



IETM REPORT

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ALL TOGETHER NOW

Report from the IETM Amsterdam Plenary Meeting, 14 – 17 April 2016

by Vassilka Shishkova



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All Together Now

Moderator:

Olivia Sautereau - freelance

With:

Vijay Mathew- HowlRound
Simon Hart - The Touring Network
Sara Rodriguez Marin - Ouishare

Although collaborative economy started forming a trend in recent years with services like Airbnb and Uber, it is hardly a new phenomenon. One might say without exaggeration that the Netherlands exists due to the collaborative effort of its people from Friesland, who literary conquered the land from the water, observed Olivia Sautereau, freelance performing arts manager, moderator of the session. Nowadays, information technologies, social media and mobile apps especially, have reached a level of development and spread that allows people to form

networks and to collaborate efficiently and effortlessly. One of the seven pillars of Europe 2020 is Digital Society and that what a collaborative economy network is based upon.

Collaborative economy: how it changes services, how it affects the arts

Sara Rodriguez Marin, connector at OuiShare, presented the platform and gave some details on what the state of the arts of collaborative economy is.

The OuiShare network

OuiShare is a global network and think-and-do-tank started in 2012 in Paris, now spread to 45 local groups in 15 countries on four continents. Its mission is “to build and nurture a collaborative society by connecting people, organisations and ideas around

fairness, openness and trust”. Resonating with mass disillusionment with consumerism and corporate economy after the financial crisis of 2008 and in the spirit of the Occupy movement, OuiShare insists on being a horizontal, distributed and decentralized organisation in which decision-making is based on contributions and actions. It defines its values in a way, which appeals even more to Millennials, the core of a 3000+ official individual members’ community: openness, transparency, independence, impact, meeting people in real life, action, permanent beta, feedback, play. OuiShare weaves its network of local communities through online groups, live events, summits, festivals¹. Knowledge on the new ways of the collaborative economy is generated through research and publications of OuiShare think-tanks. It has been disseminated through the OuiShare Collaborative Magazine, through its YouTube and Speaker channels. OuiShare aims to serve as an incubator of what they define as “meaningful projects and experimentations” from community members and social innovators through initiatives like OuiShare Fest, POC21, the Collaborative Territories Toolkit and by contributing to various local projects as well. OuiShare carries out many educational activities both online through OuiShare Academy and by holding classes in universities across Europe.

These efforts and recourses are aimed at promoting in society the benefits of 21st century collaborative economy and its impact on personal lives, societies, cultures, and the environment.



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¹ The list of supporters features corporations like Renault, Danone, Google, Deloitte along with airbnb, BlaBlaCar, and others. ([presskit](#))

Collaborative economy in a nutshell

Being an active connector at OuisShare, Sara Rodriguez Marin is a keen advocate of collaborative economy as well.

She explained that the terms ‘collaborative’ and ‘sharing’ economy overlap, the latter being assumed as correlating with the notion of ownership and therefore perceived as derogatory. Collaborative economy refers to modern business models but also to ways organisations function and to a lifestyle people choose². It is usually defined as practices and business models based on horizontal networks and participation of a community, transforming how people live, work and create. In the past few years collaborative models spread to a wide range of sectors, featuring companies and communities in consumption, learning, production, finance, governance.

