

**Project Reports CCN+**  
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**Activities:**



The key activity within the Expertise strand in recent months has been the completion of the *Plenty as a Response to Austerity*, invited closed call project – which investigated how communities respond to, or can be helped to grasp the potential of, and issues around Big Data – both as a real phenomenon, and as a label that can be provoke anxiety and rejection.

The project produced engagement with a varied public, developed networks between public and university figures involved in thinking about big data in community terms – and also indicated the problems and barriers ‘big data’, as a concept, and as a reality, pose for community organizations.

The project developed somewhat differently than anticipated as links were developed between humanities and sociology-based researchers and team members from the Centre for the Analysis of Social Media (CASM), a collaboration involving the Text Analytics Group at the University of Sussex, based in informatics. This group is also working with Demos, the public policy group – and they also became involved. Three workshops were programmed - bringing in a wide section of the public and community organizations in Brighton to a Big Data Taster event, to which academics were also invited. Two further fully programmed workshops involving the same community constituency at which a prototype big data search tool involving real-time text stream analysis, event detection, and entity recognition using Twitter was explored, through hands on exercises, where then produced.

The workshops produced insight into public attitudes to big data, levels of understanding, possibilities for engagement, and also provided test sites for exploring how a beta tool might be developed for open community use.

As a part of the project links were developed with and between a series of hubs, organizations and groups involving themselves in Big Data and community activity – including for instance various Meet Up groups. The workshops themselves were contextualized by interviews and other empirical research work. A full report is currently being completed and will be submitted in February.

The project underspent, with some funds returned to the CCN+ project as a whole; largely because the collaboration with CASM/Demos necessitated use

of University computers, and in one case specifically a computer lab. This meant workshops took place at Sussex campus, rather than in community venues – which meant funding here was not required and other costs (catering, travel, equipment hire) were all substantially lowered.

Other strand activities included notably support for the *Austerity and US*, a community conference on media tools and Austerity, held in Brighton, May, 2014, supported by a wide range of local organizations, including e.g. the People's Assembly, groups concerned with welfare of hospitality and service sector workers, local health campaign organizations, and others.

### **Dissemination/Impact:**

#### *Relevant Publishing activities:*

Special Issue of *Convergence* on Expertise. (eds.) Bassett, Gomez Cruz, and Thornham. Tanya Kant, a doctoral student at Sussex, was employed by the project as project assistant (Forthcoming, 2015). Also contains article considering expertise and automation, co-authored with Fotopoulou and Howland, based on the earlier *Expertise* symposium.

Bassett, Caroline (2014). 'Not now? : Feminism, Technology, Post-digital', in Berry and Dieter (eds). *Postdigital Aesthetics: Art, Computation and Design*. London: Macmillan. (in print).

Bassett, Caroline and Zenerian, Lefteris, *How much is Plenty?* journal article in preparation for submission to NMS.

#### *Community Engagement/Knowledge Transfer*

Around 80 people, representing a series of community and cultural organizations have been involved in the Plenty/Austerity workshop programme, and follow up impact and dissemination activity on this is still on-going.

#### *Dissemination to Junior Academic Community:*

Caroline Bassett, Public Talk: *Are There Too Many Things?: Gender and New Media*, Oxford Internet Institute Summer Doctoral programme. (July 10th, 2014.).

Bassett, Caroline, On Whose Significance Everyone Does Not Agree. Keynote to TechnoCultures, Doctoral Student-Organized Symposium at the University of Glasgow, 19.09.2014.

Bassett, Caroline. 'Undead and Everywhere?' The Post-Digital as a response to Ubiquity. Paper presented to Doctoral Arts Seminar, Department of Media/ Media Lab Helsinki, Aalto University.

### **Budget Position:**

The Sussex 'end' of the CCN+ project still has substantial budget for activities to continue the length of the project. This is largely due to the underspend on RA time. It emerged due to (1) adherence to ruling on faculty time and (2) underspend on various day rate researchers associated with the project activities who have had a fortunate (for them) tendency to find permanent work – notably Fotopoulou, now at Lancaster University, and Howland, now at Sussex/Informatics. In both cases this meant they took on

fewer days than anticipated. The Plenty/Austerity project was funded in addition to the Expertise strand.

**Future Plans:**

Our budget position provides us with the resources to programme a series of activities in the final term of the active life the project – some of which are already underway, so that a substantial part of the budget is spoken for.

They include

1. Plans for further work on technology and feminist networks - developing work undertaken by Fotopoulou and O’Riordan on Susnet.

See e.g. (<http://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/susnet/>).

2. Four short commissioned projects designed to join the dots from earlier projects, and also fill some emerging gaps – we wish to return to age issues produced in the first Expertise report, return to Fairlight school to do a follow up on the workshop series, develop public work with archives and learning at the East Sussex Keep. Finally we wish support further work following on from the Plenty/Austerity project – specifically investigating what it would take to make the current tool, ‘self-supporting’ as a tool for public use.

3. In addition we will be drawing on the funds for internationalization projects. The first involving exploring ethics and digital technologies through a writing spring including representatives from Iceland, Finland, and the UK. (Helsinki, Spring 2015). The second more tentatively exploring issues of digital methodology with CNN+ members and researchers at Helsinki, Tampere, and the UK.

Ends.