

Local Media Mapping in Media and Communications Studies: The Brisbane Media Map

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Abstract

This paper attends to two key policy issues in the media and communications sector, and focuses on an innovative case study through which both are being addressed. The case study here is the Brisbane Media Map (<http://bmm.qut.edu.au>), a student-produced online directory of the Brisbane area's media and communications industry and services. The Brisbane Media Map (BMM), now in its sixth year, is a response to two related policy problems in the media and communications sector particularly, as well as in the creative industries sector more broadly. The first problem arises from shifts in tertiary education policy in a knowledge economy environment: how can curriculum and learning design successfully prepare students for work in the rapidly-evolving media and communications sector? The second problem relates to the visibility and development of the creative industries sector. What are the industry development requirements of a range of industries that have been hitherto overlooked in policy making for the knowledge-based economy, and how can these industries be made empirically visible? How can the significance of the highly productive media and communications sub-sector be made visible – to policymakers and funding allocators, as well as to industry members themselves - when existing economic activity measures are not yet calibrated to empirically account for the value and presence of creative industries?¹ This paper focuses on two media and communications problems, and on a project which is successfully responding to both.

¹ Discipline-specific debates about how to incorporate 'new' media into the pedagogical repertoire of Australian media, communication, and cultural studies courses are another important influence on the BMM project. This theme is not developed in depth here, but it remains important, and has been discussed elsewhere (see Spurgeon and O'Donnell 2003; Foth, Severson & Spurgeon, 2006).

Introduction

This paper attends to two key policy issues in the broad media and communications sector, and focuses on an innovative case study through which both are being addressed. The case study here is the Brisbane Media Map (<http://bmm.qut.edu.au>), a student-produced online directory of the Brisbane area's media and communications industry and services. The Brisbane Media Map (BMM), now in its sixth year, is a response to two related policy problems in the media and communications sector particularly, as well as in the creative industries sector more broadly. The first problem arises from shifts in tertiary education policy in a knowledge economy environment: given the rise to prominence of employment as a key graduate outcome at both federal and individual institutional policy levels, how can curriculum and learning design successfully prepare students for work in the rapidly-evolving media and communications sector? The second problem relates to the visibility and development of the creative industries sector. What are the industry development requirements of a range of industries that have been hitherto overlooked in policy making for the knowledge-based economy, and how can these industries be made empirically visible? To date, creative industries research has shown that established media firms and new media firms engaged in digital content creation are key engines of economic growth and important institutional hubs within the wider creative industries. Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCTIA) creative industries research indicates that 'certain firms, operating principally in the established media, are key to the industry, as well as some smaller enterprises which have a leading role in the development of digital content and applications' (2004, vol. 1, p. 12). But how can the significance of the highly productive media and communications sub-sector be made visible – to policymakers and funding allocators, as well as to industry members themselves - when existing economic activity measures are not yet calibrated to empirically account for the value and presence of creative industries?² This paper, then, focuses on two media and communications problems, and on a project which is successfully responding to both.

The Brisbane Media Map

Before discussing the policy issues with which the BMM deals, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the BMM itself. Initiated in 2000 by Dr Christina Spurgeon as part of the Queensland University of Technology's (QUT) Faculty of Creative Industries' Media and Communication programme, and now managed by Dr Christy Collis with technical design and development by Marcus Foth, the BMM is an online resource which is updated annually by final-year undergraduate and coursework postgraduate students. The resource comprises dynamically searchable profiles of over 500 firms and organisations in the Brisbane area, and has proved popular with students, industry professionals, and job-seekers: since 2003, the site has attracted an average of over 1250 hits per day. The BMM makes visible fine-grained information about the media and communications sector in Brisbane, including its

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active geographical, historical, and institutional dynamics. Rather than relying solely on Australian New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZIC) listings for its core data – problems with which are taken up in this paper – the BMM draws upon a variety of resources such as student-conducted industry interviews, online research, and industry body directories in order to ensure that its listings are reflective of the current state of the sector. The BMM also features numerous ‘media issue commentaries’ which provide a critical framework for the otherwise strictly empirical information contained in the resource. Although the BMM features a cartographic map of Brisbane which spotlights specific cluster sites, or ‘hot spots’, it is, as Spurgeon and O’Donnell (2003) note, primarily a conceptual rather than a geographical map: the various categories and subcategories into which individual firms’ entries are entered reflect the students’ understandings of the organisation of the local sector. Just how this resource works to address the two key policy problems of training and sectoral visibility is the focus of this paper.

