultural Tourism

Globally, culture is increasingly significant as a driver of tourism. Internationally, cities as varied as Melbourne, Beijing and Mumbai are positioning their creative economies at the heart of their offer to both leisure and business travellers. In each of the six cities featured in this Study, local authorities are supporting the 'packaging' of their culture and creative industries offer as a 'cultural tourism proposition'. Such approaches enable cities to move beyond traditional tourist themes such as heritage, and thus 'widen the shoulders of the tourist season' through initiatives that profile processes of creative production (such as cultural infrastructure) and consumption (such as the night-time economy). There is also growing realisation of the role that new types of cultural tourism can play in terms of inward investment and global profile raising. The venues, with their signature role as vibrant spaces for contemporary culture, and with their central locations in the 'cool parts of town', are presented by their cities as part of the cultural tourism offer and certainly as a feature of the wider city brand.

For example, Yorkshire South Tourism recognises this and has invested in 4 different festivals hosted by the Showroom in Sheffield.

"They (film festivals) are usually more than merely a source of lively activity within the city, and are very useful in the strategy of building the city's image and of fostering its attractiveness and thus its economic development, of which they constitute a fundamental element"

(The Socio-Economic Impact of Film Festivals – The European Coordination of Film Festivals, 1999).

Culture is a critical component of Manchester's tourism and inward investment strategy, most particularly the transformational power of culture, the way it creates powerful and evocative brands and the way it can be used to attract a diverse and engaged audience to a place. Cornerhouse has been described as a 'critical component' of Manchester's brand, providing the innovative and original cultural experience and cross-over with the creative economy which is seen as a vital part of the redefinition of Manchester as a post-industrial city. Miranda Sawyer, cultural commentator and journalist, described the city as the 'country's biggest cultural innovator'[16] a statement that only makes sense because of organisation's such as Cornerhouse and their commitment to creating a distinctively Mancunian take on modern culture.

However, this is an ongoing challenge: Mancunian culture is always in transformation, and thus it is important that the Cornerhouse does not reflect a reified sense of place and identity but projects a progressive engagement with new cultural forms and processes that are very much *owned* by cultural producers and consumers: the 'audience'. As will be shown, digital platforms are as important here as physical infrastructure: the building and its contents are no longer adequate to reflect, let alone express contemporary culture in Manchester or any of the cities.

Community-Building: Audience and Market Development

Most of the venues, with their diverse, often 'non-mainstream' cinema programming, have operated as the key providers of a cultural experience otherwise unavailable in the cities. There is a basic *intrinsic value* here, offering access to and building audiences for high quality, often international, media. This remains a critical asset for the venues and is the provider of much of the 'added value' to a range of agendas such as creative place-making, where a solid 'art-house' programme bolsters a city's integrity and internationalism. It also helps to maintain a contemporary identity for the venues, with *the latest* in international film available at any one time, and flexible programming, festivals and seminars offering further connectedness to the creative zeitgeist.

In addition, innovative cinema programming has historically provided a means to nurture new audiences for diverse media – such as through the introduction of minority foreign films to audiences that would otherwise not view them. By extension, such films may appeal to minority cultures in the cities – for example, it might be expected that local Albanian people might attend an Albanian season in the cinema.

However, there are two key development issues here that continue to challenge even the best programming and most committed outreach and education work of the venues:

[16] Observer, July 1 2007.

- Digitalisation has increased (potential) access to minority media: the venues are no longer the only providers of accessible minority media, although arguably they are the only providers of the 'minority cinema experience'. In addition, the programmes of mainstream 'multiplex' cinemas do overlap with the venue programmes. In some cases, such as where larger cinema operators are located in city centres where there is a significant 'knowledge worker footfall', this overlap is increasing. In such cases, the cinema experience can be the determinant of choice.

- The main audiences for the venues are under-representative of the city's black and minority ethnic (BAME) demographic profile. In some cases, as with Watershed, the per cent proportion of the audience that is from BAME backgrounds match that of the per cent proportion of BAMEs across the city; but this is not to say that every BAME community is engaged. There are many instances of excellent programming that have attracted large mixed audiences, but such audiences are not representative of the core audience for the venues. This has implications for the *ownership* of the programming and the wider offer of the venues. That the venues are interpreted by some as being 'cliquey'; 'open for some and closed for others', presents a significant challenge to the legitimacy and integrity of the venues.

Doubtless, the venues undertake considerable outreach and education work and they do programme with audience development an absolutely central concern. *They are working on their openness.* Mother and baby mornings; minority programming; and myriad community projects exemplify this. However, capacity here has been limited and initiatives such as mother and baby mornings have in some cases stalled because licences have not been granted for babies to be present at films certificated for an older audience. However, a key challenge here is the rather out-moded notion of 'audience' and an inflexible methodology for engaging with said audience. The venues have actively fund-raised to conduct audience research, but in most cases a standard approach has been adopted that quantifies how services can be improved. Little work has been done on how the public understand them[17], how the venues understand the public, and thus how new types of ownership can be invigorated. In addition, little research has been undertaken that explores how the wider offer of the venues – across their physical and digital footprints – can engender new types

[17] Watershed's 2007 audience research found a lack of awareness about the breadth of programme.

of relationship and *new ways of owning.* There is a role here for the funders: to be more proactive in investing in new types of audience research.

Demos, in a 2007 research project[18], focused on how diverse communities engage with and interact in different types of public space. They identify eight types of public space:

- Exchange spaces: places where people exchange ideas, information and goods
- Productive spaces: used by people engaged in activities to grow or create goods
- Spaces of services provision: support services are run from these spaces, either by statutory or voluntary providers
- Activity spaces: where people gather for leisure, such as for play, sport or informal events
- Democratic / participative spaces: for shared decision-making or governance
- Staged spaces: 'one-off' special occasions where people are brought together for a specific purpose
- In-between spaces: places which are located between communities
- Virtual spaces: non-physical spaces, such as those created online by social networking sites

The six venues – and a wider set of cultural buildings – can be (re)conceptualised as each of the above and (re)configured to operate accordingly. Demos argue that a city or district that is open, safe, inclusive and intercultural, comprises a combination of the above.

This is critical for issues that range from public safety to diversity advantage. It is by establishing shared spaces with multiple senses of ownership and agency that civil society and a creative economy will flourish. Currently, each of the venues achieves some of the above types of public space. For example, the bars offer excellent exchange spaces, virtual spaces such as Watershed's eShed[19] are effective platforms for diverse experiences and expressions (in this case for young people from relatively deprived communities), and off-site screenings (such as Showroom's recent film tent in a park at the Sheffield Show and Tyneside's 'outreach' screenings back into Newcastle city during its temporary relocation to Gateshead) reach new audiences as a

[18] Demos, 2007, 'Equally Spaced? Public space and interaction between diverse communities'. A Report for the Commission for Racial Equality.
[19] See: www.eshed.net

'staged space'. However, it is arguable whether the venues' bars provide democratic/participative spaces where a wide set of stakeholders can feel a sense of agency; and many of the virtual, in-between and virtual spaces of the venues are under-connected, with navigation between them difficult in different ways for divergent 'users'.

"In order to achieve a capacity for invention and innovation…it is essential that many people understand the technologies in which they work. This in turn requires continual informal interaction in cafes and bars and in the street. In this way, new ideas are formed and transmitted"
(Sebastiano Brusco, 1990)[20].

The venues need to better connect their different spaces and products in ways that provide for greater ownership and openness. Such an intercultural, open-source approach is key, with opportunities for audience-driven programming and content underdeveloped beyond projects such as ShAFF Season in the Showroom[21] and Watershed's dShed: such projects need to be programmed to sit at the heart of the offer. The current Cultural Leadership Programme[22] for the venues can have a progressive influence here through its "exploration of the leadership tools required to enable arts organisations to embrace personalisation in service delivery by leaders of moving image focused cross-art-form-venues." For the venues to maximise their place-making role, this agenda is critical: they need to show that they are genuinely *of the city*, and they need to capitalise on the creativity and innovation that will be sparked from this mix[23].

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[20] The Genesis of the Industrial District, International Institute of Labour Studies, 1990.
[21] A partnership with Sheffield's substantial rock-climbing sector brought a short season of films on this topic.
[22] As a network, the six venues featured in this Study are currently taking part in the Arts Council England Cultural Leadership Programme.
[23] The Demos 'Equally Spaced' report could provide a way forward here – exploring how the venues can advance their engagement with BAME communities.

Public Value, Cinema and Culture

Public value issues sit at the heart of debates on investment in cultural infrastructure. Rather than setting out to re-define or impose a definition, we asked the commissioning clients for their position. Each is very much involved with the debate. For example, in 2005, Arts Council England's Chairman gave a speech on the arts and public value at the Royal Society of Arts, and the UK Film Council's Board was debating issues on public value and market failure.

Arts Council England has been engaged in a consultation exercise 'directly' with the public:

"The arts debate is a major programme to explore how people value the arts. It combines in-depth research with wider consultation and debate. It is bringing together members of the public, artists, arts organisations and other key stakeholders to share their opinions and set some new expectations for public investment in the arts."

Arts Council England's Public Value Literature Review stated that *"what is measured has not always been what is most relevant or valuable about what the arts can do"*, and that *"arguments about the actual and potential contribution of arts organisations to wider social and economic goals leaves under-articulated and undervalued the 'intrinsic' worth of these organisations and their activities."*

There is substantial literature on 'public value', various interpretations, and a wide-ranging and high level debate. Yet there is as yet little evidence of a pragmatic approach in applying the principles to the management and delivery of cultural activities and organisations:

"The focus of the debate in the arts to date has been on measurement and not on process." (Arts Council England).

Each of the venues engaged with this Study struggles to articulate the public value offered by their infrastructure and activities, often reducing it to a sense of 'public service' and always challenged by the task of marrying agendas – such as those relating to sector development and the contribution to a creative place (see **Figure 2** above).

'Public value is too often understood in terms of **benchmarking performance, rather than as a framework and driver of mission, strategy and delivery.** Public value is rarely utilised as a framework for planning, perhaps because people are focused on delivery and simply see 'public value' as demonstrably inherent. There is a strong sense that *"arguments about the actual and potential contribution of arts organisations to wider social and economic goals [had left] under-articulated and undervalued the 'intrinsic' worth of these organisations and their activities"* (Arts Council England).

Arts Council England's Literature Review itself becomes more interested in potential for Arts Council England to demonstrate its own 'public value', but concludes *"there is no single public value framework that can be applied to all organisations. Public value has been interpreted in a variety of ways and all have drawbacks as well as benefits. Those organisations that have applied public value have generally adapted the concept to meet their own strategic needs."* This establishes a strategic challenge for the venues: to maintain a clear strategic approach on their own terms and deliver public value agendas for their funders and partners.

As will be shown, there are currently issues of *capacity, expertise and appetite* that obstruct real progress in articulating public value outcomes from investment in such venues and their wider programmes.

