DECOLONIZING CREATIVITY: A CROWDSOURCING PROJECT ABOUT CREATIVITY AS SURVIVAL

Adriana A. de Souza e Silva
North Carolina State University, USA

Kelsey Dufresne
North Carolina State University, USA

Mai Nou Xiong-Gum
Furman University, USA

Creativity is a "hot" topic nowadays. An increasing number of trade publications aim at teaching people "how to be more creative." However, most current accounts of creativity are embedded within capitalist and westernized modes of production and consumption. Creativity becomes, then, a catch all word for enticing people to work harder, beat the competition and be successful in the workplace (Anderson et al., 2014; Steiber & Alänge, 2013). Following this perspective, creativity is often characterized as something that is achieved by intense individual concentration and contemplation—making it an activity for those with the time, money, and resources to be creative (Amabile, 1996). However, creativity also happens outside of this traditional view. Creative practices emerge within situations of hardship, where there is a lack of time, money, and resources. These practices are deemed illegal or subversive and have frequently been described as appropriation, but not "creative" (Bar et al., 2016; de Souza e Silva et al., 2011; Farman, 2014). When slum dwellers in favelas or forced migrants in make-shift dwellings repurpose technology to improve their living conditions, they are not only appropriating technology: they are both collectively recreating their context with technology and re-inventing themselves.

Within this context, creativity can be understood as a process that relies on networked resources and mobility within an environment that connects people and technologies. For example, in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, where walking paths are unpaved and access to wheelchairs are limited, Safwan Harb looked to his surroundings to create an electric bike made from spare parts (Copestake, 2016). In doing so, he was not just inventing a wheelchair-bike—he was making mobility possible by re-creating

himself alongside the mobile-wheelchair/bike. Understanding creativity from a decolonial perspective means removing the focus from the individual as innovator (as well as the profit-oriented goal), and instead highlighting the ongoing networked relationships among people, technologies, and spaces. This creative process is not concerned with the creation of new things. Rather, it is about the mobility and networking of resources that can improve lives and facilitate survival strategies.

To explore this idea of creativity as a collective and networked process, we have created a PubPub website[1] to crowdsource examples from around the world. Following de Souza e Silva and Xiong-Gum (2020), we named this resource Mobile Networked Creativity Repository. Our goal is to decolonize traditional ideas of creativity, by building a crowdsourced repository of creative practices that emerge from a process of survival.

PubPub is an open-source, online publishing platform that prioritizes community-generated knowledge sharing. It is a low-barrier entry method to share information and knowledge within one's community of learners—in our case, individuals interested in creative practices that occur outside traditional corporate and profit-oriented domains. Once content is published on PubPub, it can be viewed, read, and shared by anyone with access to the Internet via a computer or a mobile device. Moreover, PubPub, as a collaborative web platform (Bakardjieva & Gaden, 2012; Jenkins et al., 2009), offers support for sharing, integrating, and embedding all sorts of digital content—particularly multimodal media.

We developed the digital housing's format to accomplish four main goals: (1) explain Mobile Networked Creativity for a broad and non-academic audience, (2) share previous research and materials about this topic, (3) ask the audience to contribute to the collection, and (4) display the crowdsourced examples from the audience.

In building our PubPub housing, we were especially interested in collecting publicly-identified instances of Mobile Networked Creativity to support the development and accessibility of a broad collection of examples found across the world. Currently, the contribution format encourages potential participants and contributors to describe and share their instance of Mobile Networked Creativity through a Google Form linked from the PubPub website. On the form, individuals are asked to describe their example of Mobile Networked Creativity and explain its relevance. We are particularly concerned about accessibility and giving people with lower levels of literacy opportunity to contribute. Therefore, participants have the option to upload an audio file instead of writing a text. In addition, they have the option to upload media files, such as photos and videos, to better describe their contribution. Finally, participants can add the geographic location of their contribution and the time frame of the event or example, if pertinent. After reviewing submitted entries, out team uploads the most representative ones to the PubPub website. Through the ease of integrating media, we hope to continue compiling various videos, audio files, images, and more to help further develop this repository of Mobile Networked Creativity instances. We plan on rotating the various

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[1] https://mobilenetworkedcreativity.pubpub.org/

submissions on the main page of the PubPub housing, while also maintaining access to all submissions for the public through the Examples page.

Such practices of maintaining and displaying publicly documented and accessible materials corresponds to UNESCO's recommendations for open science for more equitable and collaborative knowledge sharing (UNESCO, 2021).

Keeping in mind that most Mobile Networked Creativity processes occur outside Global North and English-speaking contexts, we are in the process of translating the PubPub into different languages, such as Spanish, Portuguese, and Mandarin. In doing so, we hope to be able to not only to collect examples from all around the world, but also to reach an audience outside of traditional Global North contexts. The ultimate goal of the project is to include a diversity of communities in conceptualizing creativity outside traditional capitalist contexts, as well as making them aware that non-traditional ways of using and appropriating technology are also creative, and should be valued as such.

In this presentation, we will describe the conceptualization and development of our online repository of Mobile Networked Creativity examples, focusing on how open science knowledge and crowdsourced information can help and inform non-traditional creative processes.

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