Problem #1: Media and Communications Education in the Knowledge Economy

In 1987, the Hawke Government created the United National Systems policy for tertiary education, a move which continues to have a significant impact on media and communications programmes today. At the core of the Systems policy were two key imperatives: that university offerings become ‘vocationally relevant’, and that graduates’ facility with new information and communications technologies become crucial national economic drivers of the emerging knowledge economy (Putnis et al 2002, p. 7). These two imperatives are clearly related: recognising the increasing economic importance of communications industries, the policy encouraged the vocational skilling of graduates in the area. Students’ recognition of the importance and strength of the media and communications sector is clearly reflected in enrolments: between 1989 and 2001 enrolments in media and communications courses trebled, and postgraduate enrolments quadrupled (Flew 2004, p.111). Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) policy recommendations for higher education signal the continuing focus on graduate employability in a knowledge economy, making it a priority for universities to respond to ‘new skills and knowledge requirements from the knowledge economy and emerging industries’ (DEST 2005, p. 85). The question for educators in this policy and industrial environment, then, is how can teaching and learning best be designed to competitively equip students for employment in the knowledge economy? What skills are required and how can they be developed? For educators working in the field of media and communications - among the cornerstone disciplines of the knowledge economy - these questions are particularly pressing.

One of the key issues within the question of learning and curriculum design is the nature of the industrial sector for which media and communications educators are equipping and preparing students. The impact of ICTs, and in particular of media convergence, means that solely providing students with specific skill sets for traditional media and communications professions such as journalism, television, or advertising is no longer a means to fulfil the policy imperative of vocationally relevant education. Media and communications work, as Putnis et al note, is increasingly hybrid and multimodal (Putnis et al 2002, p. 18), and is likely to be dispersed across numerous industrial sectors such as law and business (Flew 2004, p.

119) as well as in traditional ‘heartland’ sectors such as broadcasting. In recognition of the media and communications sector’s rapid evolution, the Nelson Review of Higher Education advised educators that their task was to equip graduates with ‘emerging skills and knowledge...[for] roles yet to be envisaged’ (DEST 2002, p. 13). The policy bind into which programme and curriculum designers are put here is clear: they must generate vocationally-relevant education for unspecified, amorphous vocations! At an institutional level, one policy response to this problem has been the replacement of highly-specific graduate skills with more generic, flexible graduate attributes. Graduate attributes ‘go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses’ (Bowden et al 2000). Graduate attributes for media and communication students at QUT, for example, include the ability to understand and to undertake content creation; collaborative skills; the ability to develop and maintain value-adding social and professional networks; and an understanding of media and communications institutions, policies, technologies, and audiences. Yet under the umbrella of these broad policy and outcome statements, educators and programme designers are left with the specific question: how to translate these into actual courses and assignments? As we explain in the second half of this paper, the Brisbane Media Map is one specific response to the embedded issues of vocationally-relevant educational design for the evolving, and important, media and communications sector.

Problem #2: Locating Media and Communications in Creative Industries

The second problem relates to methods for inventorying the creative industries sector in general, as well as the location of media and communications industries within the larger, emergent policy discourse of ‘creative industries’. This term is shorthand for a new approach to framing development strategies for the increasingly ‘weightless’ (Coyle 1999) content, cultural and design industries. Although the specific activities covered by this description vary between different national policy contexts, creative industries as a sectoral definition generally serves to draw attention to the strategic importance of creative inputs in contemporary social and economic development. As societies and economies have rapidly informationalised, services have usurped the place of commodities as the sources of new wealth creation. Knowledge-intensive services, such as the creative industries of advertising, architecture, design, fashion, audiovisual media, broadcast media, interactive media, publishing and music, are now high-value sites and sources of economic competitive advantage. Creative industries are now widely recognised as sources of innovative, high-value applications (for example, Lennon et al 2005, p. 4; Howkins 2001, p. 52) of central importance to new wealth creation strategies. Among other things, creative industries often extend the productivity of the ‘hard’ infrastructural achievements of the applied sciences, but the importance of creative industries is not immediately apparent in existing measures of economic activity. Consequently, creative industries are at risk of being under-valued in governments’ decision making process, and industry-based development opportunities are also missed (DCITA 2004, vol. 2, p. 36). Various factors contribute to this structural under-valuing of creative industries. Two main factors considered here are problems of quantitative and qualitative industry sector research. The first is the problem of statistical accountability and

visibility. Related to this is a second problem of the qualitative visibility of specific, local creative industries ecologies.³