2.2 Creative Economy: Creating Spaces Where Interactions Take Place

"What is needed is not new or adapted instruments for knowledge transfer, but something quite different: the spaces in which interactions can take place. Why spaces? Because what is needed is not a system to transfer from one party to another some knowledge that has already been produced, to transfer something that has already happened. But, rather, the need is for a system to create spaces in which something can happen. In the Creative Industries, much of the time, once it has happened it has already been transferred[24]"

(Professor Geoffrey Crossick, Warden, Goldsmiths, University College of London: A Lecture to the Royal Society of Arts).

One of the defining features of the six venues is the multiple connections and interactions with the creative economy at a local and regional level. What especially marks out the venues from other elements of our cultural infrastructure is the sheer number of connections they have forged, their depth and breadth and the way that these connections cross traditional boundaries between the public and private sector and different media and art forms.

These types of connections and boundary crossing activities are increasingly recognised as key contributors to the economic health of our major cities. It is now widely accepted that the economic and social success for our cities and regions over the next ten years will partly be defined by the extent to which they continue to embrace and adapt to the needs of the knowledge economy. Ongoing success will require these cities to become adept in handling the currency of the new economy; adept that is in creating a market-place and free flow of ideas, talent, knowledge, creativity and enterprise, within an urban environment that delivers a high quality of life to its inhabitants and workers. This environment requires spaces which both reflect the aspirations of those working in the new economy, but also connect to the wider society, where much of dynamism and radical thought needed to fuel the next generation of services, products and social innovations lies. As Richard Florida puts it:

[24] Geoffrey Crossick: 'Knowledge Transfer Without Widgets: the Challenge of the Creative Economy' - A lecture to the Royal Society of Arts in Leeds on 31 May 2006.

"(T)he increasing importance of creativity, innovation and knowledge to the economy opens up the social space where more eccentric, alternative and bohemian types of people can be integrated into core economic and social institutions"[25].

The degree to which any of the six venues can be said to be fully delivering this potential today is limited by the still emergent status of this agenda in their respective cities. However, bringing together the 'alternative and bohemian' with 'core economic and social institutions' is something which broadly describes much of the impact they currently have on their surrounding creative economies.

In strictly economic terms, the value of the transactions between venues and the creative economy in their city and region is hard to quantify as there is often not a straightforward cost or charge involved. The strength of these transactions lies less in their pure monetary or financial value than in the bonding and bridging social capital they contain and the way they facilitate new types of innovation or creativity. This makes benchmarking with other cultural infrastructure very difficult.

2.2.1 Knowledge Transfer and Exchange: 'the spaces where interactions can take place'

"Watershed facilitates; statutory service providers and the creative industries don't necessarily collide otherwise. You get web designers seated next to social policy people – it's an important synergy and energy. And it is neutral – lots of digital companies lobby the City for business. Watershed is trusted and transparent; exchange does not get shut down – the place is key in maintaining a credible process"

(Stephen Hilton, Corporate Consultation Manager, Bristol City Council; Project manager, Connecting Bristol).

Since their origins, all six venues have aspired to be, to use Crossick's phrase, 'the spaces where interactions can take place'. One of the most visible ways they have sought to do this has been through pursuing knowledge transfer or knowledge exchange activity with providers of research, learning and skills, primarily universities and colleges of further education. This has evolved from being a largely informal relationship, driven by their location within a university city and the knock-on demographic effect that

[25] R. Florida (2001): The Rise of the Creative Class.

has in terms of the type of audience that the venues are able to attract and engage with. With a loyal following amongst students and academic staff, often with a keen interest in film, digital media, art and the cultural context and the discourse which surrounds it, it is natural that an interactive relationship between university and venue should emerge.

The recent Sainsbury Review of Government Science and Innovation Policy[26] describes the elements which make up the UK's 'National Innovation Ecosystem' and makes a number of recommendations which are relevant to the venues' current activities and future development. It describes the need to focus on the goals of the Technology Strategy Board, which include *'stimulating those businesses that have the potential to be among the best in the world'* and *'ensuring that the emerging technologies of today become the growth sectors of tomorrow'*. It describes how great steps forward have been made by universities in terms of knowledge transfer, but that more needs to be done to especially in the field of SMEs and placing graduates in business. Additionally, it makes recommendations that more activity should be conducted regionally (through RDAs) and that there should be a greater concentration on global connections. The venues need to ensure that they are well positioned to make the most of these opportunities going forward.

For the main part, this relationship between the venues and universities has been informal - a lecture or workshop to accompany a film or festival; or a conference/seminar on a particular topic. However, the changing landscape of knowledge transfer activities, coupled with the increased desire and need for academic institutions to develop new relationships with the wider community, especially business, have opened up new avenues for collaborative work. There are three main areas to this type of knowledge transfer activity:

- **Research** – Engaging with research activity directly or acting as the facilitator between the academic institution and a third party provides an increasing focus for the venues. Watershed and HP Labs have engaged in several projects which involve utilising Watershed's ability to make and develop connections across the cultural sphere. This type of activity is not confined to the UK, reflecting the increasing internationalisation of our universities and the globalised nature of research projects. Recently, Watershed, with HP Labs, oversaw two artists' residency programmes in the UK

[26] HM Treasury, 'The Race to the Top: A Review of Government's Science and Innovation Policies', 2007.

and India. The project in the UK saw the creation of a new Alternate Reality Game, part funded through an AHRC Knowledge Catalyst Award. This project, which involved collaboration with a creative SME, was delivered through University of the West of England and saw the exploration of how narrative can be delivered over the internet in innovative ways. It has been deemed as successful by HP Labs, which is going to engage the artist on an ongoing basis to work with HP engineers.

- **Connections to teaching programmes** – Building on their academic connections, it is only logical that the venues should be seeking to connect to the central teaching function of Further and Higher Education. The expansion of courses into new cross-discipline areas and the rise of MBAs and other degrees in cultural and creative entrepreneurship and management provide multiple opportunities for the venues to engage in new ways. Cornerhouse and Manchester University are currently exploring ways in which MA and MBA students on the University's rapidly evolving cultural leadership and arts programme could be involved with and connected to Cornerhouse. Also, Tyneside's programme and marketing team deliver modules on film and media studies at Newcastle University. The potential exists for the venue to act as 'action research' with students conducting research from within the venue which functions as a live learning lab. Other relationships are possible because of the skills and knowledge of senior staff. For example, Mike Stubbs is Director of FACT and Professor of Art, Media and Curating at Liverpool John Moores University.

- **Entrepreneurship and business** - The ability of venues to provide a bridge between academic and business worlds is demonstrated through business incubation, work placement and residency programmes. Cornerhouse is currently exploring how it can best use its brand and natural connection with undergraduates to work with local institutions to encourage more graduates to stay in the area post-graduation. FACT is working with young film makers and graduates on residency programmes to help them move from the academic into the commercial. Showroom/Workstation houses Sheffield Hallam University's Hatchery – incubation spaces for creative pre-start-ups. However, much of this activity can be conceptualised as *infrastructure for you* – housing and resourcing; rather than *infrastructure by you*, where the venue directly partners students and businesses, exploratively connecting businesses, entrepreneurially brokering new relations, and at times following the lead of creative partners that dare to cross boundaries. Forthcoming developments, such as the relocation of Sheffield Hallam University's Northern

Media School to a site adjacent to the Showroom and Workstation, provides opportunities to establish genuine boundary-crossing partnership. The Showroom can contribute to and benefit from its location alongside one of the leading centres of production-based media education in the UK if commitment is made on a practical and cultural level to treat the walls of the academy and the venue as porous, allowing for both formal and informal flows of ideas and knowledge.

- **Cross-disciplinary action research -** The venues are at the vanguard of the growing trend for universities to promote cross-department and cross-disciplinary working, providing both the space and opportunity for new types of engagement to occur. Such developments are helping to provide the types of innovation and collaboration that drive the development of the knowledge economy. FACT in Liverpool has recently been working with the Sandbox, an initiative from the University of Central Lancashire, that brings together a wide range of skills and expertise to allow the generation of new and collaborative forms of working. The offer of creative workspace, facilities and staff, enhance the capabilities of cross-disciplinary forms of development and production across academia and industry. FACT has worked with the Sandbox to develop new ways of displaying video art to wider audiences as part of the Re: Video Positive exhibition through the creation of a video jukebox. Tyneside has an AHRC-funded PhD embedded within its team to develop the archive newsreel interpretation and its public engagement.

For the venues to provide a really progressive approach to knowledge exchange in the creative economy, they must be positioned to capture and project the dynamic between innovation and creativity. These are overlapping concepts, with creativity focusing on the origination of new ideas and innovation on their successful exploitation. The Creative Industries fosters an attitude towards creativity and innovation which transmits to other parts of the economy. The venues and partners in education can be real leaders and enablers here, brokering relationships between 'users' and researchers, consumers and producers, businesses and educationalists. In this sense, the venues can operate as supply-responses to an increasingly demanding consumer: distinctive product design, bespoke holidays, mobile phones and other communications devices, MP3s, *distinctive cinema, and new cultural products and forms*, are all driven by an iterative relationship between producers and consumers, creatives and innovators. There is a tendency for some UK knowledge transfer and exchange programmes to overly formalise connections that thrive through their informality: creating the enabling conditions for innovation and creativity is far preferable to managing the processes of exchange.

2.2.2 Business Support and Mentoring: Skills and Capacity for the Knowledge Economy

Supporting creative talent and creative businesses is a vital component of the offer of all six venues. It has long been recognised that the creative industries require individuals with both 'hard' technical skills and knowledge 'soft' skills such as interpersonal skills, confidence and networking. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the creative industries, in terms of technology, value chain and business models, the nature of the skills required does not mean remain static. This means that that those best placed to deliver them are often practitioners in a non-formal environment which is more akin to the workplace. Therefore, the venues, which are positioned between conventional academic institutions and industry, are well placed to support and nurture creative businesses. In particular, this is through their *specialist intermediary role*, often operating as the trusted broker that facilitates processes of creative collaboration or that provides training initiatives with much-needed brand value.

However, providing skills is only half the picture: providing young and emerging talent with progression routes into trainee positions and work experience, or providing the space, time and resources to enable them to develop their own projects is the other. This requires a deep set of connections with a wide cross-section of industry and providers. The type of support offered by the venues currently ranges from specialist support services connected to workspace and incubation to more intangible development and support (both formal and informal), connected often to practice and activity. These include:

- **Technical skills:** Providing the bridge between a formal academic environment and live practice is a valuable role that the venues undertake, often with a focus on the individual being in charge of his/her own development. This learner-centred approach means that from an early age participants learn valuable skills such as self-reliance and the ability to self structure their learning requirements. Support in this area is usually based around utilising the skills and knowledge held within the organisation. FACT supports creative practitioners and businesses through enabling and facilitating the use of their equipment facilities such as the sound studio and digital mastering suite. They are also currently developing and expanding archiving facilities which will enable it to support artists and creatives through the provision of archiving services.

