

**The Museum as a Cathedral and a Bazaar:  
Tracing flows of rights in the UK cultural, memory and education sector**

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### ***1. Introduction***

This paper attempts to challenge the dominant digitization and curation model as one (a) instrumented in a top down, well planned and centralised fashion; (b) requiring vast initial investment; and (c) strictly separating the digital from physical experience. Instead, we propose a complementary model that (a) builds on the notion of the audience as curator (Bourriaud, 2000; 2002) and increasingly demands its participation in the production of taxonomies (or *Folksonomies*) (Voss, 2007) of the displayed material (Adams, 1997); (b) makes extensive use of existing infrastructures for the classification of existing material, the communication with the public and the digitization of material (especially social software networks and cheap digitization techniques) and hence requires low initial capital investment; and (c) views the virtual experience as complementary and strongly related to the physical experience of the museum space (Kallinikos, 2006).

### ***2. Main argument and objectives***

We argue that memory institutions increasingly have to produce and manage greater quantities of digitized or digitally-born material that invite a different cultural enjoyment experience. They also have to use a variety of production, digitization and distribution channels ranging from digital cameras and centrally managed web-sites, to blogs and

social software networks. Finally, they manage information infrastructures within the physicality of the cultural institution space, such as wireless networks, terminals and interactive installations.

As a result, the experiencing of a memory institution is often initiated before the visit to the physical premises of the relevant institution (e.g. by visiting the relevant web-site or blog), it has moments of hybrid interaction (taking of digital photos, participation in interactive on-line, in site exhibitions) and may be extended *post* the physical visit (e.g. through uploading of the digital or further material on relevant social software networks) (Doherty, 1998; 2004).

Such experience involves (a) low/ mid-quality, mass-scale digitization, (b) the creation of massive in scale but micro in their production taxonomies of the material and (c) possibly the production of value-added material by social groups or individuals for existing or new exhibitions (Bishop, 2006). The management of this low-level, *mass-micro* digitization and *folk-curation* requires an alternative mode for managing the relevant material. It also questions the relationship between such new material and the existing traditionally made digital material. Finally, it calls for an investigation of the relevant legal infrastructures that could support such vision.

Objective of this paper is to explore and present a three tier-model for fostering such a paradigmatic shift on the basis of existing practices in some of the key UK memory institutions: First, we present the economic model underlying this participatory and digital-physical mode of experiencing memory institutions, the Commons Based Peer Production model (Benkler, 2002). Second, we refer to the existing technology infrastructures used by a selected range of UK institutions tacitly embarking in the exploration of such a model. Third, we identify the key legal instruments (open content licences, contributors' agreements and copyright policies) that are most likely to support such practices. Fourth, we trace flows of works and rights within the relevant institutions in order to create "value maps" and indicate strategies making the most out of Web 2.0 technologies for culture and memory organizations.

### **3. Conclusion**

The paper concludes by sketching the current adoption trends for such a model by the UK cultural sector and by identifying key areas where further research and experimentation are required. It emphasizes the need for a comprehensive creative, techno-economic and legal account of the operation of participatory curation and highlights the main components of a relevant strategy.

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