Various claims have been made about the global significance of creative industries (for example, Rifkin 2000, p. 52). Creative industries are estimated to have grown in value to the Australian economy from ten to eighteen billion dollars (or from 2.2 to 3.3 percent of GDP) between 1995 and 2000 (DCITA 2004, vol. 1, p. 18). State governments have accepted their strategic value in economic planning (for example, QLD Department of State Development 2004). However the case for creative industries has generally been constrained by the absence of ‘robust’ data (Howkins 2005, p.119). This last point is one of the policy problems addressed directly by media mapping. There are significant limits upon schemes of national economic data collection which mean they have generally not kept pace with the shift to the knowledge economy. The most substantial and sustained Australian creative industries study to date, the Creative Industries Cluster Study auspiced by DCITA, paid particular attention to this problem, focussing on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) industry data classification ANZSIC scheme which, in turn is based upon the industrial scheme used by Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries. This classification is intended to provide indicators about the industrial base of the Australian economy, but is ‘a somewhat dated industrial classification’ (DCITA 2004, vol. 2, p. 27). Last updated more than fifteen years ago, it provides reliable indicators for old industrial economy trends in agriculture, mining, construction, utilities and manufacturing industries, but relegates services to a residual ‘garbage can’ category of economic statistics (Flew 2005, p. 122). Similarly problematic is the absence of any concept of digital content (DCITA 2004, vol. 2, p. 15). While the ABS does have a Service Industries Survey programme in place, these surveys fail to account for all sectors of the creative industries, and further, surveys of each service industry are conducted only every three years (DCITA 2004, vol. 2, p. 37). The ANZSIC was augmented in 2001 with the Australian Culture and Leisure Classification (ACLC) in order to track the economic significance of cultural industries. However, data has never actually been collected using the ACLC categories. Rather, data collected in the ANZSIC has been shoehorned into the ACLC. The ANZSIC ‘silo’ approach means that important creative industries trends are not captured by the ABS. These include:

- the emergence of new intermediate markets and industries
- the recursive shaping of services by user communities
- the internationalisation of service markets (Cunningham et al 2003).

DCITA was able to generate broad descriptions of creative industries from ABS ANZSIC data. For example, it identified some 7000 businesses in the creative industries, which employed about 76,000 people with outputs worth \$2100 million (DCITA 2004, vol. 1, p. 27). However, significant concerns remain about the general under-representation of creative industries in the ANZSIC scheme. A revised OECD classification scheme that incorporates information sectors is due to be adopted in 2007, with a similar new scheme to be implemented in Australian and New Zealand at about the same time (DCITA 2004, vol. 2, p. 17). In the meantime, national governments, including the Australian Government, wishing to steer a knowledge-

³ The term ‘ecology’ was coined by Moore (1998) to refer to an extended system of connected and mutually supportive organisations. It is used here to highlight the numerous articulations within the sector itself, as well as the sector’s evolving nature.

based economic development course, have prioritised filling these gaps in knowledge by other means (see for example Pratt 2004).

One of the key recommendations made by consultants to the DCITA creative industries cluster study is that a variety of systemic approaches to researching creative industries need to be applied with a view to generating new insights on their structures, geographies, and linkages between their various component parts, not just the elements that comprise the points of production, distribution, and consumption of a given creative industries value chain (see also Lennon et al 2005, p. 10-11). This extends to the use of qualitative research methods to assess the influence of intangibles upon creative industries, such as research and development, organisational structure, and lifestyle factors that maintain educated and skilled creative workforces in a given location. This key information can be hard, or not impossible, to extract from ABS data in the way in which it is currently collected and organised.

