ART, TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS: TRANS–DISCIPLINARY TEAMS IN THE ARTS

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The Ancillary IPs hypothesis theorises that, despite myths to the contrary, artist regularly work in trans-disciplinary teams and this way of working is analogues to the entrepreneurial team found in business.

For the past two years I have been working with The Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) to develop and test a model for working commercially with creativity, a model where artists aren't diminished in their creative work, but are able to generate a broad range of revenue from their activity. This Ancillary IPs hypothesis theorises that, despite myths to the contrary, artist regularly work in trans-disciplinary teams and this way of working is analogues to the entrepreneurial team found in business. The hypothesis predicts that if this trans-disciplinary team is recognised while the relationships and commercialisation processes are managed within specific criteria, artists can successfully commercialise intellectual property embed in their artwork while enhancing their artistic output.

In part 1 of this paper an overview of the Ancillary IPs hypothesis is presented with a focus on the proposed five factors for successful commercial outcomes from creative practice. Part 2 tests the Ancillary IPs hypothesis against the findings of an Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) and University of Adelaide's Entrepreneurship, Commercialisation and Innovation Centre(ECIC) investigation into artists attitudes toward career, collaboration and commercial elements of their practice and a case study of the company rezon8 .

Part 1 : The Ancillary IPs Hypothesis

OVERVIEW

Unlike previous representations of the Ancillary IPs hypothesis, in this paper two separate but linked concepts are articulated to make reference to research and case studies more clear, Ancillary IPs and the Ancillary IPs Process.

Ancillary IPs occurs when, in the course of an artist pursuing their vision, they encounter a technical road block that requires the development of a technology, device, process or code. [1] These tools can then become the basis for IP commercialisation.

The **Ancillary IPs Process** addresses commercialisation of Ancillary IPs by seeking to unlock the pent up commercial value in creative activities, while ensuring sustainable ongoing creativity based on equitable trans-disciplinary collaborations.

ANCILLARY IPS: CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Creativity relies on intrinsic motivation expressed through curiosity and self directed exploration. [2] Because of this artists are internally motivated to create and discover what does not yet exist and overcome the problems that arise through that creative process. This intrinsic motivation is what drives artists to create intellectual property on an ongoing basis.

A commercialisation process benefits from high level artistic process, because this process relies on sound problem discovery [3] but problems that we did not know existed and problems that often seem unrelated to present concerns. This approach to problem finding sets artist outside of the marketing concept in a commercial sense [4], but makes them perfectly placed to deal with disruptive technology as detailed by Moore. [5] Because artists are engaged in research questions or cultural activity they are often reaching into an unknown, yet linked future. In a sense they are long range strategic problem finders. This means that artists are continually uncovering problems that will have general applicability into the future. But artists can only serve in this capacity if they are left to be creative. It is the open ended nature of creativity that underwrites its value, or to put it another way, personal creativity is diminished when put to work for someone else's ends.

Whether we acknowledge them or not Ancillary IPs are being created all the time as a part of creative practice. The hallmarks of this creative practice are the application of ideas to people, culture and society and this is why the creation of Ancillary IPs in the arts can be seen as an innovation process.

ANCILLARY IPS PROCESS: INNOVATION AND COMMERCIALISATION

The Ancillary IPs Process is based on the commercialisation of the tools that artists create to overcome technical roadblocks, not through setting them the task of applied research or commercialisation. Because of this the Ancillary IPs Process does not compromise valuable intrinsic motivation and because the tool (IP) has been created to resolve a real problem, it is just a case of finding a like problem that the tool can resolve; giving a considerable head start in the R&D process. In this way an appropriate commercial value is placed on purely creative endeavours.

This aspect of Ancillary IPs Process is what sets it about form innovations based on coincidence. The Ancillary IPs Process is not an accidental discovery of a property or application; it is a repeatable approach for any instance of creative practice.

ANCILLARY IPS PROCESS: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND COMMERCIALISATION

The Ancillary IPs Process relies on collaboration for commercialisation outcomes. This is necessary so as not to compromise the intrinsic motivation. There is a myth that artists are not interested in commercial outcomes. Artists are driven by intrinsic motivations, but this does not mean they do not value commercial activity and the revenue that can come from it. Usually artists do not wish to become business people, but they value their creative output in commercial sense.

In the Ancillary IPs Process commercialisation happens in the context of a team, much like an entrepreneurial team, enabling the artist to focus on the creative process. Artists work with technologists, business people, or any other skills they need to create work while having access to the commercial world.