- **Business start-up and incubation:** The venues are well connected with local and regional commitments to attracting and retaining talent and fostering entrepreneurialism. The venues' strong cultural affinity with the under-graduate and graduate community mean that they are well positioned to play an important role in encouraging young people to stay in the area they trained or studied in. Cornerhouse are currently developing this theme, potentially in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University. This will see the organisation taking a more strategic role in ensuring that there are increased opportunities for graduates to develop business concepts and ideas in Manchester. Sometimes, this relationship is more tacit and unstructured. For example, the Showroom (with the Workstation), through its showcasing, networking and workspace offer has provided the appropriate nurturing environment for nascent creative organisations that have since grown to become real drivers of Sheffield's creative economy. These range from Warp Films to Lovebytes; with the venue providing the space and platform to project the emerging value of these very different creative organisations. The Showroom has developed collaboration with film production companies based in the Workstation (next door), so that they have access to the cinemas for viewing rushes, test screening and previews. This support is repaid by offering premiers and director Q & As to the venue. As part of its redevelopment, Tyneside's former office spaces become hot-desk let-by-the-moment project workspaces for media companies to compliment the extensive if 'creatively cold' business incubation spaces available in the City. In partnership with University of Teesside's 'Digital City', these spaces will host a northern centre for Digital City's professional mentoring services for digital media businesses.

- **Workspace:** Broadway, Watershed and (through the Workstation) Showroom, each provide a workspace offer for small creative businesses. Configured as a means of incubating and connecting creative businesses, this is a vital provider of revenue for the venues – in particular Showroom, which has benefited from the high levels of occupancy at the Workstation. It is also a provider of creative dynamism and innovation generation within the buildings, with businesses connecting through the social spaces of the corridors, meeting rooms and café bars; in many cases developing projects and products together. It is also a provider of kudos and 'cultural capital' – for example, film director Shane Meadows operates out of Broadway, Warp Films is based in Sheffield's Workstation, and Richard Fenwick is 'Filmmaker in Residence' at Tyneside. Connecting Bristol, the City lead for participation and e-democracy, is based at Watershed: *"There is an energy to tap into. It's symbolically important for both sides."* (Stephen Hilton, Project manager, Connecting Bristol). Opportunities to extend and improve the workspace offer are being explored by the venues - such as by refreshing the Workstation; increasing connectivity between businesses, and instilling a greater degree of business churn so that a dynamic business environment is maintained. The brand of the venues and the workspace management credentials of staff also introduce opportunities to extend the physical footprint of the venues off-site, leading workspace and activity space developments elsewhere in the cities. There is significant interest from strategic partners in exploring whether the culture-led regeneration pioneered by the venues several years ago can be introduced in other areas – such as Sneinton, the adjacent district to Broadway in Nottingham.

- **Creative skills and workshops:** Often based around the film programme being shown at the venue. These activities include Q&A sessions with film makers and directors. These can be high-profile, such as recent evening when FACT hosted Quentin Tarantino for a Q&A session following a screening of his new film *Death Proof;* or when Broadway hosted Ken Russell for a well-attended Q&A event. The reach and impact of the *Death Proof* event, which sold out in 20 minutes, was such that FACT were able to use the session as a way of connecting to prominent developers and businesses in the City through specially arranged VIP admission. In addition, the conferences staged and in some cases organised by the venues provide opportunities for intensive discussion and debate which can have a wider research, learning and skills agenda – for example, the Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival has elevated thinking on mixed media digital content issues.

- **14-19 education:** Events and courses aimed at aspiring film makers and entrepreneurs are a vital part of the offering of the venues. Such activity is usually run in collaboration with universities, schools or other centres of learning. Cornerhouse take a learner-centred approach, whereby many of the decisions relating to a course are taken and initiated by the young people involved. An example of this was on the recent summer school when participants arranged themselves for unaccompanied refugee children to be able to attend the school, which showed a strong commitment to both inclusion and cohesion. Watershed's eShed.net is one of many projects that enable young people to make work which is then shown, at the venue, and through its dShed online showcase. Tyneside's Northern Lights Film Festival started its 15-19 year old Northern Stars Film Academy in 2006. Its gives young people the chance to run their own production projects mentored and supported by industry professionals, over a year-long programme of activity. It has had significant success – such as in awards nominated and won and progression into Higher Education by its participants.

"If you are serious about making films, I reckon Northern Stars is one of the best things you can do. The knowledge and contacts you will make are invaluable and you will have a showcase of films way ahead of most people your age"
(Nancy Eadington, Participant – Northern Stars 2006).

The venues are critical providers of training opportunities in the creative economy. However, this has historically been as much due to the sheer infrastructure offer of the facilities – with seminar rooms, screens and technical know-how key. The venues have not been leaders in developing specialist training programmes or in supporting training providers to vary their provision or explore new cross-boundary training themes and activities. This is changing, with the venues moving from a relatively passive 'facilities provision' role to a more proactive programming role, often designed through collaboration with the end-user. This is in part a response to increasing competition from other venues which may have improved or new facilities. It is also in part an expression of an openness to change that situates training and support as part of the wider fabric of creative and critical interfaces and spaces that are so essential for a sustainable and meaningful role. With greater capacity, expertise, and a more active partnership role, the venues are in a position to operate as progressive centres for creative learning which provide that point of collision between consumption and production that other facilities (such as in education institutions) struggle to establish.

2.2.3 Extreme Collaboration and Convergence: *the Spark for Innovation and Creativity*

"Co-operation and collaboration are critical to innovation in the arts and Creative Industries. Artistic processes closely parallel new understandings of innovation…'the dominant tradition, which focuses the individual artist and his/her work, fails to see the creation of art as a network of co-operation among many'. Knowledge sharing among professionals has been demonstrated to be central to work practices Hollywood's film industry, for example" (NESTA 2007)[27].

Perhaps through their connections to film, an industry which has always relied on pulling together divergent talent, aims and objectives, the venues seem to be predicated on an instinctive understanding that collaboration is critical to the success of the creative economy. Fostering collaboration between usually divergent spheres of activity is recognised by key strategic partners such as the AHRC and NESTA as a vital area for growth and expansion if the UK is to continue to develop a competitive creative

[27] NESTA, 2007, Reaching out from the Creative Silo.

economy. Collaboration is not achieved simply by encouraging and developing networks, it requires a leadership and initiation role; as well as a willingness to cede control and let the creatives *own* the process[28].

For example, the venues are increasingly utilising their connection with and capacity in digital technology to act as the connector between diverse groups and individuals. Digital technology provides a platform which can negate geographic difference, but it also increasingly allows for collaboration between previous separate entities such as the producer and consumer. This is leading to the rise of democratic or user-led innovation[29] which uses open source models and iterative processes to give end users the opportunity to create products and services that better meet their requirements or needs. This type of innovation is being particularly championed in the public services and it is an area where the venues with their closeness to their audience are well able to take advantage of. Already the venues, in collaboration with their audiences, are producing innovations in areas which may have significant social benefit.

Extreme Collaboration: Interdisciplinary Art

Each of the venues has played an innovative development role, brokering new types of 'extreme collaboration'. For example, Cornerhouse commissioned seventeen new media art works in 2006, and Broadway works closely with Reactor[30], an art collective which works collaboratively on the production of one-off events, tailored individually to specific contexts. Alongside the ICA in London, FACT has been the one country's leading *commissioners and supporters of interdisciplinary digital art* since its founding with many ground-breaking works including the Video Positive Festival which between 1989 and 2000 saw seminal work produced by many leading artists including David Hall, Judith Goddard, Lynn Hershmann, Lei Cox, Keith Piper and Michael Curran. The recent RE: Video Positive exhibition, which forms part of FACT's new online archive of work, shows the extent to which this work has influenced other artists and practitioners.

Tyneside started working on open source projects in 2001 when, with Arts Council England support it brought the Light Surgeons to the region. Twelve regional artists, designers, musicians and filmmakers were brought together to work as a collective,

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[28] Ibid
[29] Von Hippel 2005, 'Democratizing Innovation', The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.
[30] See: www.reactorweb.com

mentored on site and on line by the Light Surgeons to create a portrait of their city. The result, the *Chimera Project NewcastleGateshead*, was later broadcast on BBC TV and its raw footage is held digitally by Tyneside available for any of it 'owners' to use. The project was repeated in Middlesbrough in 2003 as part of the first AV Festival and later distributed on DVD.

FACT has developed a brokerage role, encouraging new forms of collaboration with interdisciplinary digital art a key ingredient. FACT's exemplary Collaborations Programme was established in 1992, as *"a new and distinctive framework for artists and community groups to work together, engaging participants as producers rather than consumers of the moving image and new media".* Activities include:

- **Social care and film making:** Tenantspin, a unique collaboration between tenants in social housing, a housing association and FACT, is an example of a successful collaborative project. Founded in 1999, Tenantspin started simply as a means of allowing socially isolated individuals in a Liverpool tower block to communicate and share issues and connect with the wider world through film making. It has now grown to the point where they have a studio within FACT; have been commissioned by the BBC to write their own play; have collaborated with internationally famous film makers such as Nick Broomfield and Alex Cox; and are examining ways to expand the model to other areas through a social enterprise model.

- **Healthcare and sound recording:** FACT are currently collaborating with sound recordist Chris Watson and the Alder Hey Children's hospital to bring the therapeutic sound of the dawn chorus in a combination with a light show to six waiting rooms and wards across the city. Once installed in the hospital, a consultant in paediatric neurology at Alder Hey Hospital will lead a team to investigate the issue of sound within a healthcare environment and its potential impact on healing and recovery. The programme adds a new dimension to the hospital's neurological research. Evaluation will be disseminated nationally.

- **Cultural place-making through extreme encounters - The Bold Street Project[31]:** As part of its desire to improve its physical footprint in the city centre, become more visible to a wider audience, and connect more effectively to a vital part of the cultural ecology of Liverpool (such as the independent traders and community artists), FACT initiated the Bold Street

[31] See: www.boldstreet.org

project in 2007. This is a web- and physical-based interaction with the histories and transforming identities of the Bold Street area – which is perhaps the main district for independent retail and cultural activity in the city (although it was once recognised as the 'Bond Street of the North'). FACT's Collaboration Programme is leading this process, commissioning culture-led events and presentations using the city's Bold Street as inspiration, subject, venue and metaphor. The Bold Street Project Blog also provides a forum for memories and visions of Bold Street to be shared. FACT is operating as an active broker of creative place-making, engaging artists, SMEs and the wider community to (re)imagine senses of place for Bold Street. It is conflating the digital and the physical to bring people together in a creative process of cultural dialogue.

- **Support for R&D** – FACT's ITEM a pilot research and development programme is aimed at exploring and developing the potential of new media tools for exhibition and exposition. It provides an example of the ways R&D is now often taking place outside of the conventional company environment. Organised by FACT and supported by NESTA and Arts Council England, the programme is supporting a small cluster of research projects that bring together artists and technologists to explore the possible future directions of new media technologies. A recent example is '*Elsewhere in between*', involving BT Exact, by Julie Myers. This is a collaborative film shot by five different directors in five countries in Central America, India, Europe and the Middle East. Each participant selected a section of the script they wished to shoot and used their own social environment, local landscape, friends and family to tell their story. This is now being extended to explore how a content management system developed by BT Exact, BT's Information Technology operations business, could be used to show multiple narratives.

