

Cultural Capital

Maximising Public Value Across the Cultural and Broadcasting Sectors



“Culture defines who we are, it defines us as a nation.

Government should be concerned that so few aspire to complex cultural activity, and has a responsibility to do what it can to raise the quantity and quality of that aspiration.

What we need to do is to make complex culture, and the benefits it can bring, a reality to as many people as possible. This suggests we should view the funding of culture as a whole across government.”

– Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP, *Government and the Value of Culture*, May 2004

Introduction

Each year more than £1.5 billion is invested in the arts – theatre, music, film, galleries, heritage, museums etc, in the form of direct subsidies by government. Traditionally, public service broadcasters have played a vital role in ensuring that cultural and artistic activities reach audiences. In today's technologically fast-paced climate, terrestrial services, and new digital media, are even more crucial for showcasing the UK's envied creative achievements and championing our rich cultural heritage at home and abroad.

This is why five leading UK cultural agencies – Arts Council England, the British Film Institute (*bfi*), the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) and the UK Film Council – have now joined together to stimulate debate on the future role of culture within the sphere of public service broadcasting.

After all, greater collaboration between these organisations can only benefit the broadcasters while simultaneously optimising the benefits of investment in the arts for every single UK citizen.

We aim to help devise a framework to ensure that culture is at the heart of public service broadcasting policies on established and new services. We also want to ensure that licensed public service broadcasters meet their statutory obligations towards cultural activity as contained in the Communications Act.

The importance of partnerships

Not only does the UK arts sector comprise a UK-wide patchwork of world-beating creativity, it boasts an unequalled and diverse archive of materials – a testament to the long-cherished and complex culture of the nation.

As digital technologies reroute the delivery of creative content, the arts will continue to develop and converge, providing myriad new ways for future citizens to create and access culture. Already, new means of interaction – podcasts, weblogs, game consoles, digital audio players etc – have empowered citizens. New outlets for participation can only increase the public's engagement with new forms of creativity.

Digital technology means that the availability of our cultural assets – like all content – is no longer limited by capacity constraints. Digital services have the potential to make available valuable cultural resources and archives to specialist communities on a massively enhanced scale, complementing the existing work of traditional broadcasters.

We want to maximise the opportunities for cultural agencies, public service broadcasters and other partners to work together to build public value, by creating and strengthening partnerships in both the media and civic spheres. Broadcasters will dip into new streams for content, talent, innovation and public participation while the cultural sector will extend its reach, stimulating and inspiring through co-creation.

The new opportunities – arts and broadcasting alliances

Access

Empowering every UK citizen to participate in this country's cultural life is a responsibility of cultural organisations and public service broadcasters. Joint initiatives should focus on extending the range and diversity of audiences while improving the volume and quality of material that they engage with. The cultural and broadcasting sectors can both help to steer people towards further areas of interest and to broaden access to under-exploited or undiscovered content and talent. Regional infrastructures and digital access via libraries and cultural institutions will accelerate this reach.

Broadcast content

The arts should be interpreted and adapted in imaginative ways, creating new forms of artistic expression and throwing up new ways to make culture appealing. Content-driven joint ventures between cultural agencies and public broadcasters can lead to a more diverse range of high-quality programming, some inspired from a more experimental approach to development. Whilst minds focus on innovation and risk-taking in creative and cultural expression, access to arts can be broadened through the development of new technologies or creative applications, shared knowledge and skills and the targeting of niche audiences.



Talent and skills

The cultural and broadcasting sectors have a central role to play in education and learning, offering knowledge, tools, technologies, spaces and a range of perspectives that can be used in formal and informal education for creatives and cultural entrepreneurs. Using broadcast, broadband and mobile networks – in conjunction with the UK's cultural institutions – audience appreciation and understanding of media, art and cultural forms can also grow.

Research and development

Research and development is the lifeblood of creative endeavour, and collaboration will benefit both cultural and broadcasting partners. The rapid pace of change in technology governing creative content delivery offers shared approaches to blue-sky thinking, investment in multi-platform content and innovation, and experimentation with new media and cultural forms to fully exploit cultural resources and archives. Shared audience research will also assist both sectors in deepening their relationships with individuals across the UK.

Looking ahead – opening doors to culture in the UK

We see potential for collaboration to improve and extend distribution and therefore access to creativity and culture across the UK, as well as to benefit particular communities and regions. Partnerships can promote cultural education and media literacy, foster creative industries and so provide an important means for regeneration. We are aware there are questions, for example, relating to investment, promotion and distribution of cultural forms, such as branding of joint initiatives and the thorny issue of intellectual property. However, we are optimistic that by building the right pathways for joint activity, many of these might be ironed out along the way.

We hope to move towards shared action in the following areas:

Partnership frameworks

A first stage might be the creation of ways to improve broadcast collaboration on content, a consistent flow of joint and innovative projects and the establishment of transparent processes and guidelines for content. We could also work towards protocols on issues such as commissioning, branding, archiving and rights management.

Research

A continuous and collective dialogue can only be mutually beneficial and help to identify gaps or barriers. It will also identify opportunities for new content and educational initiatives.

Monitoring and evaluation

An important underlying objective should be for cultural and broadcasting partners to improve transparency and accountability of information and resources in areas of mutual interest.



UK Film Council

The UK Film Council is the lead agency for film in the UK ensuring that the economic, cultural and educational aspects of film are effectively represented at home and abroad. It invests Government grant-in-aid and Lottery money in film development and production; skills development; international development and export promotion; distribution and exhibition; and education.

It also promotes:

- **creativity** encouraging the development of new talent, skills, and creative and technological innovation in UK film
- **enterprise** supporting the creation and growth of sustainable businesses in the film sector
- **imagination** promoting education and an appreciation and enjoyment of cinema

Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts in England. Between 2005 and 2008, it is investing £1.7 billion of public funds from government and National Lottery.

This is the bedrock of support for the arts in England. It believes that the arts have the power to transform lives and communities, and to create opportunities for people throughout the country.

Arts Council England's vision is to promote the arts at the heart of national life, reflecting England's rich and diverse cultural identity. The organisation would also like people throughout England to experience arts activities of the highest quality.

The British Film Institute (*bfi*)

The British Film Institute's purpose is to champion moving image culture in all its richness and diversity across the UK, for the benefit of as wide an audience as possible, and to create and encourage debate. It does this by developing opportunities for all UK citizens to engage with film, TV and media heritage and culture. The *bfi* also works closely with national and regional partners to provide a focus for the diversity of UK moving image culture, while playing a key role in influencing the national and international agenda.

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)

Museums, libraries and archives collect and interpret knowledge about the past and the present, for the future. Inspiration from great works of art, from music and the written word and from the diverse creativity of different cultures fuels the knowledge that we all need to develop and better understand the world around us.

MLA is the national development agency working for and on behalf of museums, libraries and archives in England, advising government on policy and priorities for the sector. It provides strategic leadership; acts as a powerful advocate; develops capacity within the sector and promotes innovation and change.

NESTA

NESTA, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, aims to be the single most powerful catalyst for innovation in the UK. In everything it does, it is seeking to increase the UK's capacity to fulfil its vast innovative potential.

Through a range of pioneering programmes, it invests at every stage of the innovation process; providing early stage seed capital for promising ideas for new products and services; investing in UK talent to ensure it stays in the UK; and experimenting with new ways of engaging the public in science, technology and the creative industries.