The ANZSIC scheme also under-represents creative industries because it skews towards large businesses. While there are large creative industries firms, with media and communications firms particularly notable among this number, the DCITA study also found that most creative industries firms are in fact small businesses, and many are very small 'micro' businesses. In order to get a sense of the extent of ANZSIC under-reporting of creative industries, DCITA turned to directories including the *Yellow Pages*, the *Encore* directory of film and television industry services, and databases compiled by agencies such as the Australian Interactive Media Industry Association, and Multimedia Victoria (DCITA 2004, vol. 1, pp. 28-30). From these sources the cluster study researchers could garner important additional information about the number of firms; their practices of self-identification and definition within creative industries sub-sectors, for example, as multimedia businesses; and the consistency of geographical distribution and clustering patterns with those suggested by ANZSIC data (DCITA 2004, vol. 1, p. 30). The directories also helped to confirm a key finding of the report: that 'cluster development in the Australia (sic) creative industries is embryonic and patchy' (vol. 1, p. 39); it also affirmed the value of clustering as an industry development strategy.

Although they cannot be relied upon for statistical accounting purposes, it is useful to reflect upon why it is that directories have proven to be valuable qualitative aids to creative industries research, and how this bears upon the problem of how qualitative research can improve the visibility of creative industries. In the first instance, directories are created for the purpose of aiding discoverability. They are informational resources that facilitate communication, exchange, networking and comparison. Directories are important to the functioning of the soft infrastructure of creative industries as well as to the wider knowledge economy. It is for these reasons that the directory form also finds application as a valuable foundation for mapping the dynamics of specific local cluster ecologies.

The Brisbane Media Map: Structure and Design

The Brisbane Media Map is a web-based application written in HTML, PHP, and MySQL. It comprises three interacting components:

- the front end website that displays both static and dynamically generated information that users request through browsing or searching the site;
- the Database Management System (DBMS) that allows registered users, that is, students and teaching staff, to manipulate data sets, such as inserting and updating company profiles, adding photos, and revising classification categories; and
- the database that stores textual information and photos and responds to search queries.

The core of the BMM is a dynamic directory of company profiles researched and compiled by students. Each profile includes information fields such as company name, synopsis of core activity, address and contact details, ownership, market, company value, revenue sources, turnover, number of staff, detailed description, and history. Additional fields used for administrative purposes are added that store information about the author of the profile, the modification date and peer validation of the profile. This data is visible through the BMM's front end. The BMM's homepage lists categories that provide a starting point for browsing and accessing company profiles. Categories and sub-categories divide Brisbane's media industry into more defined segments as illustrated in Table 1. The number in brackets indicates the number of entries per category; however, a company profile can be listed in multiple categories. The total number of records in the Brisbane Media Map version 6 (2005) is 510.

Print	Broadcast	Audiovisual	New Media
Newspapers (31) Magazines (18) Street Press (14) Publishers (10) Organisations & Associations (11)	Radio (24) Television (8) Organisations & Associations (16)	Production (30) Distribution (6) Cinema (11) Organisations & Associations (9)	Games & Leisure Software (13) Electronic Publications (12) Web Developers (31) Internet Service Providers (22) Organisations & Associations (5)
Music	Community	Media Services	Governance
Record Labels (20) Distribution & Retail (20) Production (23) Publications & Promotion (15) Venues (26) Festivals (9) Organisations & Associations (8)	Cooperative (10) Disability (10) Ethnic (6) Indigenous (6) Protest (3) Queer (9) Religious (11) Festivals & Events (18) Organisations & Associations (7)	Marketing, Advertising & PR (33) Media Planners & Buyers (6) Image & Graphic Providers (23) Intellectual Property (22) Education & Training (19)	Regulatory & Advisory Bodies (16) Funding Bodies (11) Industry Organisations & Associations (36)

		Research Resources (14) Organisations & Associations (18)	
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Table 1: Category structure of the BMM v6. (n) = number of entries.

At the beginning of each semester students are required to review and revise the particular scheme of industry knowledge as it is represented in the inherited category structure. They need to generate a definition and photographic representation of each category and sub-category. The Media Map system allows for a dynamic re-definition of categories from one student cohort to the next and for company profiles to be assigned to multiple sub-categories. Advanced search functions such as boolean and alphanumeric provide further means of finding specific entries or generating queries in order to compile customised lists of companies.