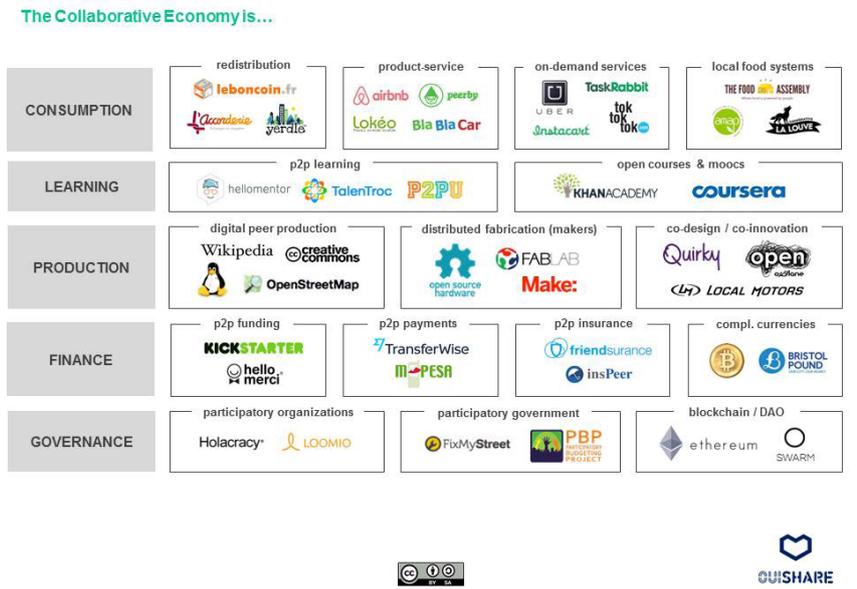
Collaborative economy is not all about goods, resources and services for free. In fact, several models coexist. There are initiatives and communities that distribute goods or services for profit: by renting, subscribing; others promote sharing: swapping, donating; there is a whole range in between, applying lending, reselling, etc.

The rise of collaborative economy in recent years marks the transition from 20th century consumerism to 21st century cooperativism. While the consumerism order allows only traditional consumption, the collaborative model features a variety of options to participate: sharing (sharing other people’s content or ideas), shaping (remixing or adapting content or ideas), funding (crowdfunding, peer to peer funding), producing (creating or delivering content or assets within a peer community), co-working (having partial or complete ownership in content or assets).

Triggers of this fundamental change are technology, economy, environment, networks and community. Digital technologies make forming an engaged community easier than ever before. Mobile applications and affordable smartphones enhance dramatically the availability of any services. Rating mechanisms, peer review and immediate feedback features contribute to building confidence and trust in online-based service platforms.

The decade of downfalls in national economies and globally has fueled the quest for new ways to produce and consume. Global warming makes us strive to achieve environmental sustainability of our economies. New digital ways to create communities have boosted many collaborative initiatives – from local community work to protests and revolutions – thus reinforcing communities and horizontal collaboration.

As of 2016, many cities are well positioned on the collaborative economy map: Amsterdam, Helsinki, Portland, Seoul. Some companies provide platforms through which the users pay for the service: Airbnb (4 mln. people have already used the service), Uber, BlaBlaCar, Etsy. Other platforms are truly collaborative: Wikipedia, CreativeCommons, Khan Academy, Coursera. Some of the big industries launch open source projects: Tesla, Ford, Toyota. Virtual wallets like Bitcoin and Blockchain gain share.



An example of the variety of platforms and services of the collaborative economy.

² Source for all definitions and statements concerning collaborative economy: Sara Rodriguez Marin’s presentation at IETM Amsterdam Meeting, All Together Now session, 15 April 2016.

Collaborative Economy and the Arts

What would collaborative economy change in relation to the ways we do and “distribute” arts? Sara Rodriguez Marin presented several initiatives that demonstrate these aspects of the topic.

One can sell their creations on [Etsy](#)³, a global community which makes, sells and buys goods at a “a human, authentic and community-centric global and local marketplace.”

Crowdfunding is another big trend of the last decade. While some web platforms will fetch funding to all sorts of projects, arts including ([Indiegogo](#)), other platforms focus on arts exclusively ([Cinecrowd](#), [Kickstarter](#)).

How to defend intellectual property when sharing ideas in the digital world is a question that lies within the competence of national and global legislations. However, we can do something to defend our ideas through the digital technologies. [Blockai](#) helps you claim ownership of your digital creations. [Ascribe](#) provides tools to lock in attribution, securely share and trace where your digital work spreads.

Actual decentralisation could bring art creation a step further into collaborative economy. For example, [Muse](#), a block-chain especially designed for the music industry, aims at setting the base for the music industry's new ecosystem⁴.

Collaborative projects are not new to the art world. Collaborative economy principles bring cooperation in arts to a next level. For example, [Ampliative Art](#), a web platform for collaborative art production, states in its [manifesto](#) it is a new type of art procedure that is reciprocity-based, equitable and self-sustaining. Through its web platform art actors may contribute to the art community and be rewarded through alternative means.

