Creative Capacity – Creative Exchange Wales Network (CEWN)

Phillippa ROSE, Simon Gough

RedFront Service Design and Innovation

Redfront is a service design and prototyping agency working across the public, private, creative, cultural and educational sectors. We use Design Thinking, Lean Start Up principles, collaborative tools and digital capability to bring people together and develop user-focused, innovative projects across boundaries.

We recently designed and delivered Creative Capacity - a series of full-day co-creation knowledge exchange events for Glamorgan University, working across Wales to develop new collaborative projects between academics and digital creative businesses, and boost the creative economy.

Themes from the first three sessions were digital heritage and tourism, health and wellbeing, and globalisation. So far seven projects have been funded and developed further. The final workshop focussed on prototyping emerging project concepts with a range of early career academic researchers.

Each event focussed on exchange of knowledge and practice through experimentation between a diverse range of individuals, all undergoing an intense process of ideation, collaboration and rapid prototyping of cross sector projects. Each of the four events resulted in a number of very strong project proposals to boost the local creative economy that have since been awarded funding, and are now in development.

Keywords: knowledge exchange, digital heritage, case studies

Introduction

Redfront is delighted to respond to the call by the Creative Exchange, for submissions to the 2013 Knowledge Exchange Conference. We have a track record working at the interface of HE and industry and have been involved in a number of projects seeking to foster new mutually beneficial exchanges between academia and the creative economy.

We believe that knowledge exchange is embedded most quickly and effectively through practice. We employ ideation, co-creation and rapid prototyping techniques in intensive, high participation workshops ranging from anything between four hours and three days. We draw on open innovation, design thinking and Lean methodologies.

We are submitting a paper on a recent project involving creative businesses and academics developing joint projects to boost local creative economies and communities across Wales.

The CEWN Brief

Redfront was commissioned to design and deliver the Creative Capacity strand of the wider Creative Exchange Wales Network programme, which provides a portfolio of funding support for knowledge transfer, and opportunities for collaboration between academia and business, to impact the wider creative economy.

The Creative Capacity strand is defined as "Knowledge exchange events and a series of pilot projects to pump prime collaborative R&D for the creative economy"

Creative Capacity knowledge exchange events have been funded by A4B. The project held three exchange events in 2012-13 to act as a stimulus for knowledge exchange and R&D activity. Each knowledge exchange had a specific theme. These were:

- November 2012, Digital Past and Futures - linking creativity with digital heritage, museums and tourism
- December 2012, Creative Industries and Health and Wellbeing
- February 2013, Globalising the Welsh Creative Industries

The events typically involved 30-40 individuals with a 50:50 split between academics and businesses.

There was a fourth event held focussing on rapid prototyping, specifically for early career academic researchers, held in March 2013. This was a two-day professional development event to foster cross-sector and cross-institution collaboration and knowledge exchange. Industry speakers presented on the first day, and Redfront led the second day, moving people from thinking, to high participation ideas generation and co-creation of projects, eligible for funding.

With the exception of the latter, each event aimed to produce knowledge exchange and collaborations between academics and businesses, leading to the creation of project plans. These were then eligible for £10,000 AHRC development funds allocated to each event. The project plans were then submitted within 3-4 weeks of the event.

Our Approach

Redfront has considerable experience of designing and facilitating innovation programmes for clients as well as for internal programmes. We are particularly skilled at ensuring maximum engagement during facilitated group sessions to provide the most effective learning outcomes.

The key aims of the Creative Capacity sessions were to foster joint working, knowledge transfer and ideas generation between sectors, laying the groundwork for potential collaborations in developing group projects and ideas for seed funding afterwards. With this in mind, we focussed on as much interaction and practical activities as possible. We wanted to break down any attitudinal barriers between sectors, stimulate conversations, ideas and partnerships. We want to allow room for participants to shape the agenda, drawing upon Open Space meeting methodologies, but also using techniques that in our experience help to develop meaningful ideas and relationships.

We chose to the following approaches in the CEWN knowledge exchange and co-creation events:

- Looking at innovation from three angles (internal resources, open collaboration and user-driven) to widen thinking and ensure practicality).
- Multimedia documentation (using written word, sketches, photography and video where appropriate).
- A focus on practical action as well as discussion (we push participants to prototype ideas and explore the reality rather than just generate ideas).
- Critical examination (we make sure that ideas are explored by everyone so that they can be properly assessed).
- Creating links (we make sure that relationships formed before and during sessions can be maintained afterwards so that momentum is not lost).

Pre-Event

We agreed a broad set of key research questions to stimulate ideas at each session, circulated in advance along with briefing information, funding opportunities and the meeting format.

During the session

We divided people into groups through self-selection based on interest in the research questions posed as prompts. We then reallocated certain groups to ensure balance of academics and business

achieved. We then took people through a deliberately fast brainstorm process. We pushed people beyond their comfort zone on purpose, to generate ideas and rapid responses in a very short timeframe. One day to devise concepts, demonstrate tools and methods and build possible teams and projects is an incredibly fast process, but perfectly possible to achieve, and in our experience very effective in the exchange of knowledge and practice. We draw upon Design Thinking, Agile and Lean Start Up methodologies to enable people to devise and test project concepts rapidly.

At each Creative Capacity event, once grouped in teams, we ask people to respond in silence to research question with single words or short phrases for 5 minutes on post it notes, then spend 20 minutes analysing potential patterns or common trains of thought, and devise possible project ideas. The group is then given a further 10 minutes to consolidate ideas and communicate them visually on two pieces of flip chart paper. This stage in the concept development is known in Design Thinking as 'the fuzzy front end'.