The second major component of the Media Map system is designed to provide users with a rich and topical reportage of current media issues through short essays and commentaries that students write and upload. These commentaries are categorised by research themes that students define in the beginning of the semester. The current list of research themes is:

- **Audience:** Commentaries regarding spectators, listeners and readers of media and their behaviour
- **Culture:** Commentaries regarding art, beliefs, institutions and behaviour patterns
- **Governance:** Commentaries regarding automotive bodies, their administration, regulating, and interaction with media
- **Industries:** Commentaries regarding various sectors of the production and sale of media
- **Services:** Commentaries regarding various facilities and organisations whose functions support media activities
- **Technology:** Commentaries regarding the various ways technology influence media

Media commentaries are also associated with industry categories. This allows users to not only view a representation of company profiles of a specific industry sector but also to access manually researched and compiled reports that target the industry sector that the user is currently browsing.

A recent addition to the Media Map system is an evolving component that tries to capture the dynamic clusters of certain industry segments – referred to as ‘Hot Spots’. Media hot spots are geographic areas of economic growth where businesses along the same horizontal or vertical value chain co-locate. A prototype that combines geographical information on hot spots with media industry data generated from the existing database was added to the BMM in 2003 and refined in 2004 and 2005.

However, its full potential as envisaged by students in their concept briefs is yet to be fully realised.

Most of the information that is published on the Media Map website can be manipulated through the DBMS – an administrative back end site to which only registered students and the teaching staff have access. The core of the DBMS is the Media, which provides an easy way to insert and update records of company profiles. Each user can be given different access privileges. Users on the administrator level can also delete records, while students cannot. This means there is no risk of students inadvertently deleting or over-writing the work of other students. Media categories, hot spots and media commentaries can also be manipulated through the DBMS. There is also a section to view user feedback submitted through the BMM's front end, and an 'Admin' module which allows administrators to add users, to view total contributions per user, and to grant or revoke user access privileges.

The BMM is thus specifically designed to serve several key functions. First, it has become a valuable and popular local resource for students, researchers, and industry members. Second, it directly addresses the two problems discussed in the first half of this paper. Just how it does so is the focus of the paper's second half.

Solution #1: The BMM and Knowledge Economy Education

The Brisbane Media Map is a direct response to the problem of providing vocationally relevant learning for media and communications students. Two key aspects of the BMM project differentiate it from more traditional tertiary offerings: its contributing student approach, and its authentic learning focus. The combination of these two elements results in a course which equips students for media and communications employment as well as contributes to the sector itself.

One of the key shifts in media and communications pedagogy has been the shift away from both abstract philosophical approaches (traditionally the domain of Media Studies courses) and highly-specific skills development approaches (traditionally the approach of practically-oriented courses such as film and radio production) towards courses aimed at equipping students to work in a rapidly-evolving, multimedia, and often project-based industrial environment. According to Gunther Kress (1997), this means that educators need to change their focus from training students to critique existing media and communications products to assisting students to develop their multi-modal literacies by designing their own. Betty Collis (2005) argues that educating students for knowledge economy employment requires a significant shift in pedagogy: rather than learning how to *listen*, she argues, students need to know how to *do*; rather than learning how to work in isolation, students need to know how to work in multidisciplinary teams; and rather than acquiring information, students need to become co-contributors engaged in the production of knowledge-based resources. The development of 'authentic learning' has emerged as a key pedagogical modality through which to address these general knowledge economy requirements, as well as the vocational imperatives of federal and institutional educational policies. Authentic learning involves student participation in real-world projects; it is often referred to as 'generative learning because the

completion of the task requires the students to generate other problems to be solved' (Herrington, Oliver & Reeves 2003, p. 61).

The BMM project is an entirely authentic learning task: over the course of one 13-week semester, students must evaluate the existing version of the BMM, critically comparing it against the current topography of Brisbane's media sector as well as against the needs of end users; generate their own taxonomical groupings to accommodate the diversity of Brisbane's media organisations and firms; redesign the site; research and re-write over 500 records; and finally, re-launch the resource. Herrington, Oliver, and Reeves identify ten characteristics of authentic learning activities, among which are 'real world relevance', 'complex tasks to be investigated by students over a sustained period of time', 'the opportunity to collaborate', and 'the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives using a variety of resources' (Herrington, Oliver, and Reeves 2003, pp. 61-2). The latter two characteristics are particularly relevant to media and communications education, as they are two key attributes required in the diverse sector. The BMM project clearly comprises these characteristics, putting the design and creation of a popular public resource almost entirely in the students' collective hands. In involving students in an authentic, project-based collaborative task which culminates in the creation of a major digital resource, the BMM responds successfully to the policy imperative of vocationally-relevant tertiary education for the media and communications sector.

