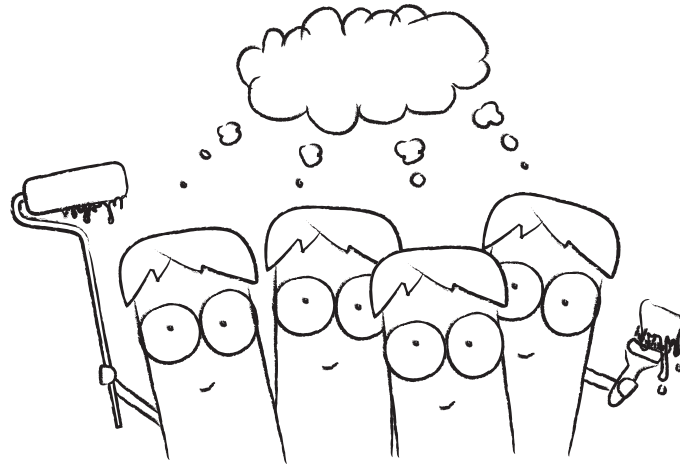


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Crowdsourcing the Production of Public Art

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Design

Massey University College of Creative Arts ~ Institute of Communication Design

Michael Denton ~ February 2010



Thesis DECLARATION

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Abstract

Many people that would like to contribute at some level towards creating art in public spaces. However little is currently being done to make use of this untapped potential.

The difficulties involved with collecting and coordinating dispersed talent often prevents it from being utilized. But now the Internet offers new opportunities to make harnessing latent talent much easier. Successful online platforms (such as Wikipedia and YouTube) demonstrate the potential value that can be derived from volunteers when appropriate systems are in place to utilize their contributions. Jeff Howe refers to this idea of harnessing distributed volunteered effort via the web as ‘crowdsourcing’. Which he explains as “the process by which the power of many can be leveraged to accomplish feats that were once the province of a specialized few” (2008).

This thesis aims to investigate how an online platform might harness voluntary contributions in order to produce public art. The design objective for this project is to develop an online platform that allows people to contribute towards creating art in public spaces. My research explores the needs and motivations of potential contributors as well as techniques for harnessing voluntary contribution and coordinating group effort.

As understanding human behaviour and user interaction is central to this project I have adopted a user-centered approach to research and development. To better understand the requirements of the proposed online platform user research was initially conducted in the form of focus groups with potential users and then via an in depth case study.

In order to tackle the challenge of designing an entire platform the process was divided into distinct elements that could be addressed individually. These elements included the core functionality, the brand identity, the structural design, the interface design, and the visual design. For each element I consider what techniques might help to better harness voluntary contribution.

The final result provides an online environment for people to get involved with specific art projects around their city. Projects are presented as separate challenges and users can contribute at many different levels such as sharing designs online, attending events, or simply providing feedback.

Contents

Abstract **iii**

Contents **iv**

INTRODUCTION

Research Question **2**

- Unpacking the question 2
- Defining Online Platforms 2
- Defining Voluntary Contributions 2
- Defining Public Art 2

Project Aims **3**

- Design Objective 3
- Research Objectives 3

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

The Potential of the Web **6**

- Connecting With Others 6
- The Social Web (Web 2.0) 6
- Reducing the Hassle of Coordinating Effort 7
- More than Just Consumers 7
- 7

The End of Bureaucracy 7

- Summarizing The Potential of the Web 7

Harnessing Voluntary Contribution **8**

- Introducing Crowdsourcing 8
- Related Ideas 8
- Crowdsourcing Examples 8

- What Can be Crowdsourced? 8
- 1. Collective Intelligence 8
- 2. Crowd Creation 10
- 3. Crowd Voting 10
- 4. Crowd Funding 10
- What Can't be Crowdsourced 10
- Why Do People Contribute? 10
- 1. Unconscious Contribution 10
- 2. Practical Solutions 10
- 3. Attachment to a Group 10
- 4. Reputation 10
- 5. Self-Expression 11
- 6. Taking Part and Influencing 11
- 7. Succeeding at a Challenge 11
- 8. Altruism 11
- Why Financial Payment can Inhibit Contribution 11
- Attracting the Right People 11
- Allowing a Spectrum of Participation 11
- Identifying Useful Contributions 12
- Summary of Harnessing Voluntary Contribution 12

Coordinating Group Effort **13**

- Barriers to Collaboration 13
- The Need For A Unifying Vision 13
- Providing Leadership 13
- Structure As Leadership 14
- Benefits of Modularity 14
- Summary of Coordinating Group Effort 14

Managing Creativity **15**

- Connecting Sparks 15
- Connectedness vs. Diversity 15
- Encouraging Creative Exploration 15
- Allow Time For Ideas To Emerge 15
- The Creative Process 16
- Summary of Managing Creativity 16

RESEARCH AND DESIGN PROCESS

Overall Approach	18		
• A User Centered Approach	18		
• Breaking Down the User Experience	18		
• Resolving Each Element	19		
Understanding the Challenge	20		
• What Needed To Be Resolved	20		
• Techniques For Solving This	20		
• Identifying The Site Objectives	20		
• Identifying User Needs	20		
• Identifying The Target Audience	20		
• Talking with Potential Users	21		
• Response from the Focus Group	21		
• Summarizing The Purpose	21		
Identifying Core Functionality	22		
• What Needed To Be Resolved	22		
• Why This Is Important	22		
• Techniques For Solving This	22		
• AOF Prioritization Method	22		
• Concepts for Core Functionality	22		
• Result	23		
• Primary Activity: Connecting artists with spaces they can paint	23		
• Social Objects: Spaces (or locations) available to paint	23		
Identity Design	24		
• What Needs To Be Resolved	24		
• Why This Is Important	24		
• Techniques For Solving This	24		
• Answering Brand Questions	24		
• Brand Pyramid	25		
• Coming Up With A Name	26		
• Result	26		
Informative Test Case	27		
• What Needs To Be Resolved	27		
• Why This Is Important	27		
• Techniques For Solving This	27		
• Finding a Space	28		
• Promoting the Opportunity	28		
• Brainstorming Project Ideas	29		
• The Brief	31		
• Developing Designs	32		
• Getting Equipment	33		
• The First Painting Session	33		
• The Second Painting Session	34		
• The Third Painting Session	35		
• Regular Painting Sessions	36		
• Public Feedback and Engagement	40		
• Findings	41		
Structural Design	42		
• What Needed To Be Resolved	42		
• Why This Is Important	42		
• Techniques For Solving This	42		
• Process	42		
• Designs	46		
• Discussion	46		
• Events	46		
• Blog	46		
• Result	46		
Interface Design	48		
• What Needed To Be Resolved	48		
• Why This Is Important	48		
• Techniques For Solving This	48		
• Layout	50		
• Language	50		
• Flow	50		
• Options and Defaults	50		
• Result	50		
Visual Design	52		
• What Needed To Be Resolved	52		
• Why This Is Important	52		
• Techniques For Solving This	52		
• Process	52		
• Result	55		

CONCLUSION

Final Screenshots	58
Summary of Findings	65
Bibliography	66

Section One

INTRODUCTION