Extreme Collaboration: Industry

In addition to undertaking comparable projects to the above, *Watershed has pioneered extreme collaboration between industry, education and culture*. For example, in 1999 Watershed established an on-going partnership with HP Labs, collaborating on a series of projects that gave individual filmmakers, artists, and small creative businesses, access to high end and developing technologies; and gave HP Labs access to creative talent to test and challenge those technologies. One of the projects, SE3D, gave animators the opportunity to work with HP Labs' 'utility rendering' technologies, and gain remote access to the massive computer power required to produce 3D CGI animation. The SE3D advisory group included representatives from the BBC, Aardman Animations and DreamWorks, who, in turn, contributed their own industry contacts as mentors for the participants. A case study report by David Drake[32] - cites high praise for the collaboration:

"(T)he scheme gave micro-businesses [access] to capacity they could otherwise only dream of."
(Paul Hassan, then Business and Development Director for South West Screen).

For Steve Hinde, External Contacts Manager at HP Labs, widening access to the huge capabilities afforded by new generation computing is the key to revolutionising the industry and supporting emergent talent:

"Utility computing has the potential to shake up the media industry by lowering cost barriers for the animators and others. They can call on a service like ours when they need it, paying only for what they use. We hope projects like SE3D will uncover highly talented people who would otherwise never be able to work in animation."

And for Julie Taylor, Head of Knowledge Transfer at the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Watershed/HP Labs collaboration (particularly in relation to SE3D) is an important national and international model of research-based knowledge transfer within the Creative Industries:

"(*T)he project embeds many of our current concerns, including networking as a business model, access to new and expansive technologies, new distribution avenues, mobilisation of production funding, changes in core business practice and the ownership of IP in the content that is created by the research process".*

[32] Under Blue Skies: The Watershed/HP Labs Partnership - A Case Study, David Drake, 2005.

2.2.4 Showcasing and Engaging: Supporting Talent and Facilitating Debate

As well-connected, networked and relatively high profile spaces, it is unsurprising that showcasing is one of the key areas of impact that venues have on their regional creative economy. Connecting to the wider community, boosting regional and local talent and facilitating debate and knowledge exchange is part of the stock in trade for all of the venues. While much of showcasing utilises traditional means such festivals or exhibitions (occurring within the confines of the organisation's existing physical footprint), increasingly the type of activity that they engage embraces digital mediums, online and social networking spaces as well as distribution portals such as youTube or googlefilm. These ensure that the activity gains a wider audience while enhancing the venue's digital footprint. Showcasing interventions range from localised platforms for community expression to globally-facing festivals:

Festivals of national and international significance

The venues run and/or host a variety of festivals which are of international significance, through dint of reputation and influence. These include documentary, feature and short film festivals, as well as relatively specialist areas such as Broadway's Silent Films Festival. Cornerhouse runs the Exposures Festival for student film makers, which is now in its 14th year. This festival has four categories: Animation. Documentaries, Drama, and Experimental. This includes a special section for '19 and under' film makers from the North West, 'Underexposed'. Showroom hosts the Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival – a major event on the city's cultural calendar and a significant contributor of economic value, offering a critical space for this burgeoning form as well as ensuring that the city's hotels, restaurants and bars are well-occupied. Such events are critical for the cultural integrity of the venues, which in turn add to the cultural offer of the cities, while of course facilitating business-led dialogue for practitioners based across the world.

Festival programmes are also a feature that distinguishes the venues further from the other 'Picture House' cinemas, not least because they offer opportunities for programmers and audiences to take risks that regular programming doesn't allow. Recent analysis (UK-wide Film Festival Funding, 2004), commissioned by UK Film Council to inform the development of a cross agency Specialised Distribution and Exhibition Strategy, acknowledged *"the lack of a UK-wide strategic framework for festivals"*. There has been very little work at either regional or national level on 'bench-marking' for festivals, or even on what constitutes a 'film festival'. The UK Film Council review characterised film festivals as:

"(S)mall, unstable and financially precarious..subject to changing substantially from year to your, depending on levels of resources and changes in leaderships, both operational and curatorial..unable to deliver (against strategic objectives) because their resource base in inadequate."

Against these odds, venues have consistently taken it upon themselves to take advantage of the excitement that running a festival offers, and from their position of relative stability, provide support to festival organisations that might otherwise not have the platform or expertise to establish a profile and foothold in the market. The festivals staged in the six venues alone represent a range of unique programming, including significant enhancement to local provision, as well as events of national and international standing.

Examples of Festivals across the Six Venues
Exposures UK Student Film Festival, at Cornerhouse since 1993
Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival, at Showroom since 1994
Showcomotion Young People's Film Festival, at Showroom since 1994 Viva,
Spanish and Latin American Film Festival, at Cornerhouse since 1994
Lovebytes Digital Arts Festival, at Showroom since 1995
Encounters Festival, at Watershed since 1995
Kino Short Film Festival, at Cornerhouse since 1995
British Silent Cinema Festival, at Broadway since 1998
Bang! Short Film Festival, at Broadway since 2000
Northern Lights Film festival, at Tyneside since 2003 ShaFF,
AV Festival, at Tyneside since 2003
Sheffield Adventure Film Festival, at Showroom since 2005

An example of a festival being proactively nurtured by the venues is the AV Festival, first held in Tyneside in November 2003. It developed from Tyneside opening its doors to young local promoters and artists, not hosted within other conventional 'cultural' venues, who had developed fluency with digital experimentation through music and were rapidly seeking to engage with moving image. This process attracted a different audience and a new kind of creative talent to Tyneside, and to capitalise on this, it was decided to stage a pilot festival. The eclectic programme included live performance, artists' moving image, new media art, a Mike Figgis retrospective, and 35 new works were commissioned, including new pieces by The Light Surgeons, and filmmaker Richard Fenwick – now 'filmmaker in residence' at Tyneside. The third festival is scheduled for Spring 2008, and while still hosted by Tyneside, it is now run by an independent company of which Tyneside is a member. It is the UK's largest international festival of electronic arts, and uniquely commissions and exhibits with partners across the three urban centres of the North East – moving visitors through the region.

The festival aims to act as a catalyst, developing the expertise and knowledge of its local partner organisations, and prompting new collaborative relationships. Its peers are at once local – such as artists and new audiences; and global – such as Ars Electronica in Linz, Austria. The 'value' of the festival ranges from the perspective of the Newcastle Gateshead Initiative, which acknowledges the importance of the festival in creating jobs, attracting visitors and talent to the region, and the potential of culture as a tool for regeneration; to individual artists, provided with opportunities to collaborate, express and showcase.

In the case of this and other festivals run by, nurtured and/or hosted by the six venues, though they may vary in quality and relevance to a wider audience, each has a valuable role to play in:

- Adding to the cultural integrity and contemporary relevance of the venues
- Supporting niche activities to spin into wider collaborations
- Nurturing audiences and sparking debate
- Profiling the cities as creative places – with direct and indirect impacts on creative dynamics and economic activity.

Festivals, as part of the wider physical and digital platforms of the venues, are critical brokers of creative activity – especially when they are *led, shaped and owned* by creative businesses and organisations that would otherwise lack a voice and be denied agency in the cultural landscape of their cities. However, there are perhaps *too many festivals currently managed or hosted by the venues*, which makes the strategic curation of events and activities that are animated from and through the buildings very difficult.

An approach that improves the management and offer of the existing festivals portfolio, that connects festivals as valuable tools in connecting to digital agendas, and that shares efficiencies and expertise across the venues, might be considered. This includes a consideration of the motivations for continuing to support festival models for which sustainability and purpose is questionable. In addition, the festivals need to build their profile beyond the physical footprint of the venues in their host cities. For example, the Sheffield International Documentary Film festival (Doc/fest) has an excellent international profile and yet has only recently begun to raise its profile in its host city. Creative Sheffield, the city's key economic development agency, is investing in the event as a key cultural offer for the city. This has benefited the digital footprint of the event – with an online 'meet-market' connecting local people to global players. This provides an example of how festival can increase their impact and widen their *value range* if they develop *connectors of relevance* to different communities – from an expanded digital footprint to screenings in other venues and the programming of a complementary arts offer (for example, including music and performance).

Indeed, in some cases, festivals were developed as a direct response to expressed audience or industry needs. For example, Doc/fest was developed and supported to assist the local production sector in Sheffield by bringing 'industry' to the city; and Showcomotion was developed out of frustration at the lack of non-US product for young people. These needs do not always vary significantly in each of the different cities, so opportunities to share product and profile (perhaps using Digital Screen Network management) could be explored alongside other ways of disseminated digitised product.

Finally, with festivals notoriously difficult to manage and resource, other ways of driving agendas in collaboration, engagement, creativity and innovation, might be more effective – such as structured events programmes and a greater degree of on-line commissioning and showcasing.

2.3 Creative Infrastructure – Cultural Intermediaries for Democratised Culture

"Broadway exists to bring the best in world cinema, digital arts and media to as diverse a range of people as possible in a broadly educative, social, participatory and entertaining environment. It exists to explore and represent the history of cinema and moving image cultures whilst simultaneously being at the cutting edge of new technologies, ideas and aesthetics. It is a democratic and

social space that exists to serve the people of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, whilst contributing to Nottingham's tourist and cultural economy by attracting visitors from overseas"
(Broadway Operations Plan).

Tasked with identifying how cultural infrastructure can play a more effective role in supporting cultural development and the growth of a competitive creative economy, the *DCMS Creative Economy Programme Infrastructure Working Group* recognised the *value range* of cross-art-form and media venues and Watershed in particular:

"Watershed is a prime example of a highly connected, flexible, porous piece of cultural and creative infrastructure, of which there are too few examples. Watershed is more than just an arts cinema. It is at once a cultural centre, a business broker, a social networker, a research and innovation facility, a cafe/bar, and a cultural tourist attraction."
(DCMS Creative Economy Infrastructure Working Group Report, August 2006).

With a value range that includes Creative Place-Making and supporting the creative economy, the venues are in many ways leaders in terms of open, explorative, fit-for-purpose cultural infrastructure. With increasing emphasis on developing the digital footprint and pioneering collaboration across multiple boundaries, the venues are operating as critical connectors in the physical and digital landscape. They could be conceptualised as '*international cultural villages*': open, porous and ever more generous in their role as brokers and champions of creative content:

"We are most interested in collisions of experience and cultures, to create something new. A laboratory for experiment, risk and disruption. We are a router and amplifier cultural ideas, creativity and technology."
(Dick Penny, Managing Director, Watershed).

This endeavour requires an openness of spirit, a commitment to boundary-crossing, and a very considered approach to *curating the mix*:

- The mix of facilities – such as workspace, activity space, gallery space cinemas
- The mix of content – the media shown, the content commissioned
- The mix of experiences – such as the design of the physical and digital footprints; and the balance between production

and consumption
- The mix of collaborators – brokering exchange, building partnerships.

The six venues have each established a role in the cultural landscape of their host cities as providers of space for creative people to relax, connect and collaborate. They have in some cases become the venue of choice to meet creative people, run creative businesses, and showcase work. The mix varies across each of the six venues – *they are each curated differently* - but they each retain a commitment to the showcasing and engaging with contemporary culture and technology; they all continue to cross new boundaries and develop multiple collaborations and partnerships; they are all committed to being open and accessible and widening notions of this openness; and *they all retain cinema at their heart.*

2.3.1 Cinema at the Centre: Programming the Venues

It is cinema that adds immensely to the cultural integrity of the venues and for most it was the initial raision d'etre; and it is cinema that gives the venues a particular sense of 'the contemporary', because by programming the latest films from across the world, the venues are hosting the immediacy of 'the global' in a way that is not possible in, say, theatre. It is also largely through cinema programming that the venues gain a profile at a regional and national level – for example, it is the cinema programme and not the digital art programme that tends to be featured in the listings sections of national newspapers.

