



Entrepreneurship in the Creative Industries

How Innovative Agents,
Skills and Networks Interact

Phillip McIntyre · Janet Fulton
Susan Kerrigan · Michael Meany

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*In honor of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.
He lived life as it should be lived, he made a positive difference to so many
people's lives, and he left his mark on our thinking.*

PREFACE

This book attempts to uncover and explain many things. It comes in three connected sections. The first section asks the contextual question; why, at this point in time, did we arrive at such a heavy concentration on entrepreneurship in the creative industries? The second part of the book very pragmatically asks: if there is such an emphasis on entrepreneurship in the creative industries, which the evidence suggests there is, what do those who work, or want to work in the creative industries, need to do to pragmatically gain an income under these circumstances? The third and final section of the book gives empirical examples from the lives of those who have indeed found a way to successfully gain an income in the creative industries, and it highlights their entrepreneurial approach to that endeavor. Put very simply, the book answers three primary questions: How and why did we get here? Given that we are here at this point in time, how do we go about being entrepreneurial? Who has managed to do this in the creative industries, and how did they do it?

In answering these questions, this book examines both the creative industries and entrepreneurship as a creative system in action. It will help those who wish to work in the creative industries develop practical skills and a deep understanding of how creative and innovative agents, operating within and dependent on the structures of the world, attempt to bring novel and valued products, processes and ideas into being. That is what creative entrepreneurs do. At the same time, given the precarity of employment in the creative industries, we believe it is crucial that creative practitioners understand the value of gaining an income rather than getting a job, that is, they now need to develop an entrepreneurial mindset.

Understanding those ideas is an absolute necessity in understanding how the creative industries work.

This book not only exposes the workings of creativity and innovation within the creative industries, and the central role entrepreneurialism now plays in this industry, it also examines the historical, social, cultural, economic and political contexts the creative industries have come to exist in, detailing how individual agents take care of business inside these industries and contexts. The book applies these complex frames of reference to successful creative entrepreneurs in a series of case studies to demonstrate real-world applications of the theories and concepts we use to explain the necessity for entrepreneurship in the creative industries.

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There are so many people to thank and acknowledge. We will live dangerously, selecting only a few and trusting that the others will eventually forgive us. The people at Palgrave Macmillan have been, as always, a pleasure to work with. Sarah Coffee is the very best of colleagues—and one hell of a copyeditor. Without the dedicated help of our research assistants and co-researchers across a number of projects much of this material would not have seen the light of day. In particular, we need to thank Alysson Watson, Lee-Anne Marsh, Claire Williams, and Evelyn King for their willingness to go the extra mile—and they did it all with a smile. The Australian Research Council has been very generous in its funding for our research in the field, and the various universities we are affiliated with have been very helpful in providing the institutional homes for us as we slaved over our hot laptops. It is worth noting that we have drawn on the following references to complete this book.

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PHILLIP

Working with the A Team has been, once again, a deep pleasure. Susan, Janet, Michael, and I have certainly done some stuff together. We've negotiated the shoals and privileges of academia, stood our ground as critical thinkers, played with the very best on the planet, and still managed a smile through it all. To have them as colleagues has been enough indeed but to have them as close friends constitutes another level of wonder for me. I am also deeply grateful to all of the students who have passed my way, undergraduate and postgraduate. There are far too many to mention but rest assured you have all bought me one of the greatest gifts, that is, to remind me there are truly outstanding human beings on this planet and that it will be safe in your hands. My family has, as ever, been so supportive of the things I do—they might rib me for it, but their love is palpable. Julie, a writer herself, stays my one true love. She creates the place I come home to.

JANET

Once again it has been a joy to work with these collaborative and intelligent scholars. Many, many thanks to Phillip, Susan, and Michael for your ongoing support and friendship. I hope we can continue to play together in this research space we love so much. And we joke about the Newcastle School of Creativity Research, but we have developed a core of creativity research in media and communication that is strong and internationally recognized.

It was during the writing of this book that our academic rock god Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi passed away. This giant in creativity research has guided my research over many years. We have dedicated the book to his memory, but I would like to pay personal tribute to him and acknowledge the impact he has had on my academic life. Vale Mike.

