Creativity East Midlands (CREEM) Workshop 2
October 2006

The first event of the Creativity Network was held on 2nd October in the IOCT, attended by Aladdin Ayesh, Stephen Brown (convenor), Dave Everitt, Andrew Hugill, Mohammad Ibrahim, Neil McBride, Toby Moores, Monika Solanki (facilitator), Sue Thomas.

At the kick-off meeting the idea as to begin to explore the terms we use to describe creativity, to identify similarities and differences. Participants each talked about their understanding of creativity, innovation, design etc and also presented an object (a performance, a product, a piece of writing etc) and explained why it is a good example of creativity. Monika Solanki kept a record of the terms used and later these will be analysed to help us begin to organise the terms that we use and the similarities and differences in the way we use them.

The following notes briefly summarise the individual presentations and emerging themes.

Dave Everitt
Creativity: serious play
Example: Terror-o-meter

Stephen Brown
Creativity is a characteristic of design and invention. Both involve research, discovery and creativity. Design results in objects, invention results in processes and principles. Design can be purposeful or playful. Not clear what the difference is between innovation and creativity.

Example: Coca Cola bottle – creative marketing solution to lack of product identity problem.

Sue Thomas
It includes: professionalism, humour
Not everyone gets it, if they do then it's probably not very good. It makes me feel courageous.
Example: Seinfeld show on the comedy channel. First went out circa 1989. Creativity evident in characters depicted that reshape everyday situations in unfamiliar ways. E.g. the regifter who recirculates presents received from others.
Second Example: Bronze sculpture, not very creative but the product of a rich creative process. So creative acts don't necessarily produce creative objects. Links to ideas proposed by Mihaly Czikcentmihali.

Toby Moores
Creativity is a halo of ideas around the bell curve of accepted ideas. If the halo is too wide, too high, or displaced too much to the left or right then the 'cool curve' or halo will contain too many ideas that are too far outside the comfort zone of most people. So to be recognised as creative, ideas have to be not too far outside the comfort zone (although the breadth of the halo may vary.) Constraints are important for stimulating ideas.
Examples: non verbal communication ideas

Cartoon puppy figure stuck on a car window vibrates and waves as key fob with RFID tag gets closer.
Channel buddies: like IRC on TV but using a controlled vocabulary of icons rather than text to communicate.

Mohammad Ibrahim
Creativity can be viewed differently from different perspectives: the creator, the user, the implementer. Need to think about exploitation. It entails making connections between different facts, processes, ideas, objects, etc. and also between different domains sometimes.
It is not necessary for the solution to be new.
Example: patent on cryptography uses new visualisation method although the solution itself is not new.

Aladdin Ayesh
Creativity is about a different perspective. Breaking out of the box. Creativity is original breakthrough while innovation is more systematic problem solving after the initial breakthrough when followers are just being inventive rather than creative.
Example: cognitive robotic dogs. Can be taught basic skills eg. Football, but how many become a Pele or Becham?

Neil McBride
Creativity is about problem solving (in the broadest sense) and often entails using metaphors. It also includes expression, imagination. It's about shigting ahead of the culture (paradigm shift.) But need to have some audience acceptance.
Creative leap is characteristic of creativity. Some people (eg. Einstein) have only one creative leap in their life.

Andrew Hugill
Creativity is about delusion, doubt and delirium. It may entail delirious chans of bizarre reasonings. It's common to throw away 75% or output. Creativity entails creating a lot of opportunity.
Successful creatives are not afraid to make mistakes and throw stuff away.
Example: Composition – Catalogue of Frogs. Inspired/stimulated by other works and writings. Also referential.

Themes that emerged from the discussion.
Recognisability of creative ideas. Creativity needs to be recognised to some degree but if too many recognise it then its probably not very creative.
Creative acts don't necessarily produce creative objects.
Novelty (in the arts) is not the same as innovation. Cf engineering where solving the same problem repeatedly is OK because you may come up with something new.
There is perhaps no real difference between innovation and creativity, it's more to do with context: science based domains tend to talk about innovation whereas arts based domains tend to talk about creativity, but the meaning is much the same.
Etymology of terms needs to be investigated.
Social tagging may be another way of enabling a consensus to emerge.