Critical to the sustainable transformation of the venues is they way they retain high quality, distinctive cinema programming at their heart while expanding their brokerage and connecting role to advance excellence and openness across digital culture.

Five of the six venues began, and have long histories, as independent cinemas. FACT's cinema opened in 2003, but the organisation had been active as an agency commissioning moving image work by artists, and exhibiting in partnership, since 1988, and it is notable that when this visual arts organisation set the principles for establishing a building for presenting moving image and new media, the inclusion of cinema was seen as essential and integral to the new venue's cultural offer. Indeed, the influence of the successful positioning of cinema at the heart of venues in Manchester, Bristol and elsewhere, provided a template here.

The enthusiasm and commitment of cinema staff across the venues is tangible; and the values and influences that derive from the presentation of specialised film are as strongly advocated, and recognised and applauded by partners and stakeholders. For example:

"Without Watershed, despite the presence of places like the Cube, Bristol audiences would have a struggle to see specialised film." (Sarah-Jane Meredith, Head of Creative and Audience Development, South West Screen).

Staff and partners are also keen to cite collective influence beyond the local, and how they champion emergent talent and nurture it for the good of the wider film industry. For example, Pedro Almodovar and Quentin Tarantino came into prominence in the UK having been championed by the regional film theatres.

However, these venues are clearly not the only way in which the public can get to see much of their core cinema offer, and in considering their 'pubic value', it isn't sufficient merely to evidence that what they do is a good and valued thing. There is also a question of whether the way they deliver cinema and how it is positioned in a wider mix, necessarily provides a *wider value range* than other options.

"I had my first date in the Tyneside Cinema, as a teenager I played truant to drink cups of tea in the Coffee Rooms. Now as a film maker it's the focal point of the regional film making community providing inspiration through the films, colleagues through networking and projects through collaboration"
(Patrick Collerton, Emmy Award-Winning Director of Channel 4's *'The Boy Who's Skin Fell Off'*).

Toward Networking and Joint-Programming

Cinema programming follows differing models across the venues. Watershed, Showroom, Broadway and Cornerhouse have specialist programmers; Tyneside Cinema works with City Screen Virtual Limited, the programming arm of the Picture House cinemas chain; and FACT houses the City Screen operated Picture House. Each of the venues is part of the *Digital Screen Network*, the UK Film Council's initiative - *"envisioned to be a key part of the strategy for broadening the range of films available to audiences throughout the UK and especially improving access to specialised (or non-mainstream) film"* - a 'virtual network' of 240 screens, located in approximately 200 cinemas[33].

The Digital Screen Network is commended by staff across each of the venues through its attempts to broaden access to specialised cinema. It is also recognised for its potential to connect venues strategically – so they can build a national agenda on programming and wider provision and partnership issues. The venues, of course, already champion 'specialised film', but there is an acceptance that other venues can be supported to do the same. Indeed, some partners in the venues question whether the Digital Screen Network goes far enough in advancing the UK cinema offer. There are issues of definition and partnership here. In terms of the former, the UK Film Council's definition of 'specialised film' seems quite broad, including foreign language films, independent (i.e. not major studio) productions and re-releases of classics. But 'mainstream' is a relative term, and such films as Mel Gibson's *Apocalypto*, George Clooney's *Good Night and Good Luck* and Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain*, all fit into this category, which leads to an interpretation of the strategy as being essentially about diversifying the mainstream. In terms of the latter, many partners in the venues recognise the importance of bringing specialised film to relatively mainstream venues, but also point to the need for strategic support for 'cultural cinema' – the diversity outside the mainstream. As expressed by one programmer:

"The Digital Screen Network is effective but mechanistic. The intervention should be informed, coming out of dialogue…through a peer network – about 'cinema'. We seek cultural dialogue – with our audience and peers, in Europe and the world. But in the UK no one is driving this. There is no peer network".

There is a desire from across the venues to develop stronger connections with other venues – in programming, promotion and knowledge exchange. Indeed, the digitisation of archives across Europe provides the venues with an opportunity to take a lead in joint-programming the touring of this product. However, network initiatives should be based on a stronger cultural element and should consider elements that surround the cinema programming – such as the wider cinema experience and *how cinema is consumed.* In this sense, the six venues position cinema and a particular type of cinema experience at the heart of their offer.

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[33] As well as the six venues and their peers, the Digital Screen Network includes a wider range of exhibitors: small independent cinemas, rural cinemas, the commercial 'art-houses', the City Screen Picture House cinema chain and the London group of Curzon cinemas, as well as the mainstream and multiplex chains Vue, Odeon and Cineworld.

More research is required to explore the public's interpretation of different cinema experiences, but existing research indicates that different types of cinema are required to cater for different types of market; and different types of film are best screened in certain types of cinema; and that different types of cinema even influence how we receive and interpret a film:

"I think like again multiplex cinemas, you always feel like you're being ripped off in some way, you know that someone's making a lot of money out of you…(W)ell, I would just say the thing that makes it individual is the fact that it is completely different to any sort of cinema experience that you're going to have - that I know of, anyway. There isn't anywhere that you can go and have a meal and a glass of wine, like in that sort of culture, it's completely different to the Vue"
(Watershed Audience Research – Taking Stock, Looking Ahead, Matthew Millmans, 2007).

"Knowing there is something else, knowing there is really good cinema to be seen, if only you can find it. And cinemas like this offer that. You would never get that from mainstream multiplexes"
(Study on The Impact of Local Cinema, 2005, UK Film Council, Film London, EM Media).

The importance of the wider 'cinema experience' is reinforced by attendance figures. For example, Watershed attendances are increasing – from 88,943 in 2002 to 112,457 in 2006, an increase of 26%. Such figures that suggest the public is choosing to see films at these venues, when they could at see some of them at multiplexes or on DVD.

Making the Case – More than Just Cinemas

This Study does not explore issues relating to who programmes cinema in the six venues, although there is a strong argument for increasing shared programming while diversifying 'around the edges' of the programme: there is scope, for example, for a common programming company/organisation (such as City Screen[34] or the Independent Cinema Office[35]) to programme a proportion of the

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[34] City Screen is a commercial operator that has targeted the 'arthouse market' *"City Screen was formed in 1989 to challenge the multiplex cinema model and provide cinemas in city centre locations that serve their local communities. Independent (or "arthouse") films have always been core to the Company's profile".* There has been substantial public capital investment in City Screen cinemas through Arts Council England's Lottery Film programme, at FACT and at City Screen, Norwich. City Screen leases and runs the cinema at FACT, has a service agreement to programme Tyneside, but the chain has been established in cities without existing 'provision' – Exeter, York, Brighton – and none of the venues operates in a city where there is competition for its audience from a Picture House.

[35] The Independent Cinema Office is a national organisation that aims to develop and support independent film exhibition throughout the UK. Funded by UK Film Council, BFI and Arts Council England, it already works with the venues, and is trusted and successful in delivering a programme that gets audiences.

venues' cinema screens, thus relieving them of the burden of filling a whole programme (which is likely to be similar across the venues) and providing free capacity to establish absolutely unique programming (and other uses) on the other screens. For example, Tyneside Cinema's entrusting of that programming, in close collaboration, to City Screen, allows the organisation to devote 90% of its energy into the other parts of its programme[36].

There is also scope for building connections outside cinema programming with a wider network of venues. For example, Picture House cinemas offer many events that one might associate with an independent venue that receives public investment – such as mother and baby screenings, short film programmes, and 'meet the director' events. The Picture House cinemas in Cambridge and Brighton host two of the best non-specialised film festivals in the UK. The six venues and other cinemas – such as Picture House cinemas – would benefit from greater networking and a more strategic peer-driven approach to programming and promoting 'specialised' and 'cultural' cinema in the UK.

However, the six venues share much more than cinema and cinema-related activities. For example, Picture House cinemas remain 'cinemas' – cinema is all that they do. And while cinema is at the heart of what the venues do, and they do much that generates from this programme, it is not all that they do. The cinema heart beats fast and strong through a dedication by the venues to a wider set of activities, services and relationships. This, perhaps, is under-recognised by key strategic partners. For example, Arts Council England's annual review for Regularly Funded Organisations takes no account of online audiences, while Watershed's online public has increased from 500,000 in 2002 to 4,000,000 in 2006.

This is in part due to a failure by the venues to effectively communicate what they do – and in particular, what they do because of but beyond cinema. Watershed's recent audience research found strong brand recognition, but a lack of awareness about its range of activities. They are too often perceived as 'cinemas' only, with some outreach and development attached. Marketing is generally limited to listings and specific projects, with little brand development.

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[36] City Screen Virtual Limited, City Screen's sister company, uses City Screen's expertise to *"supply a tailored programme of films to individual cinemas and offers other features such as the design and production of programmes, posters and even cinema design".*

The six venues have extensive programmes of relatively traditional 'education and outreach' work: film education courses, production workshops, children's activities, membership schemes and events. But their offer is far more diverse and extensive. For example, Cornerhouse and FACT have internationally ambitious and respected contemporary visual arts programmes. All the venues have credible new media/digital programmes (such as the Showroom's Digital Space, Broadway's Digital Art and Moving Image Programme); all the venues commission new work, and facilitate artists, filmmakers and the public to create work; and all host film-makers or artists 'in residence'.

