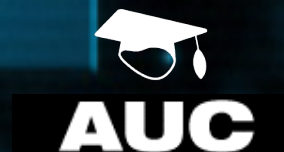# Contribute, Communicate, Collaborate:
The Internet as Workplace in the Digital Arts

Paul Draper
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AUC Conference 23–26 September 2007, Royal Pines Gold Coast

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1. a brief introduction to the flat world . . .

Day of the Long Tail, YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xAA71Ssids

WEB 2.0   OPEN SOURCE CULTURE   DEMOCRACY 2.0   DISINTERMEDIATION
FOLKSONOMIES   THE WISDOM OF CROWDS   MUSIC 2.0   THE LONG TAIL

1. a brief introduction to the flat world . . .

. . . the thing that historians will really look back on as the most seminal event, one of what I call the mother of all inflection points, is what happened when we got this convergence of the personal computer, the Internet and . . "work-flow software" . . What those three things did was create this kind of flat world platform which has allowed more people to plug and play, compete, connect and collaborate for less money than ever before in the history of the world

Lateline, "Tony Jones speaks to columnist Thomas L Friedman", *Australian Broadcasting Corcopration*, 1 May 2007. URL: www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2007/s1911784.htm

T. Friedman, *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. URL: www.thomaslfriedman.com/worldisflatexpanded.htm

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2. digital artists & creative industries

- creative industries rhetoric: IP, creativity, knowledge transfer, creative commons

- freelance artists and clusters, where the creative project becomes the new business model

- in music: direct merchandising, concert promotions, collaborations, web 2.0 sites, fan bases, podcasts - an 'economics of attention' - style, substance & craft in the age of ICT

- Apple iTunes, iTunes Affiliates, iTunes-U

3. the picture in Australian universities

- corporatised, branded, risk-averse, massified, centralised (Fed. pressure)

- ICT (& eLearning) as a top-down business delivery system

- Arts amalgamations since Dawkins & the misfit with university systems

- e-learning systems deliver downloads, digital artists create content for upload . . .

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3. the picture in Australian universities net result . .

- student artists are locked out of external content dissemination

- confusion around IP & a preoccupation with risk given artistic innovation processes & ouputs may be deemed controversial

- " . . a battle over the institutional ecology of the digital environment":

. . . the institutional ecology of information production and exchange is a complex one . . It includes regulatory and policy elements that effect different industries, draw on various legal doctrines and traditions, and rely on diverse economic and political theories and practices. It includes norms of sharing and consumption of things conceived of as quite different – bandwidth, computers, and entertainment materials . . . These are the physical, logical and content layers . . who gets to say what, to whom and who decides?

Y. Benkler, *The wealth of networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006.

4. reconceptualizing work-integrated learning

- currently 'big' in Unis; WIL, Co-Op Ed, etc

- client-focussed, shopfloor training, internships

- outmoded, 'boomer' thinking in digital arts and cultural industries landscape

- eg: in the music recording industry – Fordist workflow of old, now devolved to technology-empowered musicians

- how does a university-based conservatorium of music respond?

- an action research project (2002-07)

5. a case study: towards authentic learning music tech

- musictech is widespread in Ed., across the world
- yet here, run in massified, school-like curicula
- students (& staff) are isolated by class, year level, timetable
- borrowed from Thatcher's England:

. . . Australia has a history of adopting failed overseas educational ideas, it followed suit . . although arts institutions are not solely academic, the solution . . has been to treat them as academic and place them into university structures . . In creative areas there are no right answers but a whole range of choices . . requir[ing] very particular pedagogy . . . studio teaching focuses on a close interaction between practising artist-teachers and students, inspired by an aesthetic philosophy of "thinking through making".

R. Fitzgerald, "National Art School fighting a war of independence", *The Australian, Opinion,* 27 November, 2007. URL: theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20825339-7583,00.html

5.1. intervention 1: learning ecology project (since 2002)