Last, there is the option for giving art away for free. Many musicians decide to share their albums under the Creative Commons license: for free or for what the listeners decide to pay.

It will take time to see how the collaborative economy principles will evolve the art scene and whether this could prove fruitful to the arts. Definitely, changes have started to happen.

Commons of the performing arts community

While Sara Rodriguez Marin gave a wider view on collaborative economy, [Vijay Mathew](#), cultural strategist of [HowlRound](#), provided an insight into a theatre and performance arts specific project which employed modern digital technologies and the values of the commons.

HowlRound is a movement that facilitates knowledge commons by and for the theatre community through a web based multimedia platform: “a place for artists to provide feedback, learning, expertise, frustration, and vision”.

It started in 2011 in Boston as an initiative that was supported by [Emerson College](#). Emerson College still provides 20% of

HowlRound's income, the rest being donations from various US private charity funds.

HowlRound combines several platforms that feature digital peer production⁵: content created by the community for the community.

HowlRound Platforms

The [Journal](#) is web blog that publishes articles and blog posts on theatre and performance issues. It is a community generated content. There is a team of editors at HowlRound who work closely with the authors on their publications over a course of several weeks. The topics vary widely: gender equality in the arts scene, diversity and inclusion, criticism, arts administration, audience development, [documentary theatre](#), education and more. They are listed and can be browsed in the tag selection menu on the Journal website. The comments section under each publication is being actively used by the HowlRound community.

Latest from the Journal

Are Theatre Critics Critical? An Update
Jonathan Mandell
Frequent contributor Jonathan Mandell considers the current condition of theatre criticism and theatre critics.
April 1, 2015 - Essays

Grounded: A Stunning Singular Strike at Olney Theatre
Patricia Davis
George Brant's *Grounded*, at Olney Theatre, is a fast-paced, suspenseful, and moving one-woman show about a drone operator's struggle to play two roles: annihilator and mother.
March 31, 2015 - NewCrit

Communicating Vision: Readings and Read-dos
Liane Tomasetti
In this installation, Liane Tomasetti explores how tricky a first reading of a new site-specific play is, and how important it is to listen to all the community members involved.
March 30, 2015 - Blog

Are Criticism Rating Systems Serving Anybody?
Joanie Schultz
Director Joanie Schultz talks to theatre critics and theatre artists about

Where's the Conversation?

Parenting and Playwriting: The Boyfriend Plot
Catherine Trieschmann



Are Criticism Rating Systems Serving Anybody?
Joanie Schultz

On Immersive Theatre: The Senses to Take the Wall Down—Part 6: Memory, Sight, Edgar, and What is Next?
Michael Tara Garver

The Crowdfunding Conundrum: Using a Co-opted Model That Has Already Reached the Tipping Point
Seth Lepore

Rape Culture "On Stage" or "As Subject"
Cecilia Copeland

Happenings

Thursday, Apr 2, 2:00pm — 3:00pm EDT
 **Twitter Chat Topic: "Writing For Your Culture"** moderated by @damonchuanVC & @MrSamuelFrench. Use hashtag #howlround to participate

Saturday, Apr 4, 10:00am — 11:30am EDT
 **TV: Livestreaming Panel Discussion Artists and Scientists: Great Minds Think Alike—The 39th Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville—#HumanaFest**

[See all events>](#)

Join the **HowlRound** mailing list to keep up with the latest articles, news, and events

Email address

A snapshot of HowlRound's Journal

³ There are a lot more art platforms for sharing, selling and talking about arts: [Saatchi Art](#), [Artabus](#), [artuvio](#), [Artmajeur](#), [deviant art](#), etc. There are web platforms for designers like [DesignCrowd](#), [Behance](#) and more.

⁴ As defined on their website, Muse “is an ownerless, automated, globally distributed, Peer-to-Peer network that is both transparent and open to all. The maintenance of its content does not depend on trust of a central authority.”

⁵ Well known examples of digital peer production are Wikipedia, Creative Commons, Open Source products.