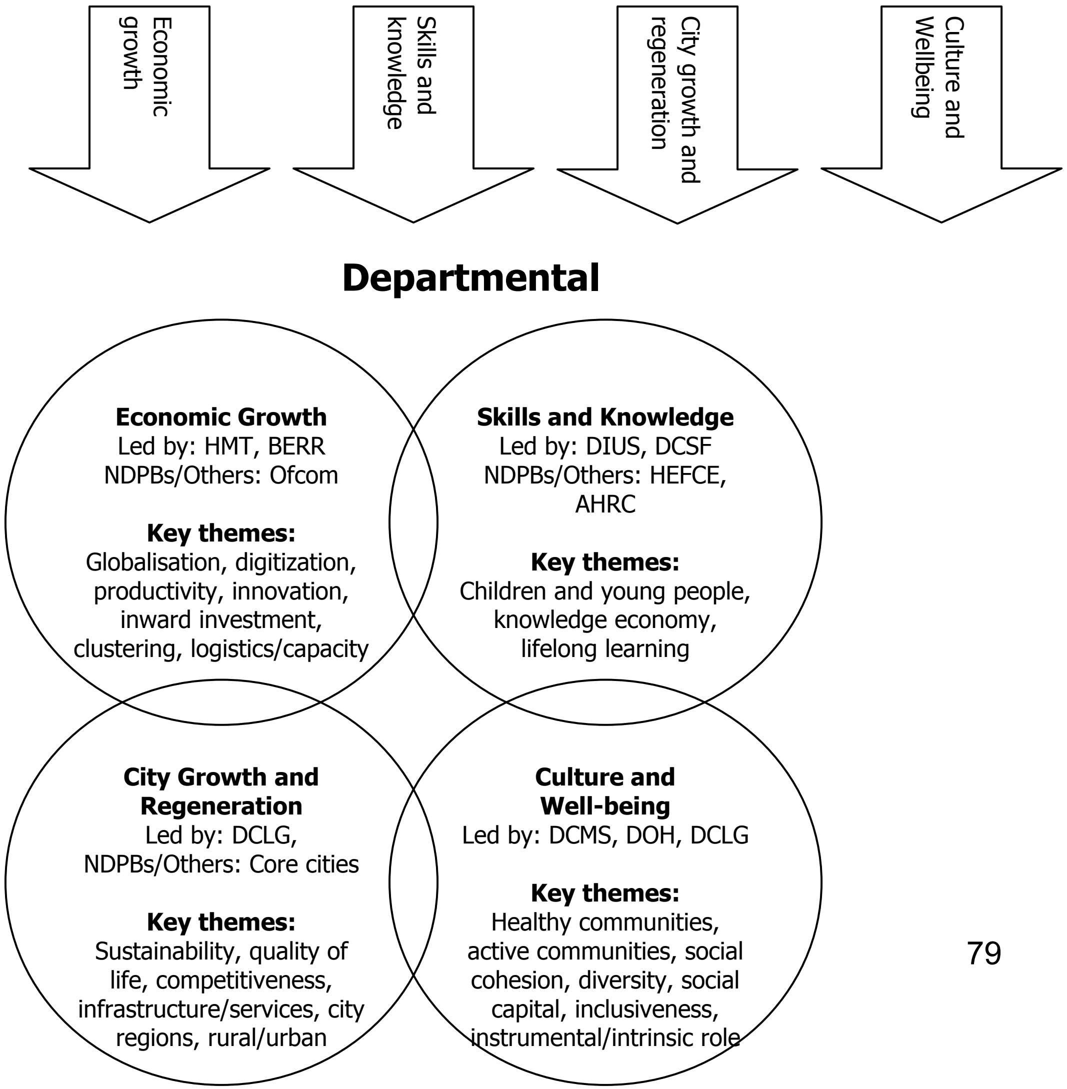
Moreover, they all break out of the confines of their buildings. Watershed's dShed is an *"online showcase of digital creativity".* Since 2003, Cornerhouse's The Bigger Picture collaboration with the BBC Big Screen has exhibited artists' film & video, interactive and participatory screen based projects and arts-based community moving image, to large, diverse, yet often fleeting audiences, reaching far beyond the traditional gallery context. Tyneside's Doorstep Pictures is a collaboration with local authorities in Blyth and Wansbeck to take mobile film events to new audiences across deprived urban and rural areas of Northumberland.

The cinema programme, then, is not seen as an end in itself. The venues need to present more strongly the full scope and value range of their activities and services; and they need to present this as absolutely dependent on the distinctive dynamics of the mix. The physical and digital footprints of the venues are being curated in such a way that *it is the interdependences that provide the real value-added*: it is not the cinema programme but the ways cinema is experienced; it is not the workspace, but the connections of that workspace to myriad of possibilities for collaboration, production and consumption. Consideration of the breadth and diversity of cultural possibilities offered by the venues highlights the inter-connectivity between cinema and other moving image and digital practice. The distinction between 'film' and 'art' made by the institutional separation of the respective Councils is one that culture itself does not make, and neither does the public.

And inevitably, what follows on from the policy disjuncture is a strategy gap. The Digital Screen Network is geared to addressing a particular model that the venues are shifting from: the wider cultural shift in which the public moves from being a consumer to a participant, and even a cultural producer. The conventional film distribution model that the Digital Screen Network promotes does not prioritise the switch from presenting media to engaging with audiences, producers and consumers. In the future, proportionately less media will be presented through this conventional model and more through the synergies of producer and consumer where the centralised distributor does not determine the product. The Digital Screen Network offers the hardware for exploring this, but it adopts a more conventional distribution model. By continuing to explore the interface between art and film, business and culture, digital and analogue, the venues can provide opportunities for public investment to exploit a growing value range that traverses the physical and digital for its real currency. This requires a relationship with audiences, from businesses to communities, that present the venues as open and opportunity-laden: **'ínfrastructure by you' not 'infrastructure for you'.**

Figure 3.Public Policy Map for Cross-Art-Form Venues

Driving the Agendas - National Themes



Regional and Local

Region-wide strategic plans

Top level region-wide strategic plans covering major strategic planning issues including investment, transport, growth, regional economics, environmental issues

Responsibility of the Regional Development Agency and Regional Assembly
Regional Spatial Strategy
Regional Economic Strategy
Integrated Regional Strategy

Sector or issue-specific plans

Middle tier strategic plans covering areas such as tourism, sport, health and well being, culture, sustainability

Responsibility of regional bodies and partnerships e.g. Regional Cultural Consortium,
Regional Cultural Strategy
Strategies on sustainability, regeneration

Local area-specific

Local level issues including regeneration, planning, active and healthy communities
Responsibility of Borough Council and Local Strategic Partnership
Local Development Framework
Community Plan

Bristol Watershed

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3. Broadening the Value Range and Crowding-in Investment: Eight Types of 'Infrastructure by You'

"Watershed has always been called a 'media centre', but we are only just beginning to realise what that might mean. For our programme, it means that we are no longer a 'cinema' and a 'gallery' – digital and online developments mean that there is a spectrum of moving image work. We're helping drive, and we're being driven by, a convergence of practice. It is a liberation – it's not about separate art forms, but about culture and creativity – and it all makes sense, and they reflect on each other. We're not seeing cinema as something different or apart from art and creativity"
(Mark Cosgrove, Head of Programme, Watershed).

The venues' role in the creative economy of their cities and regions is closely connected to the network of relationships and connections they have built up with other parts of the cultural infrastructure in their area. For example, the influence and importance of Watershed in Bristol is bound up with the way its organic growth has meant that it is fully embedded in the unique cultural milieu of the habourside and wider city and the rich variety of its cultural offering including the Arnolfini gallery, Bristol Industrial Museum, @Bristol, Bristol Cathedral, the City Library, and a real mix of retail and other consumption spaces. FACT is increasingly connected to the other leading cultural organisations in Liverpool both through joint work on festivals such as the Biennial, but also now through the ambitious programming of the Liverpool 08 City of Culture programme. *It is through a meaningful engagement with place that the venues have developed their distinctiveness and established themselves as trusted cultural intermediaries for their respective cities.*

Indeed, the position of the venues within the cities' wider fabric of cultural infrastructure is not limited to artistic connections such as shared programming or festivals. Their role is more that of *portfolio holders*, whose plurality of purpose gives them a much broader and more fluid position in the evolving creative and knowledge economy which surrounds them. As portfolio holders for the creative economy they act across areas which are increasingly being recognised as critical to the ongoing competitiveness, innovation and health of both places and sectors. The Work Foundation Report for the DCMS Creative Economy Programme[37] concludes that:

"Policy makers have to 'crowd in' drive creativity in the design of their investment in the sector, to help and the creative develop and better understand the mechanisms that transmit industries creativity between the Creative Industries and beyond…"

In a very real sense the venues have been 'crowding in' creativity across a range of areas which are now seen as vital to the creative economy:

- **As combiners of consumption and production.** Connecting cultural consumption and production has long been an integral component of many inner-city regeneration projects – including the Lace Market in Nottingham, Hoxton in London and the Creative Industries Quarter in Sheffield. It has however not been something that traditional cultural institutions have been able to capitalise on. The venues have throughout their history led in this area both through informal and formal activity; from offering up editing and previewing facilities for aspiring filmmakers at free or very reduced rates, providing workspace for incubation or fledgling businesses; through to large scale festivals critical to the production of new work.

- **As dynamic cultural brands.** The competition faced by cultural organisations for consumers' time and money is increasing as the leisure offer increases and people become more time poor. This fact alone means that cultural organisations need to apply the same standards of branding, consumer appeal and ease of access as any other element of the high street. Again this is something that they have on the whole been slow to lead on outside of very large institutions with marketing and communications expertise and funding, such as the V&A, Tate or Eden project. This is an area that, as relatively small institutions, the venues have leading on. The success of their bars and cafés, which once may have been viewed as peripheral to other activities, is now appreciated as a core component not only of the funding mix but also of the institutions' appeal and function to consumers. This is especially seen in Nottingham, where the success of Broadway's bar is analogous to and inseparable from the rise and success of the boutique shops and high quality consumer experience that surrounds it.

[37] Work Foundation, 2007: Staying Ahead: the Economic Performance of the UK's Creative Industries.

- **As reflectors of changes in lifestyle.** Sunday morning brunch showings of films at the Cornerhouse and the ability to take a drink into a film performance at FACT and Tyneside are two examples of the way that the venues have led the way for other parts of cultural infrastructure in terms of adapting to changes in consumer lifestyles. The consumer experience at the venues is indeed something that is being commodified and appropriated by others – such as real estate developers that declare the 'ambiance of the independent cinema' as a recognisable asset for their housing and workspace development. The venues – or at least what they 'stand for' have become *aspirational goods* for consumers that range from individuals seeking a distinctive cultural experience to whole cities that aspire to have the kudos and integrity offered by such venues. This value is only just starting to spread across the digital footprint, with initiatives such as Watershed's dShed offering a platform for Bristolian creativity while presenting the leading edge of Bristolian trends to a wider world.

It is clear that the venues are, in their necessarily different ways, operating as leading brokers for a transforming creative economy. They are crowding in creativity and championing it to *and with* an increasingly broad 'audience'. Indeed, the venues are working hard to 'open up' – to broaden the audience base and to engage new types of collaboration where it is the audience, the user, the consumer, that is *also the producer*. However, as will be shown, a set of significant challenges lie ahead if the venues are to move successfully to a position where their infrastructure offer is fit for purpose in a digital age.

3.1 Leading the Way: Eight Types of Infrastructure by You

Any attempt to present a simple overview of the current role that cross-art-form venues play must necessarily be prefaced by a health warning: *the similarities and differences, strengths and relative weaknesses, areas of concentration and areas of emerging activity can only be fully understood when the full context (organisational, locational and operational) of each venue is understood*.

What follows is therefore a short presentation of the eight key ways the venues are providing leading edge infrastructure for a competitive and innovative creative economy: that is finding ways to collaborate, connect and crowd-in to establish 'infrastructure by you' in addition to 'infrastructure for you':

Creative Place-making

1. Expanding and diversifying new audiences
Audiences are core for creative places and the venues have played a significant role in advancing and nurturing new types of relationship with increasingly diverse audiences. **Highlights include:** FACT's breaking down of the barriers between audiences for different activities; all the venues' commitment to organising significant international and national festivals and the emergence of particularly strong and resonant brands with a strong local following. **In the pipeline**: Cornerhouse's Open Source and collaborative models of development; FACT's collaborative work on the 2008 City of Culture; Showroom's Festival Centre; Watershed's pioneering, crosscutting and cross-sectoral programme; and Tyneside's reopening programme of commissions and projects across the North East.

