



introduction

The general field of **creative industries** studies¹ is now well established in higher education in many countries, especially in universities and colleges where there is a component of creative-practice education as well as cultural and aesthetic theory. Together with the study of public policy, economics and business strategy, the creative industries field is an interdisciplinary amalgam that draws from the humanities, the creative arts, technology studies and the social sciences. While this makes for a dynamic intellectual environment, it also results in untranslatability of concepts across different domains, sometimes amounting to mutual incomprehension and bemusement, occasionally even hostility and presumptions of bad faith.

However, there is more to the problem of interdisciplinarity than this. True dialogue occurs only when different parties learn from each other. Cultural, economic, political, artistic, scientific and technological discourses all contribute to the creative industries field of study, and all deploy their own specialist language. This is not simply jargon, but also a kind of embedded capital, carrying a history of debate, development and application within the terminology, without which it is hardly possible to make sense, let alone to make progress in solving problems. This more substantial exchange of ideas is what each domain needs to learn from others, even if the learning process turns out to be painful, argumentative and challenging.

This is the rationale for *Key Concepts in Creative Industries*. Interdisciplinary dialogue needs not only to be translated, it needs to be put to work: conceptually, to develop and test new approaches to a fast-changing object of study; and practically, to assist those with cultural and economic investments in the creative industries – from employment to activism – to make better decisions. How can we gain a better conceptual and analytical grip on real problems and find the right tools for their solution? And how can we develop a common frame of reference and understanding for our analytical language? Such questions face students undertaking courses in these fields, but equally they face academics, researchers and workers in the creative industries, who may sometimes need a guidebook to a terrain that is no-one's home territory.

There is little agreement even on the definition of the creative industries. Economists, regional development agencies, creative practitioners, art historians, anthropologists, government policymakers, business strategists, lawyers and educationalists will all have a different take on the topic, but they all have something to contribute to the analysis. As a result, there are important insights scattered across many domains, using different definitions, conceptual frameworks and methodologies for divergent instrumental purposes.

This general rule applies also to the authors of this book. Each of us brings a different disciplinary perspective to bear on the terms we discuss; and we've all had

¹Words in **bold text** cross-refer to other entries in this book.





our views modified by working with each other and learning from the interdisciplinary field. We do not start from a partisan stance (although we have our preferences and prejudices). We'd like to get beyond some current controversies, to be able to say that the field of creative industries studies now has a robust conceptual toolkit to analyse real phenomena, to marshal compelling evidence, and to solve real problems in cultural life, business strategy, public policy, critical understanding and intellectual advancement alike.

FIX OR FLUX?

To be clear, what follows is not a set of definitions. It's more a history of ideas. Why does a book that explains *concepts* used in formal study need to worry about *history*? Certain concepts, including most of those covered herein, arise in social life and enjoy a career in ordinary language before being taken up in systematic or scientific analysis. Their meaning changes and adapts in the flux and contestation of lived processes and competing institutions. Further, the same term can retain substantially different meanings in different contexts. All of this is normal in etymological terms – language evolves over time, and words mean what they do only in relation to others in the system. But it is a pain in the neck for science, which has good reason for requiring definitional exactitude, often communicated in mathematical language and in a scientific present tense, where what a concept means is intended to apply universally. Indeed, this is part of what separates the 'exact' sciences from the human and social sciences. Surely, then, a fixed definition is essential, to reduce uncertainty, so that a concept can become part of the conceptual apparatus of a scientific field?

Such a desire is understandable, but it would not lead to understanding the key concepts in the creative industries. It would strip away one of the chief characteristics of such terms – their indeterminacy or propensity to uncertainty and change. The most important concepts are dynamic both historically (in one field over time) and contextually (across different fields). Analysts such as ourselves may strive to reach an agreed definition, so that scholarly work can proceed in a systematic way, and also, importantly, so that the work of different researchers can be compared, but recognition of historical and contextual contingency in the very terms of analysis is irreducible. Thus, in cultural and media studies, the social sciences and even economics (which has developed a much more thoroughgoing mathematical system than the humanities and other social sciences),² concepts carry their history with them. What's required of both individual researchers and knowledge domains is a 'history of ideas' approach, *in order* to use concepts systematically.

CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE

One example will suffice: 'culture'. There are many different definitions of 'culture' in use, arising from different intellectual or disciplinary traditions (Hartley 2011). One definition may literally be incomprehensible in another domain. For instance,

²See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_economic_thought





compare the domain of knowledge of ‘the arts’ (Arnold 1869) with that of ‘complexity science’ (Page and Bednar 2007) in the accompanying table, remembering that both are equally intelligible and defensible within their home register.

Definitions of Culture, By Discipline

Who’s asking? Domain of knowledge	What do they say? Definition of culture	How do they know? Method of inquiry
<i>The arts</i>	Aesthetics expression imagination	Criticism
<i>Anthropology</i>	Customs norms practices	Ethnography
<i>Positivist behavioural science</i>	Attitudes beliefs values	Experiment
<i>Sociology (quantitative/qualitative)</i>	Agents institutions structures	Empiricism
<i>Structuralism</i>	Relations meanings identity	Semiotics/theory
<i>Complexity science</i>	Co-evolution of ensembles of games	Computational modelling ¹

¹Scott Page, Santa Fe Institute. See, e.g. : www.slidefinder.net/M/Modeling_Culture_Scott_Page_University/28156089/p1

It would be mistaken to attempt to decide which one of these usages is ‘right’, although it may be appropriate to look for *common rules* across different domains. No field is yet at the stage where it can claim a general definitional formula for such a term as culture (see also Hartley 2011). For the time being, it is appropriate to outline what’s at stake in *trying* to define it. The goal is to understand how knowledge is generated, adopted and grown. Here, then, we can see that what a ‘key concept’ means is determined by discipline (who’s asking?) and by methodology (how do they know?) as much as by propositional content (what do they say?). Concepts themselves are part of a dynamic complex system of ideas, and that’s what this book seeks to explain: meanings aren’t fixed; they’re in flux.

This book not only offers a road map to such dynamic usages, but it also shows how a coherent field is slowly resolving itself into focus through this diverse, internationally distributed, multi-discursive and undirected collective enterprise.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN EDUCATION

Higher education around the world has embraced the notion of the creative industries as a domain of study, teaching and research. It extends or combines courses in:

- Communications and media studies;
- Business, economics and regional policy;
- Creative arts (music, visual arts, performing arts);
- Media production (film, television, digital);
- Design (fashion, architecture, interactive design; graphic design);
- Information and communications technology;
- Law (copyright and intellectual property);
- Education (for a creative workforce).



The world's first Creative Industries Faculty was established at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, Australia, launched by the Premier of the State of Queensland, Peter Beattie, in July 2001. The authors of this book all had a shaping hand in that enterprise, John Hartley as Foundation Dean. Meanwhile, research groups around the world have been active in refining the scholarly approach to creativity, creating a strong readership base for new work in basic (conceptual, modelling) research, as well as applications to specific sectors, countries and problems. Since then, many departments, schools or faculties, and some entire colleges (e.g. the University of the Arts, London), are devoted to the creative industries, as are some secondary schools, e.g. the Queensland Academy for Creative Industries (www.qaci.eq.edu.au).

Creative industries policies have been adopted in many countries, not just advanced or developed economies such as the UK, Australia and European countries, but also in developing or emerging economies, including China, Brazil, Indonesia and Thailand. These developments are fuelling demand for coherent and authoritative educational programmes for students and professionals alike. In short, global education provision is gearing up to the challenge of the creative industries and the need for conceptual guidance is clear.

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