

The late 1990s and 2000s were marked by the emergence of the “creative industries” as the dominant paradigm in cultural policies and cultural policies studies. Both a discourse and an instrument, it was quick to spread, notwithstanding its many internal flaws and shortcomings—including, for example, its lack of consensus around key concepts, utopianism, and the overall subordination of culture to the so-called “knowledge economy” (Bouquillion, 2009). But there is more to explain how and why we might now very well be “after the creative industries” (Banks & O’Connor 2009; see also Flew & Cunningham, 2010). Times have greatly changed, and today actors in all sectors—governments and public services, as well as researchers in the field—face unprecedented challenges related to the “digimorphose” and re-intermediation of culture’s entire value chain (Hawkins et al., 1999; Chantepie & Le Dediberder, 2005). New trends and issues hints towards a new reality where disruptive technologies—i.e. new digital formats and devices, internet-related platforms, etc.—go hand in hand with the de-structuration of frontiers and territories, where distinctions between media and cultural industries are being constantly blurred, while public bodies still confront different phases of budget restrictions. As Bakhshi & Throsby put it, “digitalisation has created unprecedented *uncertainties*” (2012, emphasis added). For novel treats in terms of infringed intellectual property, to name an increasingly important phenomenon, there also appears to be increasing possibilities for reaching newer audiences, i.e. for opera houses, museums, and the like. Indeed, both cultural consumption and digital uses have been deeply renewed in the last two decades (Jenkins, 2006). In turn, all these changes profoundly affect the capacities of States and public actors to intervene in culture; more often than not, they only exacerbate the tension between the goals of promoting cultural access and supporting artists and creators.

This special issue of *The Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society* is based on the assumption that we need innovative assessments of *who does what, where and why*, when it comes to developing the field of digital cultural policies. These are currently being negotiated and implemented in many parts of the world; at the local, subnational, national, and supranational level. Different stakeholders, networks, and advocacy coalitions all take part in shaping a new ecosystem, some more than others, such as Google and Amazon. On the government side, Quebec’s cultural ministry, for instance, has developed a five-year *plan numérique* (digital plan) that finds some echo in Belgium—France for its part seems to be following its own strategic path for the moment. But what about other important players, among which the UK, Australia, the USA, and the EU? To what extent are they collaborating or even quarrelling? Which strategy finds inspiration in what plan, program, roadmap, etc.? Again, the fact of the matter is that digital cultural policies as organised regulation are still in their first faltering steps, whereas in the field of digital cultural policies research, we should acknowledge that we currently know little about such diversity and complexity.

Stakes are indeed high at the intersection of digital technologies, culture and the growing need to craft sound public policy. On the one hand, benchmarking has become increasingly fundamental, as *good practices* can travel and be adapted in different contexts, while the missteps of some can be avoid by others. For example, the EU is trying to build a digital single market through regulation, the IPR, as well as to promote net neutrality and a unique European digital Library (Europeana). On the other, more research in the field will mean not only better mapping of the different options and variations, but also the capacity to develop critical and reflexive insights on current and upcoming challenges. Comparative analysis is thus key, both in practice and in theory (Gattinger, Saint-Pierre et al., 2008; Flew, 2012). The aim of this special issue is to assemble

different perspectives and finely grained enquiries into the current state of digital cultural policies and policy-making across a large array of contexts related to the production, distribution, and consumption of digital culture, as well as geographical and institutional anchorage—perspectives and enquiries that will then dialogue with one another. The questions and topics addressed can include, but are not restricted to:

- * The current state of digital plans, strategies and consultations that address issues of digitalization across various geographical territories.
- * The issue of copyright and the state of the debate in different political arenas, in particular about open data and content belonging to the public domain.
- * The historical roots of the current debates, e.g. the differences between francophone- and anglophone-oriented approaches to cultural policies and interventions.
- * The meaning and efficacy of the different policies implemented, with regards to the values they are trying to promote, including the economic and social values of an open-data policy.
- * The inherent tension of digital cultural policies between access for consumers and support for creators, and between protectionism and expansionism.
- * The links between digital cultural policies and media and/or innovation policies. What is the role of new actors, such as Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon?
- * At the local level, how are stakeholders and regulatory bodies attempting to move past the “creative class” paradigm.
- * As many museums, libraries, opera houses, etc. around the world have launched digital platforms to attract attention, develop publics, and digitalize archives, how are these plans aggregated to inform new paths in cultural policy-making? Is this the equivalent of cultural globalization *per se*?
- * How do local, regional, national and supranational digital policies scale or imbricate with each other, and what kind of difficulties arise?
- * From an epistemological and methodological point of view, what are the advantages (and potential shortcomings) of applying a comparative framework to digital cultural studies?

The special issue will be published in the fall of 2017 —vol. 47, no. 3. The editors are Professor Jonathan Roberge (INRS–Canada’s Research Chair in Digital Culture) and Researcher Phillipe Chantepie (Innovation & Regulation of Digital Services, École Polytechnique, Telecom ParisTech, Orange), and General Inspector of the French Ministry of Culture & Media. Authors are welcome to submit abstracts to the editors by October 10th, 2016. Abstracts should be 250-500 words in length (excluding tables, figures, and references). They should be submitted to jonathan.roberge@ucs.inrs.ca and philippe.chantepie@culture.gouv.fr. Authors will be informed shortly thereafter of the committee’s decision.

Subsequently, authors asked to submit complete papers will need to submit their manuscripts by February 10th. Each manuscript should be between 4,500 and 6,000 words (including tables, figures, and references).

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