By doing this, creative practice is placed in a value network as opposed to a value chain, creating a more sophisticated relationship that can transfer the tangible and intangible value. [6] It is the ongoing mutual benefit and the ability of all members of the team to focus on their intrinsic motivations that alows creativity to be successfully commercialised.

This is a trans-diciplinary approach that doesn't separate the non-applied research from an applied research process. By having an integrated approach, innovation processes can be condensed, R&D cycles sped up.

ANCILLARY IPS PREDICTS

The Ancillary IPs hypothesis predicts that if five factors are included in a commercial process then successful long term business outcomes will be possible without diminishing the intrinsic motivation that drives creativity – these are:

1. ***Invention and Innovation:*** Because Ancillary IPs are created to resolve a real problem they are closer to innovation than pure invention. There is far greater potential to find like problems than from pure invention.
2. ***Commercial Partnerships:*** There are no expectations that creative practitioners involved in the Ancillary IPs model will have business skills. While it is ideal that a level of knowledge is developed to ensure appropriate choices are made, the Ancillary IPs hypothesis is more focused on commercial partnerships.
3. ***Personal Benefit:*** There is an expectation that the creator of the Ancillary IPs will derive an ongoing and direct benefit from commercial applications. This is a part of the commercial partnership that allows for ongoing IP to be created.
4. ***Personal Vision:*** Ancillary IPs relies on the personal vision of the creative practitioner. Their value is in this vision and everything is to be done to allow them to focus on the end vision.
5. ***Process:*** Because of its importance the personal vision cannot be curbed to commercial ends. Commercial opportunities come from overcoming roadblocks, not the end result of creative work.

Part 2: The Research

In 2010 ANAT and the ECIC under took a survey of creative practitioners who had an existing connection with ANAT. The survey was entitled *"Creative Collaboration, Commercialisation and Career Study."* [7] Those surveyed had been added to ANAT's database either through choice or through participating in ANAT program. The survey itself had two key questions to uncover in relation to Ancillary IPs. One being what is the nature of collaborations in the arts? The other, what is the attitude toward commercial outcomes in the arts?

METHOD

A questionnaire was circulated to 2150 people who were on the ANAT data base, with 36 respondents.

LIMITATIONS

1. The use of ANAT's database selects people who have an interest in collaborations between art, science and technology and who have knowledge of work ANAT has undertaken in the area being investigated.
2. The number of respondents were too low to conclusively resolve the questions.

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The key findings that relate to the Ancillary IPs hypothesis were:

1. 94% of respondents answered yes to the question - "Are you interested in exploring the commercial opportunities that may evolve from, or be embedded within your creative work?"
2. 81% of respondents answered yes to the question – "Are you interested in professional development (seminars, workshops) for commercialisation and / or business developments of creative practices?"
3. That 61% of respondents collaborate with others to develop work and that 61% of collaborations for this purpose are with people outside of the arts.

While there are limitations to this research it indicates that there is a strong interest in commercial activity from some in the arts and there is a corresponding strong interest in professional development in business skills. The research also indicated that a majority of artists collaborate in creating work and that a majority of these collaborations are with people outside of the arts.

CASE STUDY

This case study was based on interviews with rezon8 founders *Jimmy McGilchrist and Darryn van Someren* between April 2010 and May 2011. rezon8 is a fast growth technology start up. In early 2010 they presented a work at Melbourne's Federation Square entitled "Swarm".

"Devised and created by Adelaide-based artist Jimmy McGilchrist and programmer Darryn van Someren, this Next Wave Time Lapse work for March uses human recognition technology and the Fed Cam live feed to create extraordinarily graceful and surreal effects. As audience members stand motionless in Federation Square, virtual butterflies will gravitate towards their on-screen image swarming around them. As the viewer moves suddenly within the frame, the butterflies will dissipate, following them for a time before fluttering off into the distance. Ulanda Blair - Next Wave" http://rezon8.com.au/case-studies

To execute this project they developed proprietary software and a unique configuration of existing hardware that placed an audience inside the digital screen, allowing the audience to use their body to interact with digital content.

Through MEGA SA's entrepreneurial, professional development program I reviewed the work of rezon8 using the Ancillary IP's hypothesis as a framework to assesses their creative work for unique intellectual property. In this case it was the software created to drive their custom configured hardware. The software was developed to resolve technical problems associated with the realisation of their art work. It was then a case of finding a like problem in a different industry where this tool could be applied.

rezon8 applied the IP to the outdoor digital signage industry. Their IP has been able to resolve the problem of measuring consumer interaction with signage as well as increasing the engagement with this advertising investment. They have built a sustainable business that is currently negotiating export of a hardware solution developed from the initial art work. The company continues to use their art practice as a combination of ongoing technology R&D and market testing of ideas and technology.