I would like to dedicate this book to my babies Jade and Peter who continue to be my rocks.

SUSAN

Co-writing this book with my colleagues and friends has been a delight, and I thank you for giving me the confidence to become a writer, something I never thought I could be. I am deeply grateful. Phillip, Janet, and Michael, I am in awe of your thirst for knowledge and I revel in our shared belief that theory and practice are not separate concepts. As co-authors we have consciously drawn on the unification of theory and practice to simplify the ideas of creativity, industries, and incomes, and I hope future readers will find it as fascinating as we have.

To my family, David, Alice, and Rose, thank you from the bottom of my heart for providing a much-needed balance for my creative obsessions.

MICHAEL

To my co-authors, who are both friends and colleagues, I wish to express sincerest gratitude for their generosity, candor, rigor, and enthusiasm. My co-authors are leading international experts in the study of creative systems and creative industries. I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with them. This book is a function of a system at work—multiple domains, multiple fields, and multiple agents have contributed to its production. However, the raw drive and tenacity of my co-authors provided the energy to motivate the system. For this too I am grateful.

Most importantly I would like to dedicate this book to my wife, Elspeth Robertson, thank you for your love, support, patience, and ‘food in adversity’.

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His PhD, *The Performance of Comedy by Artificial Intelligence Agents* (2014), was an interdisciplinary study that amalgamated scripted artificial intelligence dialogue and computer interface scripting with the theory and practice of comedy and of creativity. His work since that time has continued to integrate the study of creativity with a range of disciplinary perspectives.

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PART I

The Context for Creative Industries
Entrepreneurship



Introduction to Entrepreneurship in the Creative Industries

Working in the creative industries is certainly glamorous, and it is a lot of fun, but it's not easy. The path to making a secure, ongoing living in the creative industries is becoming increasingly arduous. Outsourcing, casualization, and the growth in precarious work, the blurring of amateur and professional roles, convergence across multiple platforms, incessant digital disruption in a globalized world, and the ongoing dominance of the political ideology of neoliberalism have all brought us to a space and time where secure employment in the creative industries is more difficult to obtain than ever before. The full-time ongoing jobs that are still available today are becoming increasingly rare. Many are simply disappearing. Multiple reports (e.g. Deloitte Australia, 2012; Dunlop, 2016; Frey & Osborne, 2013) indicate the reality of this situation, as does the scholarly research into creative labor (e.g. Curtin & Sanson, 2016; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; O'Donnell & Zion, 2019; Ross, 2009).

In the light of these changes, it is increasingly the case that the path to making a living in the creative industries is to learn how to generate a regular income rather than to continue to search for full-time ongoing employment. Despite the promotion of the success of the creative industries and the value of their economic contribution (e.g. CIIC, 2013; EC, 2017; Lhermitte et al., 2015; Trembath & Fielding, 2020; UNCTAD, 2008), at the production end of things, being an employee looked after by a large corporation who shoulders the burden of ongoing risk taking, if ever that was really the case, is fast disappearing. Despite the continuing

existence of the whales (Davies & Sigthorsson, 2013, pp. 49–50), the big corporate players, it is increasingly the case that those lucky enough to work within the creative industries need to take on the pragmatics of being entrepreneurial more than ever before as they continue to practice their creative art and craft.

To practice entrepreneurially, however, requires risks—often large risks. More often than not, those risks lead to failure (McGrath, 2011; McRobbie, 2005, 2016; Rogers, 2003; Standing, 2011; Tahirsylaj, 2012) and sometimes the risks appear to be too great for the diminishing rewards that are available to the very large collection of plankton (Davies & Sigthorsson, 2013, pp. 49–50), the many SMEs, sole traders, contract workers, and freelancers who now constitute the bulk of those working in the creative industries. Nevertheless, those songs, films, books, ads, documentaries, podcasts, TV shows, theatre productions, radio broadcasts, features and news articles, and computer games, to name just a few of the outputs from the creative industries, still get made. Despite the rise of pro-ams and prod-users, the commitment required to produce high-quality creative work still remains the same. The expectations of the audience have not changed in that regard. There are many who still want, and indeed demand, to consume these things. But on the supply side, the fundamental shift that has taken place in how those producing these cultural items are remunerated has undergone a massive change. In an industry that values creativity above all else, creative practitioners are becoming increasingly aware of the need to prepare themselves, to use a term from Rosenbaum (2020), to become part of the often-uncertain gig economy. Within this context, the necessity of being entrepreneurial has become an overriding concern for those attempting to cope with the changes digitization, globalization, and the increasing dominance of neoliberal ideology have wrought.