● social, project-driven, blended learning

Activity	Approach	Resources
Problem-based Learning	led by the creative brief; theory and technique is unpacked in parallel or subsequent courses where students draw upon the actions and examples of peers in cross-year, team-based projects.	Student gallery archives www29.griffith.edu.au/ mutech/ eportfolio_archives
Forum	A face-to-face, weekly meeting to facilitate robust interactions between all students and staff; workshops by alumni, reports from WIL	smart lecture theatre, including wireless access, OHP, 5.1 sound, Apple TV
Resource Booking System	Students self-manage access to recording studios, mobile equipment and sound-reinforcement systems. Time-based quotas, interact with tech-support staff and maintenance plans.	RBS (LDAP authentication) www29.griffith.edu.au/rbs Based on MRBS mrbs.sourceforge.net
Discussion Board	Moderated, web-based discussion board to drive key themes, cross-faculty project calls and job opportunities. Membership includes alumni, other university elements and industry partners.	Open: user account www29.griffith.edu.au/ discussions Based on phpbb2 www.phpbb.com

Table 1: Knowledge transfer in the music technology ecology

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5.2. intervention 2: WIL project (since 2005)

- students maintained traditional ideas re. careers

- opportunities for audio and music specialists?

- eg: graduates in radio, film, gaming, ICT, education, forenisics, as well as freelance projects

- WIL subsequently devised as an expansion of forum & discussion board

- single semester, final year, contract-based

5.2. intervention 2: WIL project (since 2005)

outcomes:

- self-confidence & workplace appreciation for highly-trained, creative people

- enjoyed 'real world' pressure

- application of abilities in unknown settings

- some industry practices changed as a result

- industry critical of lack of contextual knowledge, eg: IP, contracts, client perspectives, workflow, flexibility, timeframes, virtual collaboration
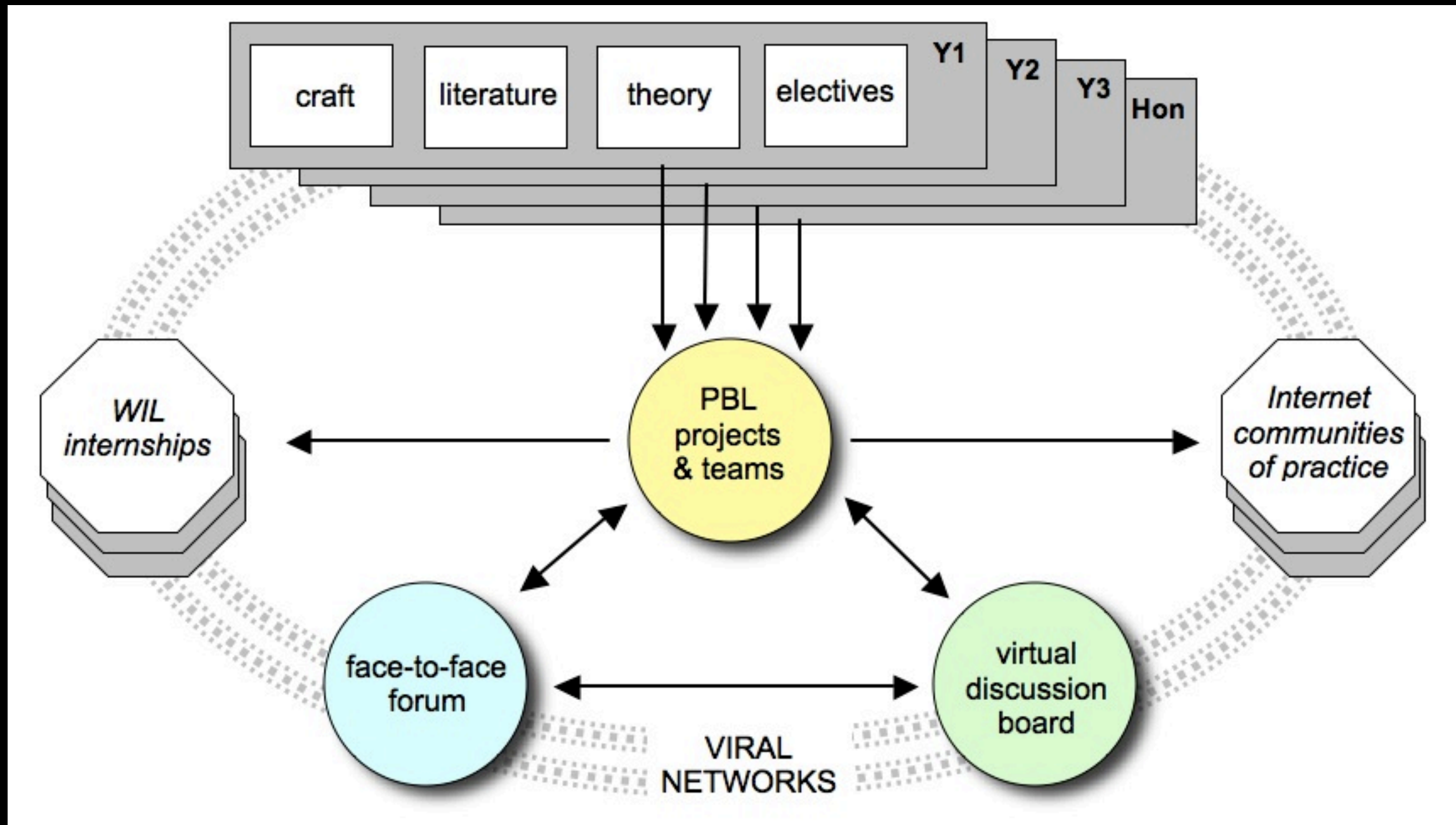
5.2. intervention 2: WIL project (since 2005)