2. Leaders in cultural regeneration
Being at the vanguard of the regeneration of their city and region is a mission shared by all the venues, whose roles in branding, repositioning, facilitating and connecting communities to place has been critical. **Highlights include:** Cornerhouse's role in the development of Manchester's post-industrial brand; Watershed acting as the nexus for the development of the Harbourside area; Showroom anchoring the Sheffield Cultural Industries Quarter; and Broadway's lead in the transformation of Nottingham's Lace Market. **In the pipeline:** Tyneside's restoration of an important historical asset and creation of new digital media facilities; Cornerhouse's multi-partner regeneration and growth of the Oxford Road Corridor; Showroom's Festival Centre; Broadway's connections with Centre for Contemporary Arts Nottingham; and Watershed's upcoming media literacy and mentoring projects.

3. Leaders in civic branding and place making
Each of the venues makes a positive contribution to the 'feel good factor' around their respective district and city. They contribute to the place-brands and influence the ways those brands then have in creating an environment which attracts inward investment, tourism and an attractive dynamic commercial environment. Critically, a wider public has developed an ownership of the brands – the venues are genuinely recognised for their cultural leadership, warmth, openness and championing of creativity; and in many ways it is the public that has informed this brand, often in quite informal ways. **Highlights include:** The public donation and municipal support seen in the regeneration of Tyneside; the international recognition FACT has for its interdisciplinary art programming; the strong connections Cornerhouse has with Manchester's emergence as a post-industrial city; and the

redevelopment and redesign of Broadway to connect Nottingham's cultural asset base – such as Sir Paul Smith's design for a cinema interior. **In the pipeline:** Cornerhouse' s potential expansion of its cultural leadership function with other institutions; expansion of Watershed's pioneering work with HP Labs; Showroom's Festival Centre; and FACT's increasingly central role to debate in Liverpool.

Creative Economy

4. Advancing knowledge transfer

The venues are increasingly taking the lead on knowledge transfer activity within their city and region, facilitating relationships between academia, arts and business, helping otherwise separate worlds and domains to come together and helping exchange the tacit, soft and networked knowledge which are so vital to the growth of the creative economy. **Highlights include:** FACT's work with the Sandbox at Lancaster University around user experience; Watershed's work with HP Labs especially around artificial intelligence; and Tyneside's work on collaboration and co-commissioning. **In the pipeline:** Watershed's establishment of the iShed as a an exemplar of research and development; FACT's work on course development; Sheffield Hallam vastly increasing its presence in close physical proximity to the Showroom; Broadway's two AHRC projects; and Cornerhouse's developing relationship with Higher Education Institutions and schools along the Oxford Road Corridor.

5. Extreme collaboration as the basis for innovation

Extreme collaboration between different elements of the knowledge economy to drive forward disruptive evolution is a relatively new strategic priority which the venues have been pioneering - fostering new collaborations and approaches to problem-solving around a range of important social, economic and environmental issues. **Highlights include:** FACT's collaboration with healthcare providers in sound and patient welfare; Cornerhouse's Artradio project and cross-art-form collaborations; and Watershed's work with HP labs on Artificial Intelligence and gaming: **In the pipeline:** FACT's expanding range of collaborations with local and regional artists and bodies; Watershed's iShed programme; and Showroom's links to the new Digital Campus.

6. Growing and supporting creative businesses

Supporting creative businesses (through providing space, support services, technical advice and skills, as well as building and expanding value chains and allowing creative businesses access to new markets) has become a significant role for the venues.

Highlights include: Significant roles in each venue supporting local filmmakers; FACT's technical equipment hire programme; FACT's work with young film makers and graduates on residency programmes to help them move from the academic into the commercial; Showroom/Workstation's large workspace offer; and the good balance of production and consumption activities in Broadway. **In the pipeline:** Cornerhouse's development of workspace provision with an FE/HE provider; Watershed's iShed supporting risk and connecting innovation to creativity; and Tyneside's new role as one of the two hubs in the North East's Media Enterprise Centre.

7. Showcasing new and emerging talent

The venues are committed to showcasing the best of young and emerging talent, often though hosting and/or running festivals and events of national and international significance. These festivals are often remarkable because their success represents an investment over a considerable period of time and are marked by a tight and specific focus. Increasingly, the digital footprint is taking a lead in showcasing new talent, which spreads the profile of the festivals in different ways, as well as introducing new ways for consumers/producers to influence programming and content. **Highlights include:** Exposures festival for student film makers at Cornerhouse; Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival at Showroom; Broadway's Silent Film Festival; Cornerhouse's innovative on-line publishing service; and the most 'infrastructure by you' - Watershed's dShed and eShed. **In the pipeline:** Watershed's iShed and the ongoing work of Digital Broadway.

Creative Infrastructure

8. Giving film a starring role

'Cinema at their heart' could be mantra for each of the venues due to the level of the commitment to innovative programming, responsiveness to the needs of a diverse audience, and the focus on emerging and alternative film-making talent from a variety of cultures. **Highlights include:** All the venues' participation in the Digital Screen Network; the highly successful showing of Digital High definition 'cinecasts' of Metropolitan Opera performances at FACT; and Broadway's regular screening for children with Autism and adults with learning difficulties. **In the pipeline:** considerations on opportunities for joint programming; stronger relationships with the BFI; and greater audience-led programming (screened on-line and in the cinemas).

Tyneside Cinema pre-redevelopment

4. Fit-for-Purpose Venues: Cultural Intermediaries in a Digital Age

This Study has explored the present and future role of six cross-art-form and media venues. This has been undertaken through a focus on how they can, indeed must, transform to ensure they are fit for purpose in a digital age and that they are *critical cultural intermediaries* in a shifting cultural, social and economic landscape that requires our cultural infrastructure to be far more convergent, connecting, democratic and engaging. This Study has shown that the venues have played an influential and at times inspirational role in the cultural life of their respective cities and regions. Centred around providing a distinctive, high quality cinema experience, the venues have:

- Operated as critical agents of creative place-making, often leading the way in culture-led regeneration, connecting and building new senses of community and place, and providing cities with a cultural vigour and identity that positively informs policy in cultural tourism, inward investment and knowledge attraction/retention.

- Performed a significant role in supporting growth and innovation in the creative economy, not least by providing a 'stickiness' and openness that attracts creative people and businesses to develop transactions and relationships; providing facilities for business development, such as workspace; and supporting convergence and knowledge transfer/exchange activities.

- Led the cultural sector in reconceptualising the function, role and attitude of cultural buildings – with openness, connectivity and trust all key in establishing the venues almost as 'cultural villages' for the knowledge economy.

However, so much potential lies unrealised; with a large gap between the role the venues currently undertake and that which is achievable, indeed required, for them to be fit for purpose and for them to fully exercise their role as *indispensable cultural infrastructure for a digital age.* Major opportunities exist for the venues to grow and improve their physical and digital footprints.

There are three critical questions here:

1. **Can a national network be established that enables the venues to work together on operational and strategic matters?** This includes joint-programming, knowledge sharing, ideas collision, and profiling/promotion.

2. **Can strategic partners effectively support the venues to become foremost hubs for a competitive creative economy?** This requires positioning the venues as lead partners in agendas such as knowledge exchange, public service publishing, regeneration, and cross-media distribution/commissioning. It also requires that the venues lead the way for other venues across the cultural sector, such as through partnership with theatres, galleries and music venues.

3. **Can the venues establish effective operational structures to manage processes of change?** This includes new management and governance structures, new partnerships across the arts and cultural sector, and a commitment to infrastructure by you.

Relatedly, there are four critical areas that require attention:

- **Engaging change: Organisational structure, management, capacity and vision**

- **Engaging partnership: Actively brokering new boundary-crossing relationships in innovation and knowledge transfer**

- **Engaging physical transformation: Reconceptualising, re-connecting and expanding the physical footprint**

- **Engaging digital transformation: Leading the way in programming, innovation, knowledge transfer and business.**

Conceptually, each of the above relate to the opportunity and challenge to move to a position where the venues are not simple providers of infrastructure, not conventional *'infrastructure for you'*: they need to both reflect and engage the wholesale transformation underway in the ways we produce and consume culture. They need to embrace and commit to offering *'infrastructure by you'*. This means championing the culture and technology of open source; extending the reach of their physical and digital footprints to engage new types of programming, new territories in cross-art-form work, and a new level of intimacy and trust with their increasingly technology savvy, globally orientated and locally committed 'audiences'.

The venues are currently positioned at a crucial juncture between their analogue past and the digital present and future. Their 'analogue' past, represented in their heritage as hybrids of independent cinema, media, education and business centres, interdisciplinary galleries and more, still has considerable currency and attends to a wide value range. However, it no longer adequately describes the role and functions that the venues can and should have. Their 'digital' future lies in the way in which they are evolving as multi-channel, connected, open, cross-sector and cross-disciplinary facilitators and providers of personalised content, experiences, learning, research and services for the creative economy.

A question arising from this is how radical and disruptive this digital future requires venues to be in terms of re-thinking business models, organisational structures, funding streams, relationships to partners, and so on. The position the venues are currently in is somewhat analogous to that of an old-fashioned terrestrial broadcaster in the digital age: do they adapt to radically evolving multi-channel world by broadening their brand horizontally through adding new channels, websites, mobile content and so on; or do they radically rethink their whole business model, perhaps ceasing to think of themselves as broadcasters in the traditional sense but concentrating instead on providing platform neutral content and experience to end users?

Because each venue and the programmes and activities they engage in are positioned between the analogue past and the digital future, there is not and cannot be one answer to this question. In some areas of activity and organisational structure, evolution rather than revolution will provide the space required for new partnerships and relationships to develop. In others, only a radical restructuring, by combining and merging previously separate functions or organisational silos will suffice. However, what is clear is that the trajectory of change for each venue has to be towards 'infrastructure by you' rather than 'infrastructure for you'. The set of issues that need to be considered in decision making includes:

- **The extent to which the end user is being placed at the centre**: What effect would putting the end user in control have? How can co-development and co-collaboration be best achieved in this area?

- **The type of partner required** – Which partners from outside existing funding streams or relationships should be involved?

- **What mechanism will best facilitate partnership?** What new thinking or fresh perspective could a radically different partner bring?

- **Considerations around the 'long tail':** Is this an area where digital distribution and multi-channel delivery means radically opening up consumer choice is needed? What cross-over and additional services and benefits can we offer the end user?

- **How platform neutral is this element?** Would it work better in another venue or multiple venues? How will users wish to consume this product? Should it be open to other platform providers (through creative commons for example)?

Extending Collaboration?

An important consideration for the venues it the degree to which they need to consider these issues individually and collectively. The opportunity cost for embracing the digital future is high in certain areas and will require the type of investment beyond the means of individual venues. Collaboration also allows for more experimentation with the possibility of venues testing out the same platform but using different business models for instance, or venues piggy-backing on each other's knowledge and experience to share capacity in terms of people and skills. Indeed, the case exists for supporting a stronger, more defined approach to venue collaboration – focusing on exchanging knowledge, problem-solving, presenting a unified voice, and tackling specific 'network opportunities' such as joint programming and promotion.