These broad contextual changes also present possibilities and opportunities that can be taken advantage of. In this new world order of fluctuating social and economic fortunes, creative practitioners need to approach work quite differently. It is increasingly imperative that they understand the value of making a living rather than getting a job. To do this they must not only become adept in making things, through acquiring the relevant knowledge pertinent to their profession and the means to make those things, but also acquire practical entrepreneurial skills.

They must understand how to leverage their own personal attributes and also become very skilled at networking. They must become aware of

all the interconnected activity that goes on around them at all scales of activity. This means not only keeping abreast of the skill and techniques one needs to know in order to make creative products, how to call up ideas, what is best practice in content creation, and so on, but to also actively gain an astute understanding of the way these practices are embedded in business settings, and the networked ‘interactions between creative practitioners in designing products and processes’ (Comunian, 2019, p. 41). Each creative practitioner must develop the ability to use local infrastructure and access finance in a cost-effective way, learn where grants and subsidies reside, as well as keep an eye on the changes in these. At the same time, they need to know how the dynamic global market for their creative products is actually performing week in, week out. They need to be well aware of the effect policy settings and legal requirements have on what they do. They also need contextual information at their disposal such as ‘the impact of larger phenomena of convergence and globalisation’ (Comunian, 2019, p. 41). This last means being able to read global trends as complex interconnected phenomena in a perpetual state of flux that, interacting across macro, meso, and micro levels of the creative industries system, deeply affect the daily practice of each creative individual.

This book attempts to uncover and explain many of these things. It comes in three connected sections. The first section asks the contextual question; why, at this point in time, did we arrive at such a heavy concentration on entrepreneurship in the creative industries? The second part of the book very pragmatically asks, if there is such an emphasis on entrepreneurship in the creative industries, which the evidence suggests there is, what do those who work or want to work in the creative industries need to do to pragmatically gain an income under these circumstances? The third and final section of the book gives empirical examples from the lives of those who have indeed found a way to successfully gain an income in the creative industries and it highlights their entrepreneurial approach to that endeavor. Put very simply the book answers three primary questions: How and why did we get here? Given that we are here at this point in time, how do we go about being entrepreneurial? Who has managed to do this in the creative industries and how did they do it?

With all of that in mind, we cluster the following chapters into three broad sections. The first section introduces and explores the ideas behind the creative industries and being entrepreneurial. For example, Chap. 2 examines the forces at work in the world which provide context for this crucial sector. It sets out some of the historical, social, cultural, economic,

and political backgrounds of the sector and how it has developed internationally. Chapter 3 focuses on entrepreneurialism and its emergence. It provides a historical context for the theoretical evolution of the ideas that inform the concept of the creative industries and examines how a political ideology such as neoliberalism has led to the world that demands an entrepreneurial spirit of its workers. Chapter 4, the final chapter in this section, places the creative industries and entrepreneurship firmly within a systemic approach to creativity and cultural production. It provides a brief account of Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on cultural production and pairs these with the extant work on creative systems in an effort to set up an analytical framework to house the next two sections.

The second section of the book drills down into the pragmatics of undertaking entrepreneurial ventures. It discusses the practices, skills, business models, and plans necessary for one to be entrepreneurial. However, rather than focusing solely on the individual as entrepreneur, this section leads the reader to an understanding of how the social and cultural contexts they work in both enable and constrain an individual's foray into entrepreneurialism. It also details how individual agents go about taking care of business through deploying social, cultural, symbolic, and financial capital in an entrepreneurially focused world. It then provides a broad view of entrepreneurial practices by discussing individual skill sets, the actions of the gift economy, the effects of clusters, and the ongoing requirements of the state. A discussion of the nuts and bolts of running a business follows, with introductory material on business plans, SWOT and STEEPLE analysis, financing, intellectual property, ownership structures, bookkeeping, and human resources. We, of course, embed these ideas firmly in our theoretical framework as we apply it to creative industries entrepreneurship. These practically focused chapters will help those who wish to work in the creative industries to develop skills and a deep understanding of how creative and innovative agents, operating within and dependent on the structures of the world, attempt to bring novel and valued products and ideas into being. That is what creative entrepreneurs do. This section provides a springboard to the next, which analyses the stories of creative individuals who have effectively engaged in actual entrepreneurial activity.