The second of the BMM project's responses to federal and institutional educational policies is its 'contributing student' approach. While pedagogical scholarship across the disciplines is increasingly recognising the value of constructive, interactive learning over more conventional broadcast methods (see, for example Collis and Moonen 2002; Jonassen et al, 1999), educators working in the creative industries generally and in media and communications specifically are particularly aware of the relevance of this approach. The previous paragraph discussed the strength of the BMM's authentic learning approach to media and communications education and training; the BMM project further works to build graduates' employability and the up-to-date quality of its course content through its 'contributing student' orientation. Training for employment in the media and communications sector is as much about learning about the sector itself as it is about learning about the various skills required to work within it. The BMM project makes students thoroughly aware of the shape and internal dynamics of the diverse sector in which they will likely seek employment. It is difficult for educators to maintain a thorough awareness of, or to teach the complexities of, a rapidly-evolving sector comprised of numerous small to medium enterprises, large firms, as well as branches of major corporations: firms come and go, new sub-sectors emerge, and funding bodies change. Given the workloads of the majority of tertiary educators, attempting to stay on top of this entire sector is a near-impossible task. Yet it remains crucial to provide students a comprehensive insight into the media and communications sector, both so that they can seek employment, and so that they can mobilise their knowledge of the sector once they are working within it.

The BMM project answers these issues by providing students with the opportunity to investigate the sector comprehensively: within the project, each student works as a member of several teams, each of which focuses on a separate subsector of Brisbane's media industries. One student, for example, might be a member of the

street press, games design, education, and film funding bodies teams. What makes the project particularly productive in terms of education and graduate employability is that the students' collective knowledge is then deployed for use within the sector itself: students not only learn about Brisbane's media sector, but also become contributing members of it. The contributing student approach—which relies on the mobilisation of students' input and combined skills—thus equips graduates for futures in the dynamic media and communications sector of the evolving knowledge economy.

Solution #2 Accounting for the sector: the BMM and media industries visibility

The Brisbane Media Map is a resource which is used by Brisbane-based students and researchers alike to discover many things about media and communications industries that more abstract national statistics do not necessarily reveal. Importantly, the resource also exists to support navigation of Brisbane's media and communications industries. Increased visibility also serves to stimulate creative industries activity in the form of information dissemination, communication flows and networking. For example, a number of firms profiled in the BMM have taken the initiative to notify of changes in details – especially contact information – via the site's feedback mechanism. Each year there are also requests from firms not yet in the BMM to be included. All firms profiled in the BMM know that they are there. None has ever requested to be removed from it, even during a period in which the site was being heavily harvested for email addresses by spammers (a problem that has since been rectified). Anecdotal evidence from former students now working as media planners and buyers confirms that the BMM is valued by major media planning and buying companies as a guide to niche media because it provides otherwise-unavailable details about the very dynamic local media scene. We also know that the BMM is highly valued by media and communications students as a resource that supports articulation from university into the creative industries. Students from a variety of institutions use it to prepare themselves for approaching firms for placements and employment opportunities. As already suggested, there is also significant potential value in the BMM as the basis of a qualitative mapping instrument for the rapidly changing media and communications cluster in Brisbane. Furthermore, it is scalable and can be grown to encompass a wider creative industries cross section than media and communications.⁴

⁴ Since the development of the Brisbane Media Map system reached a more sophisticated user experience by the end of 2003, it has attracted interest from other institutional partners nationally and internationally. After some preliminary discussions to solve licensing issues and develop a universally applicable Media Map shell that interested parties could transfer, modify, populate and customise to suit their needs, the system has been successfully installed at higher education institutions in Sydney and Melbourne, as well as at one institution in Malmö, Sweden. Expressions of interest have been received from additional institutions. This opens up two other exciting possibilities for media industry mapping. First, there now exists a nascent distributed media mapping innovation system, whereby knowledge of experiences as well as improvements in technical operation or learning outcomes can be shared amongst participating institutions. Second, the possibility of working with new and existing partners to inter-link different Media Map systems into a federated database for the purpose of generating cross-national data and comparative analyses also exists.