[HowlRound TV](#) is a free livestreaming facility. HowlRound host livestreaming of conferences, performances and other events on their website, as well as provide technical support, communication and promotional support. They also keep an archive of all the sessions. HowlRound TV features two to three livestream sessions per day. The videos are organised by date but can be browsed by topic as well.

The [World Theatre Map](#) is in development and will be launched in summer 2016. It is an online virtual map, a real time directory of theatre makers of all kinds. Each and every theatre and performance maker (directors, actors, playwrights, technical crew, designers, administrators) would have a profile with a list of projects and geographic location. With the help of the virtual map one could easily find the people they need on a certain geographic location.

Facilitating virtual communication and knowledge exchange is the core of HowlRound activities but in-person meetings are equally welcomed by the performing arts community. Therefore HowlRound hosts [Convenings](#) on request of members of the community.

[Twitter Chat](#) is another widely used platform of HowlRound. Again, community members suggest topics for the twitter discussion and open conversation for an hour is being scheduled weekly.

Why a Commons?

Commons is the wealth or resources we inherit or create together which are shared and managed together in order to benefit an entire community. Like water and air, knowledge is also a commons, the people supporting HowlRound believe. They develop the platform in the frame of commons because they are convinced that everyone has something to contribute to the learning, the making, and the sharing of art.

The mainstream culture and the spirit of our times is market economy. The commons model stays away from state and outside of private property. It is a way to create a different kind of relationship between each other and the community. One of the new

ideas is that every participant in this commons is a stake owner in the overall breadth and vibrancy of the community. Thus, commons empowers people and communities.

The community is solely responsible for the content of HowlRound. The HowlRound team is facilitating and providing support but the community is curating it. The HowlRound team discusses the subject before with the writer. A fee of 150/ 50 USD is paid to the writer in order to get a fair relationship between her/him and HowlRound. The knowledge that accumulated is viewed as a shared recourse for everyone. Common ownership means that any topic, subject or agenda is driven by whoever steps up and takes the responsibility to do it.

HowlRound fosters a multiplicity of communities and enables multiple communities to meet and exchange ideas. It also enables previously underrepresented communities to have their place and their voices to be heard⁶. HowlRound platforms with their highly responsive participants provide substantial visibility and attention, which can be used to leverage to all sorts of events, causes, projects, agendas by the community members. By accumulating all this community-created content, HowlRound builds and maintains an accessible archive of current experiences and practices. Content authorship in the frame of a commons is secured by Creative Commons license, thus allowing HowlRound to distribute it and to keep it.

During the past year, HowlRound platforms have published 650 articles and blogposts, 150 events were on livestream. HowlRound has 55,000 average monthly readers, 30,000 unique HowlRound TV viewers, 40+ Twitter conversations.

HowlRound team view themselves are the infrastructure designers for all this to happen. They have minimal role in recruiting new members of the community because people decide when and whether to join. They have no role in curating and selection of agendas because the community chooses by themselves – in the frame of the commons.

New digital tools to facilitate touring

Simon Hart, the artistic director of [Puppet Animation Scotland](#) and member of the board of directors of [The Touring Network](#) (Scotland, UK), presented [Tourbook](#), an online platform aiming to empower people in remote communities to reach culture.

Tourbook is an online platform that connects rural promoters with each other, and with professional performers of all genres. It provides a space for “performers to promote their shows and for promoters to share their activities and offer mutual support”. Tourbook is currently available to all venues and promoters based in Scotland and to performers looking to tour into Scotland but the organisers hope for a future expansion of the platform to new areas across the UK and beyond.

Scotland is quite a challenging area in terms of touring. It is the least densely-populated area in the UK. In the Scottish Highlands and Islands, the population density falls to just 9-11 people per sq. km, making it one of the most sparsely populated areas of Europe. There are few dedicated venues or performance spaces, few cultural networks. The roads are narrow. Sometimes herds of sheep block them. Scottish climate can be quite changeable: windy, sunny, rainy, stormy, and foggy: all in a single day. Even a short trip could take hours to complete. Therefore, one should carefully plan their tour, and Tourbook is especially designed to be of help.

⁶ A whole new community has sprung out of HowlRound: [Latino Theatre Commons](#) has its own agenda now.