The final section, as noted, takes all of these ideas and the practical detail we have talked about and applies them to successful entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs who work in the creative industries. We want to show how this knowledge has been leveraged in the real world. It therefore

provides a set of case studies setting out the profiles of creative practitioners who have managed to gain an ongoing income as they operate locally and globally—glocally—in a variety of creative industries contexts. Part of the purpose of presenting these case studies is to provide evidence of how these entrepreneurs learn, understand, and interact with the structures they are embedded in and how those structures both constrain and enable their creative practice, as a means for them to achieve the success they have. Each chapter in this final section focuses on a sector of the creative industries: film and screen; writing, publishing, print media, and radio; public relations, advertising, and fashion; the music industry; and gaming and design. We examine practitioners who have blazed their own trail as well as who have continued to work in the traditional system but with an intrapreneurial spirit. Based on interviews and secondary data, we detail their practical experiences as they negotiate their way through the systems that affect their ability to gain an income through their own creative practice. In doing so we hope to demonstrate how theory illuminates practice and practice informs theory.

But before we begin that journey we want to see whether we can keep us all on the same page by setting out a few key terms we think are central to any exploration of creative industries entrepreneurship.

If we are dealing with creative industries entrepreneurship, the terms to be addressed here must include ‘creativity’, ‘innovation’, ‘industry’, and most importantly, what we mean when we put them together and say ‘creative industries’ since, we believe, these latter terms must encompass something about the prior two terms in its own definition. Of course, what we mean by ‘entrepreneurship’ and its derivatives such as social entrepreneurship, technopreneur, intrapreneur, journopreneur, and a host of others is also important if we are dealing with creative industries entrepreneurship. These following brief explanations will provide a baseline, a set of operational definitions if you like, that will be used throughout the book. They will be expanded on in future chapters, but for now the definitions are a good starting point.

In the first instance, as Keith Sawyer asserts, we need to ‘look critically at our own cultural assumptions about how creativity works, and scientific studies of creativity fail to support our most cherished beliefs about creativity’ (2006, p. 33). However, if we examine the extant peer-reviewed, authoritative, well-reasoned empirical research into ‘creativity’ (for extensive summaries of the literature see Alexander, 2003; McIntyre et al., 2018; Negus & Pickering, 2004; Pope, 2005; and Sawyer, 2006, 2011)

we can see that most serious researchers now agree that creativity is the bringing into being of novel objects or processes that are valued in at least one social setting (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010, p. 572). We can extend this definition to indicate that creativity is:

a productive activity whereby objects, processes and ideas are generated from antecedent conditions through the agency of someone, whose knowledge to do so comes from somewhere and the resultant novel variation is seen as a valued addition to the store of knowledge in at least one social setting. (McIntyre, 2008, p. 1)

To go in the opposite direction, as Raymond Williams did with his definition of culture, we can, as fraught with potential danger as this is, formalize the notion of creativity into a simple equation:

$$\text{Creativity} = \text{Novelty} + \text{Value}$$

Furthermore, Beth Hennessey argues that creativity emerges from a ‘complex web of interrelated forces operating at multiple levels that can only be modeled and understood via multidisciplinary investigation’ (2017, p. 342). She goes on to suggest that ‘only with the adoption of a truly integrated systems perspective’ (2017, p. 343) can we ever hope to understand the complexities of creativity.

Closely related to creativity, *innovation* tends to be more overtly linked to entrepreneurship. We will deal with the latter term shortly. In the meantime, Mazzarol asserts that ‘innovation is not just about new technology, but also about doing things better to enhance value to customers, employees and shareholders’ (2011, p. i). Everett Rogers has been far more precise:

An *innovation* is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. It matters little, so far as human behaviour is concerned, whether or not an idea is ‘objectively’ new as measured by the lapse of time since its first use or discovery. [Italics in original] (2003, p. 12)

McIntyre has claimed that this way of thinking about innovation ‘has come quite close to recent definitions of “creativity”’ (2011, p. 4), especially in regard to both novelty and value.