The pace of change of the knowledge economy broadly, and of the media and communications sector more specifically means many new creative industries have developed under the radar of existing industry policy. Others come under the Australian cultural policy rubric. While cultural policy had economic side effects that also boosted various creative industry sub-sectors, the cultural policy approach also obscured commercial cultural services and prescribed the possibility of culture as an important site of research and development in the ‘new’, knowledge-intensive services economy. In any event, national cultural policy frameworks are now being displaced by the requirements of rule-based international trade and supranational governance. However, there is one important methodological legacy of cultural policy research that will endure in the creative industries context, and that is cultural mapping.

Mapping is an approach to data collection that began to be applied in Australian and UK local community, regional and national cultural policy contexts from the mid-1980s onwards (Clark, Sutherland & Young 1995; Greenhalgh 1998). It was often used for community capacity building as well as for identifying and optimising the culturally-based comparative and competitive advantages of specific locations, particularly those in need of social and economic renewal strategies in the face of rapid structural change (Pratt 2004). It was informed by an understanding of the trends to informationalise societies and economies, and the triumph of knowledge-based services over commodities as the high-value sources of wealth. Major difficulties with available data meant that the new sources of wealth creation were not recognised or well-understood.

Media mapping builds on this legacy of cultural policy inventorying methods and extends it to creative industries: it provides qualitative local information about specific industry sectors in a given location. Media mapping is thus complementary to the larger creative industries research agenda. Developing solutions to the problem of inventorying the creative industries sector is now high on the agendas of numerous groups: federal (DCITA), state, and local (see, for example Cunningham et al, 2003, a Report commissioned by the Brisbane City Council) governments and policymakers; academic researchers; economists; and industry bodies. Industry bodies are aware that their current lack of statistical visibility hinders appropriate programme and policy development, as well as allocation of government funding (DCITA 2004, vol. 2, p. 18). Similarly, government bodies that recognise the value of creative industries are frustrated by their inability to empirically ‘see’ the sectors which they desire to stimulate. It is widely acknowledged that ABS data—while requiring category adjustments—should remain a cornerstone of sectoral inventorying methods; it is also acknowledged that ABS data urgently require supplementation by other, different kinds of information. DCITA’s 2004 *Creative Industries Cluster Study* argues this point clearly, stating that there is a pressing ‘need to supplement the statistics that ABS is able to provide’ (2004, vol. 2, p. 38). In particular, DCITA calls for ‘qualitative and forward-looking’ supplements (2004, vol. 2, p. 39). QUT’s ongoing *Mapping Queensland’s Creative Industries* project is working to develop alternative inventory methodologies by focussing on local clusters and on the numerous inputs of creative industries firms and workers to the wider economic ‘value chain’ (Lennon et al 2005, p. 10-11).

The BMM is a second important resource aimed at filling in some of the gaps—both information and conceptual—in existing inventory methods and data. This resource works to accomplish this in two key ways. First, the BMM is highly focussed: it restricts its inventory to media and communications organisations in the greater Brisbane area. This sectoral and geographical focus is strategic: it allows a fine-grained view into the rapidly-evolving dynamics of a single local industrial ecology, whose specificities are different in both subtle and more obvious ways from broader national sectors and trends. Second, the BMM highlights the numerous category cross-overs and overlaps occupied by Brisbane’s media and communications organisations. While ABS methods tend to situate each organisation in a single category, the BMM deliberately points up the ways in which single media and communications organisations often circulate in several categories at once. The BMM thus foregrounds the multimodal nature of media and communications organisations, and makes visible the varied articulations between Brisbane’s organisations and sub-sectors. The BMM thus signals the difficulty, and the danger of depositing organisations into sectoral ‘silos’. As a sectoral inventory tool, then, the BMM productively highlights the ‘messy’ specificities of the local sectoral ecology. In doing so, it fulfils DCITA’s stated need for supplementary and innovative inventories of the creative industries sector. The BMM also successfully provides vocationally relevant education and training for media and communications students, not simply in order to respond to an instrumentalist tertiary agenda, but more importantly, to produce a cohort of critically-thinking, analytical, informed future media and communications professionals

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