We then encouraged each group to move around the room giving peer review to each group's ideas, and the filtering process begins. People had the opportunity to swap groups or concepts at this point. We then worked with groups during the day to develop their understanding of their core value propositions and work towards Minimal Viable Products.

By the end of the day at each event, people demonstrated relatively sophisticated models to take forward for funding, through physical models, films, or presentations. We varied techniques slightly at each session depending on the subject areas, and dynamics of the groups.

Redfront documented each event and have media rich content to share in various audio and visual formats.

Value Added

During break times during the day we created a wall map to draw physical connections made. We used part of the wall space for participants to add their names and a simple outline of why they're there (what they can offer and what they're looking for). We provided another time later in the day for participants to draw connections and reinforce the relationships formed during the session.

We also set up a simple but secure virtual platform for collaboration and open innovation so that programme participants could connect and share throughout the programme. We used this platform to enhance the knowledge exchange, share key resources with the participant businesses and academics, and built up a valuable resource with a legacy beyond the initial project.

Outcomes

After the initial three knowledge exchange events, Redfront was commissioned by CEWN to employ some of the same Design Thinking and Lean Start Up techniques working specifically with early stage academic researchers on a follow up one day knowledge exchange and co-creation event.

Redfront found during all the events that academics found it harder to move initial ideas onto project development and prototyping as rapidly as businesses. Each event was not designed to produce polished projects as the time frame was so short and some of the partnerships forged in a single day were inevitably artificial. However, a significant number of high quality funding proposals were produced and durable partnerships developed after each event.

Since these events a number of innovative projects have been taken forward with CEWN funding and are currently in development. Redfront is following the progress of various projects and building a rich selection of dynamic case studies evidencing exchange of knowledge, and practice, to present in September. Further information is outlined in the appendix.

Appendix

CEWN Creative Capacity funded project case studies

CEWN HW2 Walking in their shoes. Storytelling in situ to promote empathy amongst health professionals towards the impact of place on patient wellbeing

Professor Maggie Kirk, University of Glamorgan

Lisa Heledd Jones, Storyworks UK

The aim of the project is to test the impact of a digital story resource, accessed either within a specific clinical place, or recreated virtually in an online resource, on empathy of health professionals using the resource. Expressive art has been used successfully in health professional training on empathy. However, directing attention to the patient's physical landscape through the use of stories in such training has not been reported and this is an area worthy of investigation.

The aims of the project are:

• To produce a digital audio story which can be used to demonstrate the feasibility of doing this within a hospital setting and to provide an illustration of how stories can be utilised;

• To explore with senior NHS staff any potential challenges to making digital audio stories available within a hospital setting, for health professionals to access as part of continuing professional development, on practical, technical and ethical grounds;

• To review currently available Empathy rating scales for application within a complex study;

CEWN HW5 'i-Magine'

Dr Cathy Treadaway, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Prue Thimbleby, Swansea Metropolitan University (UWTSD)

Richard Crandon, On Par Productions

This project aims to scope the development of a web based interactive tool kit (comprising a website and interactive display system) that can be used to playfully stimulate, capture and extend imagination.

The tool kit will provide a visual digital environment that can support and enhance the wellbeing of children prior to, during and after hospital admission. Anxiety and fear prior to hospital admission creates stress for both children and their families. Recent research indicates that creative activities reduce stress and enhance subjective wellbeing.

This applied research will explore the potential of digital technologies to support creativity and share imagination through the development of an interactive visual storytelling environment. It will evaluate the usefulness of visual narratives to reduce stress, lower levels of perceived pain and increase subjective wellbeing. This case study will enable the scoping stage of this project to be undertaken in a 'live' situation and will provide first-hand experience of the real issues, requirements and ethical considerations of the proposed larger study. It will bring researchers, arts health professionals, clinicians, designers and developers together to identify the key requirements of the research and to source funding.

This project, if successfully realised, will impact positively on the health and wellbeing of sick children and their families by helping to overcome the anxiety they face in being admitted to hospital or attending outpatient clinics.

CEWN GWCI1: App-Teitl

Eilian Roderick, University of Glamorgan

Leslie R. Herman, Integrated Branding

Dafydd Roberts, BIC Innovation Ltd

App-teitl is a subtitling app. By nature, apps have global potential, but for all its multilingual, multinational potential, as our goal is to firmly establish this as a Welsh product, we would begin by developing the product to provide a Welsh language service. Our first major aim is to develop and produce an app designed to provide exemplary Welsh language subtitling to live cultural events specifically, and with a broader brief to do the same for other cultural events.

App-Teitl's importance can be illustrated by example:

- You are at the opera – a performance of Rigoletto, sung in Italian at the Deutsche Oper, Berlin. Your Italian isn't very good, and the in-house German subtitling is of no use either. Welsh subtitling, providing by App-teitl would greatly enhance the experience for Welsh speakers.

  Increasing its reach, App-teitl could 'aptly' support:-

- Welsh learners, be they in Wales, the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, or anywhere making the Welsh language instantly accessible;

- The entire Welsh language education system, making the Welsh language accessible during cultural excursions or any 'event' or cultural experience not generated in Welsh.

We see the provision of subtitling for live events to be App-teitl's primary USP, and probably the largest challenge. The notion of provision for live events is what is most novel about this project, and this is what drives us. The design phase of the project involves design, guerrilla testing, technological research and linguistic research.