While scholars have tended to argue over the differences between innovation and creativity, there is a tendency to adhere to a naïve and simplistic view where creativity is thought to involve merely having an idea and innovation is presumed to be carrying it out. Brian Arthur suggests the idea is ‘too diffuse, too nebulous’ (2009, p. 90) and consequently takes the popular route preferring to invoke the term innovation ‘wherever some improvement is put into practice or some new idea is tried out, no matter how trivial’ (Arthur, 2009, p. 89). Rosenfeld and Servo (1991) are also typical in claiming that creativity is the generation of new ideas while innovation refers to the process of making money off those ideas. Furthermore, to add a discursive element to this appraisal, creativity is historically associated with the arts, while the term innovation tends to be affiliated with business, engineering, technology, and the sciences (Godin, 2013; McIntyre, 2011). That differentiation, especially at a national policy level, goes some way to explaining why innovation is still considered, outside a research understanding, as different to creativity. In fact, one could argue that creativity subsumes innovation within itself, inasmuch as creativity must involve both innovation and tradition (Negus & Pickering, 2004). More on these debates later.

The next term that also needs some brief unpacking here is that of the notion of an ‘industry’. This term is often used to categorize ‘a group of companies that are related in terms of their primary business activities’ (Investopedia, 2021) and, by extension, products. In the broad sweep of time, it is a relatively new term. It emerged and solidified around the time of the Industrial Revolution but the solidity of that world has now given way to a certain imprecision. The claim has been made that ‘industry and market boundaries are porous and “fuzzy” especially where globalization is taking place’ (McGee et al., 1995, p. 261) since the merging of:

trans-industrial products and service activities inside diversified corporations is especially striking among information sector firms, which operate in the telecommunications, broadcasting, entertainment, software, data processing, and related manufacturing industries. (Todeva et al., 2007, p. 3)

What’s more, the notion of a solid objectifiable entity, an industry, is increasingly giving way to the idea that we are looking at ‘loosely coupled systems of production’ (Dubois & Gadde, 2010). The idea of the fuzziness of systems is of particular relevance in the creative industries where horizontal integration (Croteau & Hoynes, 2019, p. 74) has led to

diversification, for example, where a telecommunication company such as Comcast has expanded into broadcasting and cable television, movie and television production, and theme parks. As another example, Apple has expanded from a technology company into television, and consequently one could ask which industry it should be placed within. Regardless of these definitional issues, if, as Smith (1998) notes, fish is the primary product of the fishing industry and the steel industries produce steel, it follows that creative outputs must be the primary ‘product’ of the creative industries. But there are dragons here too.

The first real example of the use of the term ‘creative industries’ is often associated with the United Kingdom’s Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). In 1998, as a result of a policy desire, they defined the creative industries as ‘those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’ (1998, p. 3). This definition is not without its criticisms (e.g. Hesmondhalgh, 2019; O’Connor, 2012).

To put this simply, as we have seen above, the extant research into creativity indicates that creativity is not just applicable to artistic activity alone. It also applies to the sciences and just about every other area of human endeavor. If this is the case, then it is hard to argue that creativity is the sole distinguishing factor of the creative industries. All industries, by definition, must be creative. Further, we can argue that all industries originate in some form of creativity, skill, and talent. From there they are all engaged in pursuing wealth creation. And to compound the problem, not all industries create wealth through the specific exploitation of intellectual property. And herein lies another concern. The concept of intellectual property does not just refer to copyright but also to patents. A number of industries engage in wealth creation through developing and owning patents but many of these industries do not sit comfortably within our common-sense understanding of what constitutes the creative industries. The industries hinged on patents must include pharmaceuticals, biotechnology industries, the electronics industry, financial services in their use of business methods patents, and petroleum and refining industries, to give just a few examples. While John Howkins (2001) does assert that many of these must be included in the creative industries, none of them could be accepted from a ‘common sense’ point of view, as ‘creative’ industries. The DCMS definition, on consideration, may be too loose to be useful. This