Figure 1: Widening Participatory Culture

5.3. intervention 3: open publishing project (since 2006)

a number of considerations:

1. two Apple Xserves and 40 workstations - embed WIL on-site (like Con concerts?)

2. develop & assess new literacies, beyond text

3. IMERSD 5.1 production facility as practice-led research / research-based learning

4. IP problematic – old-style, brief lectures in music business disconnected from creative projects. Creative commons with content?

5.3. intervention 3: open publishing project (since 2006)

actions:

- a pilot Commons project was held in an intensive project week *(see <u>handbook</u>)*

- Xserve #1 (Hendrix) to provide media streaming and podcasting, with licensing as applicable

- Xserve #1 (Joplin) as dedicated webserver, RSS, open source CMS systems. *Pilot projects include Joomla (RadioIMERSD), Plone (smart@rts), Drupal (MyQCA).*

- *google analytics* used from the outset

5.3. intervention 3: open publishing project (since 2006)

described in a single homepage . . .
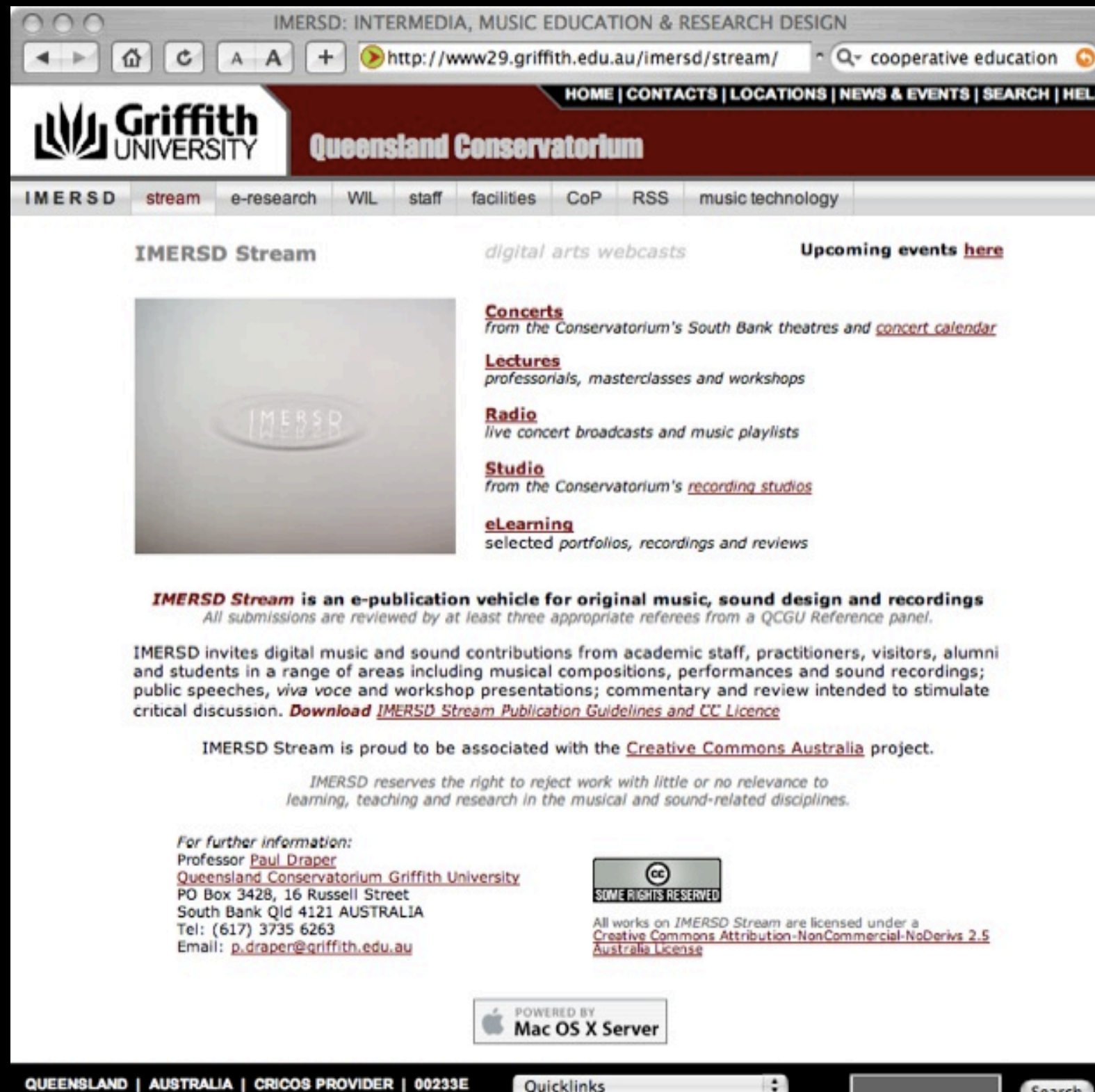
undergraduates, academics, visitors, RHD candidates, industry

