

CREATIVE CLUSTERS CONFERENCE 2007

London, 9th - 14th November

Creative Clusters 2007, the 5th international conference on the creative economy, takes place in locations across London that are home to world-leading creative enterprises and culture-led regeneration projects.



Creative Clusters is an independent policy conference examining the growth of the creative economy. We are interested in initiatives from around the world that are designed to have an impact in both cultural and economic terms.

Creative Clusters believes that creativity is the key factor driving development. Across the world, enterprises based on individual creativity are booming, and are having a dramatic impact on global culture and the economy. Furthermore, knowledge and culture-based activities now play a central role in the activities of all businesses. This is the era of the *creative economy*.

London 2007 : Agenda and Themes

Creative Clusters 2007: The Creative Economy

As technological and demographic change continues to drive globalisation, many of the core assumptions built into economic, cultural, media and innovation policy face deepening challenges.

Global demand for creative products and services is booming, and the creative industries comprise one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy. But are governments still treating the creative sector as too much of a special case? Should policy interventions emphasise cultural and regional exceptionalism, or is the creative sector now mature enough to warrant a 'grown-up' industrial policy that emphasises productivity, employment, export and innovation?



What of culture, whose core skills are at the centre of

creative industry, whose buildings are driving up land values in city centres, and yet which seems not empowered but threatened by these changes? What does it mean for the traditional separation between art and the economy if culture is a cause, rather than a consequence, of economic success?

Creative Clusters 2007 will examine these issues under four themes.

1. The Creative Quarter

From Abu Dhabi to Aberdeen, Shepway to Shanghai, new zones devoted to creativity and culture are being designated in cities and towns across the world. The functional emphasis varies: they might be places for cultural consumption, for creative industries production, or for tourism and heritage. But always, these cultural zones (or districts or quarters) are seen as key to a place's identity, renewal and modernity, civic assets as essential as a railway station was 150 years ago.



Taking as our starting point the very different areas of London in which the conference is located - the South Bank, Exhibition Road, Soho and the City Fringe - we examine the role of the cultural district in the 21st century city.

2. Opportunity in the Creative Economy

The World Bank estimates that in G7 countries more than 50% of consumer spending is now on outputs from creative industries, and that globally the creative industries account for 7% of world GDP. Every advanced economy is looking to the creative sector to replace jobs lost to developing nations.



As the UK government prepares to launch its Creative Economy initiative, putting the creative industries at the heart of UK economic policy, how do we tackle concerns that the benefits of their growth are being disproportionately enjoyed by an exclusive and protective 'creative class'?

3. World Creative Hubs

Ten years ago, a list of the world's most creative places would probably have been dominated by west European cities associated with culture and heritage, along with major centres in America.



Now, new centres of energy and gravity are emerging: core cities within mega-regions, in all parts of the world: London, Beijing, New York, Sao Paulo, Lagos, Los Angeles. Creative Clusters 2007 will throw the spotlight on some of these global creative hubs and show how each is responding to the challenge of the era of the creative global economy.

What new patterns of world trade, and what new relationships are emerging? What are the implications for cultural and economic policy?

4. The Creative Crowd

The tools of cultural production and distribution are cheaper, easier to use and more widely available than ever before. Cultural consumers are the new producers: you can publish your life-story as it happens, 'narrowcast' a TV channel and trade with the world, wherever you happen to be. Mainstream media are increasingly asking viewers to supply up-to-the-moment and real-life footage.



Underlying cultural and media policy there are some basic assumptions about producers, distributors and consumers – their roles, their power, and the resources available to them. These are deeply challenged by the capacity of the internet to provide cheap and simple platforms for collaborative problem-solving, collective creativity and mass distribution.

We look at how the power of the creative crowd is changing the media landscape, and ask how policy-makers should respond.

Please visit www.creativeclusters.com to make your on-line application before Sunday 29th April. We look forward to hearing from you.