The original version of Tourbook was commissioned by The Touring Network and launched in 2013. The Touring network provides a forum for voluntary promoters across the Highlands and Islands to connect and share knowledge, skills and resources. That formed the base for Tourbook. A redesigned and upgraded in response to users' feedback Tourbook 2.0 will be launched in the summer of 2016.

It will feature more tools for active communication. It will be the place to showcase your work, discover new acts, find venues and access audiences and make new connections with a host of industry professionals. In addition, it will allow meaningful data to be collected and used for fundraising and for advocacy purposes.



The pleasures of touring in Scottish Highlands & Islands

© The Touring Network

Questions and Answers

Specifications requested about the presented platforms.

#Tourbook

Tourbook is available for any artists who want to tour Scotland.

It was cleared out that the initial profile set up is free. Further editions, photo uploads are charged with a fee. One could subscribe for weeks or for months.

Running a showcase is a live event. As many promoters as possible gather at a single venue where the works are presented. It is a social event, which gives people the opportunity to meet, chat, have a drink and network. It proved to be a useful peer to peer approach since it is not an easy task in the Highlands and Islands to go to different venues to see what shows are offered.

#HowlRound

Currently the HowlRound's audience is strictly professional: it is aimed at theatre and performance professionals but it's open to all. The content featured on the platform covers mostly the US scene but they are looking for content from other theatre and performance scenes across the world.

Do they think of opening the network to wider audiences? Vijay Mathew explained the initially it was meant just for theatre makers, to break their isolation. There are some community members that make use of it towards audiences. For example, some are interested in writing for the theatre the way the mainstream media does not. So they aim promote a distinct type of journalism critique of plays through the HowlRound platforms. Livestreaming of performances is viewed by some as yet another way of reaching the audience.

#OuiShare

The more general question of trust arose in the context collaborative platforms. How do you trust a peer to be reliable when offering a service or writing a review? There are policies and rules on writing comments and reviews. However, at the end trust is a matter of choice: you choose to trust people.

All the presenters agreed that when platforms generate a lot of content one could just decide to trust people and give some simple etiquette guidelines. No issues arose so far. Trust and reputation are what matter the most in cases of gift economy and sharing.

Community building and community influence on platforms

Simon Hart gave an example with a festival for children that was established due to the community differentiation on a web platform. First, the festival was programmed for adult audiences. Then the online share of kids and adolescences grew so they decided to split the festivals. Then they split the websites too because each one had its own community around it. If you built a specific platform, the community "finds itself".

Sara Rodriguez also confirmed that the key is to let the community take the action. At OuiShare, online communities form first and then they decide if and how they would meet offline.

Someone from the audience made it clear that for him it is essential to have the ability to influence the platform and the community. For example, if he or other German artists start to use Tourbook, it would be appropriate to ask for their feedback, to take account of their remarks, to invite them to the assembly, or share the monthly bulletin with them.

Another person from the audience mentioned a somewhat controversial opinion published in the second half of 2015 that collaborative economy as we wanted it to be is dead⁷. According to the author, the main reason is that the community has no power to influence the platforms. Most of the so called sharing communities are actually crafted by corporate bodies working under the terms and regulations typical for the market economy. For example, the giant companies like Uber and Airbnb would never ask the community how to spend the money earned through the services the way that traditional companies don't do either. They too are centralized, vertical and take money from their users. There is nothing wrong, of course, in earning money and being profitable but then don't call it a shared or collaborative economy practice.

Sara Rodriguez reminded that some fully collaborative and commons platforms like Ampliative Art and Crowdfunding are there.

Patreon was cited as another option for crowdfunding artists and creators. They receive funding from their "patrons" on a monthly basis contrary to the project by project type of funding on other crowdfunding platforms. In return, patrons get access to exclusive content.

In conclusion, it was accepted that sharing the decision processes and the assets with the community would make a platform a truly collaborative one.

Links for joining the platforms:

Join Ouishare: http://ouishare.net/es/users/sign_up

Join HowlRound: <http://howlround.com/participate>

Join Tourbook: <http://tourbook.org.uk/login>

⁷ [The "Sharing Economy" Is Dead, And We Killed It](#)