. . . but more recently, at www29.griffith.edu.au/ radioimersd

5.3. intervention 3: open publishing project (since 2006)

July–Dec. 2006 Google Analytics - iTunes podcasting reach

5.3. intervention 3: open publishing project (since 2006)

outcomes:

- hundreds of music performances and presentations now distributed (some by iTunes podcasts, others are IP-delimited by copyright)

- higher quality of work in student podcasting assignments, as alternative to written analyses

- CCau licensing having some impact in understanding ownership and IP rights

- increased engagement and strengthening of the local community of practice, but . . .

5.3. intervention 3: open publishing project (since 2006)

Enquiry	Positives		Negatives	
Has use of the web changed?	49%	• web as workspace • other's work as exemplars • stimulated personal research • could help work prospects	51%	• already knew what to do • didn't know about project • web is for fun, not work
Impact on professional standards?	46%	• ownership of learning • context and application • future expectations/direction • raised standards of work	54%	• didn't know about project • no self-change, wait for teaching
Impact on learning?	63%	• greater sense of teamwork • sharing/promoting ideas • greater sense of competition • pride & ownership	37%	• irrelevant for students • I didn't know • no one told me • no self-change, teaching
Altered response to assessment?	57%	• greater aesthetic awareness • more attention to quality • more effort was applied • better presentation detail	43%	• work is always high quality • web is for fun, not work • didn't know about project

Table 2: Survey results of N=35 Music Technology Undergraduates

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6. implications for research-led teaching digital arts

- **'student centered learning' /'client' rhetoric**
  do students know what they want until they see it?

- **metrics, tracking, communication, collaboration**
  mapping into research and curriculum

- **'research-led teaching' is another buzz phase, based on university 'hero-science' practice**
  art is not an even playing field – public impact, fluidity

- **folksonomies, rankings, community constructions of knowledge** both for learning objects & for art

7. beyond 'digital immigrants'?

what happens when . .

- the technology is adopted, adapted, ubiquitous, inexpensive and easy to use

- digital natives and immigrants alike, 'get it'

- bandwidth is cheap/free, workplace is global, casualised and driven by content

- beyond the immigrant's fascination with options . . a return to a focus on disciplinary excellence, craft, intellectual pursuit and professional context? . . *the long tail* . .

7. beyond 'digital immigrants'?

if novelty is absent, & the 'net is the workplace, then . .

- how will students develop as contributors in a world context if they continue to be training within closed teaching and assessment regimes?

- how do educators embed creativity, innovation and negotiation experiences for global knowledge economies?

- how do we measure meaningful engagement in an open, viral work environment?

- how do universities maintain the relevance to attract and retain high quality students?

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7. beyond 'digital immigrants'?

part of the answer must lie in . . .

- going beyond conceiving of 'work-integrated learning' as simply an educational methodology or model

- investigating this interdisciplinary phenomena & institutional ecology (techologists, artists, academics)

- defining an integrated body of knowledge

- developing the 'blended scholarship' to afford students contextual understanding and applied opportunities

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Q&A

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