Workshop 2

Opening-up cultural data: a driver of growth?

After the Big data revolution comes a second centered upon Open data and sharing

The first wave of the big data revolution revolved around the exploitation by organizations of their own data. The next will big breakthrough will center upon Open data – sharing proprietary data with others. Open data aims to make digital data accessible to all by structuring their distribution and lifting format and licensing constraints to facilitate their re-use. This trend, which initially involved public or scientific research data, is now sweeping companies and today opens the way to all kinds of uses.

This trend is also affecting the cultural ecosystem. In a report published in December 2013* the French Ministry of Culture and Communication said: "opening cultural data encourages the creation of innovative products and services and enables the emergence of new growth levers to develop the French cultural economy".

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* Ouverture et Partage des données publiques culturelles – pour une (r)évolution numérique dans le secteur culturel.
Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, France, December 2013

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#1 Sharing proprietary data doesn't diminish their value, but enhances it

The sharing and use in good faith of digital data on cultural behavior enables players in the cultural arena to develop new products and services, attract new audiences or build audience loyalty, and increase visits to cultural venues or content. Contrary to what most people think, digital diffusion doesn't cannibalize visitors from cultural venues.

The creation of added-value results rather from the combination and cross-matching of different data sets – internal and external – and benefits both digital and physical cultural goods and events. Coupling the power of personalization and recommendation algorithms with geolocation makes it possible to draw consumers to cultural events and goods likely to interest them.

Case Study: Bandsintown

Bandsintown is an app that marries personal and public cultural data to alert consumers to concerts they might wish to attend, based upon their preferences. It takes the form of a concert calendar created using data from the user's audio library, and offers the opportunity to buy tickets from partners.

The system first scans the user's iTunes library to create a personalized database. Then Bandsintown connects to social networks, including Facebook,Last.fm and Pandora. It expands the database and fine-tunes its selections according to what the user 'likes'. Geolocation also enables it to suggest concerts near to the user.

The app has been downloaded 7 million times from leading stores, with 4 million Android downloads and 3 million on iPhone.

Bandsintown works in a similar way to Songkick, which was created in March 2012 and which already has 8.5 million users.

#2 Opening-up and using cultural data doesn't threaten personal privacy

Use of personal cultural data is frequently associated with targeted advertising and, by extension, intrusion into personal life.

But under-exploited value-creation opportunities are more likely to be realised using a critical mass of anonymous data than by tracking individuals.

Does a publisher need to know that Mr X reads Stieg Larsson novels in order to spot the French enthusiasm for Swedish police thrillers and draw the lessons? Put another way, is it necessary to identify by name every individual who leaves a digital trail to glean the insights contained within a huge volume of data generated by an entire population?

Statistics clearly say no. Opening cultural data can offer valuable insights without the need to track individual behavior. But it must always be based upon a critical mass of data. Provided the anonymity of individuals is assured, competition between those who use the data should hinge not upon access to the data, but upon what they do with the data. In effect, the winners will be those able to develop the best algorithms and programs for sifting the data.

#3 Cooperation between actors is essential if data sharing is to deliver growth

The creation of growth via data sharing depends upon cooperation between three kinds of player:

‣ **The public administration and cultural institutions**, making public data available and resist the temptation to apply the principle of precaution and to limit access to the data;

‣ **Civil society (citizens and consumers)**, agreeing to share their data, whilst ensuring their right to privacy is respected;

‣ **Cultural and creative industries**, which have the job of using the data to invent new applications and economic models.

Collaboration between the different players will enable the creation of new services which go beyond what is possible when analyzing personal data on a stand-alone basis.

An 'app economy' has already emerged in the United States, which pioneered data opening. Governments in Europe are following suit. The Etalab initiative in France promotes the development of innovative services based upon public data: the DataConnexions community and Hackathon Dataculture event have already resulted in new apps in the cultural field.

#4 Culture is a promising sector for data opening and sharing

Sharing data in the cultural arena hits fewer obstacles than in sectors such as retailing or financial services, especially when it involves public content and is designed to help more people access cultural goods and services.

Many cultural institutions have already begun opening their data and sharing their digital assets, such as the British Library, Germany's Federal Archives and the Getty Museum.

▸ Britain's national library talks of a cloud culture and has made a million images available on photo-sharing hub Flickr since December 2013;

▸ Bundesarchiv, the German federal archives, have struck an agreement for media repository Wikimedia to make their images available under free Creative Commons licenses;

▸ The J. Paul Getty Museum in California has made publicly available 10,000 images of paintings, manuscripts, photographs, antiquities and sculptures whose copyright has expired.

Case study: the Rijksmuseum pioneers data opening

Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum became an Open data pioneer in 2011 when it made 111,000 high-quality images of works publically available. It followed that in 2012 with the launch of Rijksstudio, a platform that makes it easy to copy its works of art or create digital images.

With its Rijksstudio Award the Rijksstudio encourages users to draw inspiration from its collections to create their own artworks and share them with the museum and online visitors.

The new strategy of the Rijksmuseum has contributed to develop its notoriety and frequentation, also benefiting to the city of Amsterdam.

Data opening enables creation and sharing of works of art. Sharing of data about 'cultural behavior', such as visitor numbers, interests and profiles is not so developed, but early initiatives have shown the potential for combining such datasets.

#5 Several pre-requisites must be in place to allow the beneficial development of sharing cultural data

▸ **Change attitudes and lift operational constraints.** Though the culture of data is very strong among digital pure players (Netflix devotes 379 MUSD – 9% of its turnover – to R&D and has integrated technology and open innovation into its business model), it is still embryonic among traditional cultural institutions and businesses. For it to develop, players have to:

  ▸ **Define clear priorities and objectives** relative to sharing and using data, such as disseminating content, increasing traffic, improving the customer experience and creating new products and services;

  ▸ **Bring new talents into play** and deploy skills in data management (consolidating data from multiple sources), in statistical analytics (developing predictive analysis and recommendation algorithms) and in relationship-based marketing (improving customer experience);

  ▸ **Equip themselves with tools appropriate** to objectives and available resources;

  ▸ **Drive innovation** by organizing data sharing both internally (across the organization) and by opening-up to the external ecosystem of developers, start-ups, citizens and researchers.

▸ **Ensure all parties involved profit from data opening**

  ▸ A piece of data linked and correlated to others is worth more than a piece of data in isolation, as Pierre Bellanger points out in his contribution to the 2014 Conseil d'Etat report on digital technology and human rights. The value of data is proportional to the square of the number of pieces of data to which it is linked.

▸ Businesses increasingly see their data as a competitive advantage. This can make them reluctant to share data externally without something in return. There are various ways to increase the value of data and convince players that their data are worth more shared, including exchanging data, pricing premium databases and sharing revenues from new paid-for services.

▸ The value of data can also be a function of its timing, so a business can use data for its own benefit in real-time, and share them later without foregoing value.

▸ **Promote wider confidence in Open data**

Users of personal data, including the state, communities, businesses and individuals, must be completely transparent in collecting and using data. In particular they should:

  ▸ Make data anonymous. It must be impossible to identify the individuals who were the source of the data that is shared.

  ▸ Guarantee to all the right to respect and dignity in their private life and creations.

  ▸ Guarantee a right to withdraw consent that is easy to exercise: it must be equally easy to give and withdraw consent to use of one's personal data.

  ▸ Give everyone a right to see and check the personal data generated by their actions.

If these operating rules are respected, the precautionary principle can be set aside, to the **benefit of innovation**.

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