CASE STUDY CONCLUSIONS: THE FIVE FACTORS AND REZON8

1. ***Invention and Innovation:*** This factor was borne out in that the IP created for the art work could easily be applied in a different market and the application was resolved to the point that rezon8, as a commercial business, could commence commercial work immediately and within six months became a sustainable consulting business with longer term automated digital outdoor signage solution in development.
2. ***Commercial Partnerships:*** The development of this factor followed the predicated path, but also showed a deviation. In line with the hypothesis rezon8 has built strategic partnerships with other business to help deliver a complete product. They formed an entrepreneurial team made up of the core team including an advisory board, but deviated from the hypothesis by creating a virtual entrepreneurial team by including a mentoring business relationship with a business that creates animations for advertising and more distant, but none the less supportive, relationships with advertising agencies. While commercial in nature these relationships developed on the lines of strategic partnerships rather than purely transactional relationships. The other point of deviation is that the hypothesis predicts that a partnership would need to be formed with a business, or individuals that could deliver commercialisation outcomes while the artist continued a creative path. As indicated as common practice by the*"Creative Collaboration, Commercialisation and Career Study"* rezon8 was an artistic practice based on a trans-disciplinary collaboration. The core team has creative, technology and business skills supported by an in-depth professional develop experience in entrepreneurship. This built-in entrepreneurial team helped rezon8 to quickly build a functioning business with the artistic process conceptualised as research and development for the commercial outcomes. This conception of artistic practice as research and development in a commercial business builds on the existing hypothesis in an unexpected way.
3. ***Personal Benefit:*** Due to the deviation from the hypothesis of commercial partners rezon8 was able to maintain ownership and control of IP. By not having to trade a share in this intellectual property for commercialisation partners they always maintained a personal benefit from the artistic IP created.
4. ***Personal Vision:*** rezon8 fulfilled this factor in that the personal vision of the "swarm" meant that the intrinsic motivated creativity encountered technical problems, that when overcome, made up the commercial basis for rezon8. The added dimension to the model came about when this personal vision was contextualised as the research and development investment of rezon8. The new venture, rezon8, invests in the production of interactive art work for events and festivals at a loss. This investment pushes the development of technology while enabling instant, large scale customer feedback from event and festival attendees.
5. ***Process:*** While the process of integrating creativity deviated from the model, it was in sympathy with the overall concept of Ancillary IPs. rezon8 have built and develop the business through looking to the tools created in an artwork, but they have brought that art work creation into their business processes. This integration brings the business closer to the creative process, but the creative process does not produce the end product sold through the business.

Conclusion and Further Research

There are two beliefs prevalent in the arts that prevent artists from being a part of the mainstream economy and more importantly it prevents artist from making a living from their creative practices.

One is that artists do not have an interest in commercial activity. The other is that the artist is a lone creative visionary. This paper begins to reveal these beliefs as unfounded and that a much more complex relationship exists between business and the arts than is commonly recognised. This paper concludes that the Ancillary IPs hypothesis shows promise in articulating more clearly this complex relationship and how this relationship can be leveraged to benefit both artist and the economies in which they work.

The case study reveals that Ancillary IPs are clearly being created in some areas of the arts, but further case studies in other industries and other areas of the arts are need to demonstrate possible general applicability of the hypothesis. Also further research and modifications to the hypothesis are required before the Ancillary IPs Process can become a deeply applicable model. The recommendations being:

1. More rigorous research with a greater sample size needs to be undertaken to get a reliable picture of attitudes to commercialisation of IP in the arts and the nature of collaboration in contemporary creative practice.
2. That the five factors that underpin a successful Ancillary IPs Process needs to be reviewed in the light of the"Creative Collaboration, Commercialisation and Career Study" and real world cases. This review will need to take into account the potential for greater integration of commercialisation process and artistic creativity and to allow for the contextualization of artistic practise as research and development activities in a commercial enterprise. Further to this a more complex view of the entrepreneurial team needs to be considered to take into account a broader array of the types of commercial partnerships that can exist in a value network that links the artistic with the commercial.
3. The notion of knowledge transfer of the tools developed to overcome roadblocks in achieving a creative vision to like problems in other industries or markets needs to be better understood from a process stand point.

References and Notes:

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