In addition, the investment required by the venues to stay ahead in terms of technology will be considerable (as will be the knowledge required to implement and understand that technology). While the venues have a head start in terms of knowledge of technology, the new types of platform, server, access and delivery systems required mean that as individual organisations they may not be able to afford the capacity or financial cost of implementation alone. Partnership with other organisations (such as industry and higher education) as well as the venues acting as a network will be required to ensure that the current competitive advantage they enjoy (over other parts of the cultural infrastructure, in areas such as wi-fi) is maintained.

It is in both the venues' and funders' best interests to consider further a network approach to venue development that extends beyond the current informal approach. Indeed, consideration must also be placed on supporting the venues to drive networks and share knowledges and efficiencies with other venues plus other parts of the cultural landscape. *Greater investment would enable existing and other relationships to blossom, the six venues providing the knowledge lead to other parts of the cultural infrastructure landscape.*

Productise and Prioritise?

The relationship that the venues have to their ever-widening constituency of partners and funders needs to productised, professionalized and prioritised. Currently, the scope of activities and the value range of the venues are not made clear to strategic partners, and in turn, the public value case is under-developed. In addition, the venues sometimes present themselves as capable of being 'all things to all people', without clearly prioritising what they do most effectively. The venues should be supported to establish a set of clear, accessible products that build upon the three themes introduced in this Study. These products should be developed within overall 'sustainable transformation plans' for each venue and then be offered as investment models to partners and funders. They will play a critical role in levering future investment, brokering new types of strategic partnership, and *defining expectations* on what the venues and their increasingly open-source approach can deliver.

Of equal importance is translating the value(s) of these products to audiences (consumers and producers). Currently, cinema dominates the brand of each of the venues (with the possible exception of FACT). The wider media offer and 'infrastructure by you' ethos of the venues needs to come to the fore in the 'public imagination'.

Capacity and Appetite?

For the venues to sustainably transform so that they reach and retain a position as *more than fit for purpose in a digital age,* then they need to address three significant structural and cultural barriers:

- **The venues currently lack the required capacity and expertise to sustainably transform.** Training, network-based knowledge exchange (peer learning), some change in personnel, and a greater degree of strategic and emotional support from partners and funders are required. Steering a course between multiple funders and balancing top-level strategic relationships with other public service providers will be key, as will the ability to understand and be close to the needs of an evolving and changing audience(s).

- **The venues need to reform their management structures, job descriptions, personnel and Boards.** Breaking down the barriers between different art forms and ways of reaching audiences means that previously distinct organisational units and functions may need to be examined. For example, how should the relationship between the core cinema programme and other activities be better converged? Are education and marketing now rapidly merging activities? Currently, for example, cinema programming sits apart from the wider curation of the mix; art forms are compartmentalised; audiences are too rigidly defined and thus their interconnectedness is not adequately engaged; and Boards are overly patronised by cinema lovers rather than media lovers and the breadth that entails. For some venues, a radical re-structuring will be required, and required urgently, for them to sustainably transform over the next five to ten years.

- **The venues need to concentrate their energies on what they agree to be their key strategic objectives.** This is not to detract from their wider role or the value range of this role: it is to encourage the *crowding-in* of investment and energy where the impact will be most pronounced and strategic.

- **There is a degree of cultural resistance to change**, especially regarding change to cinema programming. This can be linked to an aspiration to keep the venues as relatively 'pure' high quality art house cinemas; a lack of understanding regarding how exciting and beneficial change can be; and a lack of appetite in a labour market that sees a lack of churn and career development opportunities, and thus suffers from low levels of entrepreneurialism and risk-taking.

Infrastructure as Open Source: Toward 'Infrastructure by You'

As an approach to opening up and democratising institutions, services and products, Open Source methodology is evolving continuously from its software origins. It is now often combined with 'user-led innovation' processes which see the co-creation of ideas and solutions, often to community or social ends and usually using technology as a facilitator. The spectrum of mechanisms to facilitate user-led innovation include simple initiatives such encouraging open debate, discussion and voting on organisational issues or programming to bolder projects such as deliberately encouraging users to play with Intellectual Property owned by the organisation (such as video or website content) to create new content, applications or solutions of their own which they can share with other users (as successfully adapted by web 2.0 companies such as Facebook). Other organisations such as Streetcar, the pioneers of car rental for urban users on a pay-as-you-go basis in the UK, provide real examples of 'Infrastructure by You' through the way they have developed services on a truly co-creational basis which are popular, flexible, fun and easy to use.

Infrastructure by You: Expanding the Physical and Digital Footprint

The venues already have a proven expertise in non-traditional non-linear media participative media. Projects such as Fact's tenantspin, Cornerhouse's Artradio and Watershed's work with HP Labs around artificial intelligence, demonstrate their ability to combine artistic excellence with innovative ways of interacting with audiences. As place-based centres of excellence in this field they are well-positioned to build a leading role as generators of activity; connectors between content producers, consumers and technologists; and pioneers in the education work around digital literacy. The venues are beginning to develop a *reinvigorated and redefined cultural intermediary role*, engaging in increasingly reflexive and iterative ways with complex notions of 'audience' to elevate cultural experiences and generate new content. *With attention to the structural and cultural barriers introduced above, the venues could start to express the type of cultural offer demanded by changing audiences.*

In some cases the physical footprint needs extending and certainly improving. The non-availability of capital to progress the development potential of venues is a policy shortcoming. In addition, the digital footprint needs expanding, stepping forward from the brand, quality programming and cultural experience of the buildings to *generate new content, new experiences and a whole new value range by and for new consumers and producers: the new digitally literate, content hungry, boundary-less yet place-driven audiences.*

Manchester Cornerhouse

Appendixes

Appendix 1: List of Consultees

1. Bristol:

Watershed
Dick Penny, Managing Director, Watershed
Clare Reddington, Producer, iShed, Watershed
Mark Cosgrove, Head of Programme, Watershed
Gill Haworth, Digital Development Co-ordinator, Watershed
Jill Stokes, Head of Finance and Administration, Watershed
Polly Hamilton, Head of Cultural Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf (Clore Fellow attached to Watershed)
Derrick Price, Chair, Council of Management, Watershed
James Touzel, solicitor, Watershed and iShed boards
Jaya Chakrabarti, Managing Director, Nameless digital agency, WShed board

Partners
Paul Appleby, Interactive Executive, BBC Bristol, WShed board
Mark Leaver, Director of Development, South West Screen
Sarah-Jane Meredith, Head of Creative and Audience Development, South West Screen
Stephen Hilton, Corporate Consultation Manager, Bristol City Council; Project manager, Connecting Bristol
Andrew Kelly, Director, Bristol Cultural Development Department
Seth Johnson, Director, Theatre Bristol

2. Manchester & Liverpool:

Cornerhouse
Dave Moutrey – Director Cornerhouse

FACT
Mike Stubbs – Director, FACT
Laura Sillars – Senior Curator, FACT

Partners
Sara Clowes – North West Vision
Sarah Fisher – Arts Council England North West
Fiona Gasper – Culture Company
Alice Morrison – Director, North West Vision
Fran Toms – Head of Cultural Strategy, Manchester City Council
Sarah Fisher - Head of Visual Arts, Arts Council England North West
Peter Fell - Head of External Relations, Manchester University
Fran Toms - Head of Culture, Manchester City Council
Brian Cronin - Tenantspin, Liverpool

3. Newcastle:

Tyneside Cinema
Mark Dobson, Chief Executive, Tyneside Cinema

Partners
Honor Hargar, Director, AV Festival
Michelle Hirschorn, Consultant, AV Festival
Mark Adamson – Head of Creative Industries, One North East
Mark Robinson, Chief Executive, Arts Council England, North East
Tom Harvey, Chief Executive, Northern Film and Media
Lisa Laws, Creative Industries and Social Impact Manager, Northern Film and Media

4. Nottingham:

Broadway
Laraine Porter – Director, Nottingham Broadway
Steve Mapp – Deputy Director, Nottingham Broadway
Tim Challans – Board Member, Nottingham Broadway
Nick Ebbs – Board Member, Nottingham Broadway
Andrew Cooper – Board Member, Nottingham Broadway

Partners
Sarah Reed – Visual Arts Officer, Arts Council England East Midlands
Peter Knott – Director of Arts Development, Arts Council England East Midlands
Debbie Williams – Chief Executive, EM Media
John Tobin – Head of Market Development, EM Media

5. Sheffield:

Showroom
Ian Wild – Director, Showroom/Workstation
Chris Ashton – Finance & IT Manager, Showroom
Andrew McIntyre - Head of Cinema, Showroom
Jo Wingate - Head of Communications, Showroom
Sarah Coleman - Commercial Manager, Showroom
Mark Knight - Assistant Workstation Manager

Partners
Ann Gosse – Director of Culture, Sheffield City Council
Bill Paton - Performing and Community Arts Manager, Sheffield City Council
Stuart MacFarlane – Cluster Manager, Yorkshire Forward
Jay Arnold – Exhibition Officer, Screen Yorkshire
Andy Carver – Chief Executive, Arts Council England Yorkshire
Professor Sylvia Harvey – University of Lincoln
Eleanor Tams – Harmony Training
Brendan Moffat – Head of Marketing, Creative Sheffield
Elliot J. Huntley – Film-maker

6. Strategic Partners:

Gill Henderson – Director, Create KX
Bronac Ferran, Consultant
Susi O'Neill, Screen Image and Sound Cluster Manager, Advantage West Midlands
Steve Chapman, Funding and Policy Manager, Screen West Midlands

7. Commissioning Partners:

Carol Comley – Head of Strategic Development, UK Film Council
Tim Cagney - Head of Partnerships, UK Film Council
Peter Buckingham – Head of Distribution and Exhibition, UK Film Council
Sarah Schafer-Peek – Assistant to the Head of Strategic Development, UK Film Council
Neil Watson, Strategy Advisor, UK Film Council
John Newbigin, Strategy Advisor, UK Film Council
Julie Taylor – Head of Knowledge Transfer, Arts and Humanities Research Council
Adrian Friedli - Director Visual Arts & Literature, Arts Council England
Nema El-Nahas, Senior Strategy Officer, Business Growth, Arts Council England
Gus Casely-Hayford - Executive Director, Arts Strategy, Arts Council England

Appendix 2 – Venue Structure

All six venues are registered charities; some have set up trading companies, and Watershed's iShed project is a Community Interest Company, enabling it to develop partnership projects that have exploitation potential.

Previously funded by Regional Arts Boards and the British Film Institute, following the establishment of the UK Film Council and Arts Council England, public funding is administered through Arts Council England regional offices and Regional Screen Agencies. Regional Screen Agency support has usually shifted from revenue to restricted project funding. The venues are relatively generously supported by their local authorities, and otherwise draw on a wide range of support, from trusts, sponsorship, and regional, national and European development funds. Box office and income from trading are a significant proportion of their income.

All six have received Lottery Capital funding from Arts Council England.

Contacts

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Arts Council England

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Arts and Humanities Research Council

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UK FILM COUNCIL LOTTERY FUNDED
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
Arts & Humanities Research Council