‘Work of the Future’ and its implications for workers and entrepreneurs in the creative industries

Review of literature and research

Report written within the context of Activity 6.1 of the NSR INTERREG IVB project CCC Reloaded: CREALAB

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## Contents

1 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 5

2 Trends in the societal and economic context ............................................................. 6
   2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 6
   2.2 Industrial development ......................................................................................... 7
   2.3 Technology ............................................................................................................. 8
   2.4 Labour ................................................................................................................... 8
   2.5 Consumption ......................................................................................................... 9
   2.6 Socio-demographics ............................................................................................ 10

3 Emergence of new, flexible working relations ......................................................... 11
   3.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 11
   3.2 Flexible working relations in the creative industries ............................................ 11
   3.3 Creatives’ perspectives on flexible working relations ........................................... 13
   3.4 Coping with flexible working conditions: examples .......................................... 14

4 Changes in the required working and entrepreneurial skills .................................. 16
   4.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 16
   4.2 Professional and vocational skills ....................................................................... 16
   4.3 Entrepreneurial skills ......................................................................................... 16
   4.4 Acquiring entrepreneurial skills: examples ......................................................... 17

5 New, non-traditional working environments ............................................................ 21
   5.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 21
   5.2 Remote working ................................................................................................. 21
   5.3 Non-traditional physical working spaces ............................................................ 22
   5.4 Non-traditional working spaces: examples ......................................................... 22

6 Conclusions ............................................................................................................... 26

References ................................................................................................................. 27
1 Introduction

Work Package 6 (WP6) of Crealab focuses on Work of the Future, a concept which addresses the new types of skills, working relations and working environments that increasingly characterize many economic sectors, in particular in the service industries. To a large extent this concerns the continuation of trends that have been visible for some time in some sectors, but now, due to various economic, technological and social factors, are spreading much faster and to a much larger part of the economy. The current speed and broadness of the above trends mean that any prediction of their potential impact should be considered tentative. It is clear, however, that they will affect considerably larger groups of workers than before.

WP6 studies the above topics with special regard to business start-ups and small enterprises in the creative industries. The creative industries, and even more so creative start-up firms, are among the sectors the most and the longest affected by the various aspects of the Work of the Future, being at large innovative, non-conventional in their location preferences, and fragmented in many and small firms and self-employed. Some creative sectors, for instance film and music industry, are characterised by a bifurcated structure of a few very large companies and a great number of small businesses and individual workers. In addition, creative industries are considered crucial for the innovative capacity and long-term economic performance of cities and regions, especially if they succeed to establish cross-over relations to more mature regional business clusters. In regard of this, the aim of WP6 is to map and explore knowledge of Work of the Future in order to strengthen the position and performance of these creative enterprises and workers within innovative regional clusters. That is, in the end, also to the benefit of these clusters. As Krätke (2011:197) concludes, “…regional economic success does not solely rest on the mere concentration of workers in technologically or artistically creative occupations. Rather, it depends on the development of a highly networked regional innovation system that integrates these occupations as well as other groups of skilled workers”.

The current report is the result of Activity 6.1. It aims to briefly review previous research on Work of the Future in the creative industries, as well as to explore the supposedly mutual relation of, on the one hand, Work of the Future within the creative industries and on the other hand the development of regional business clusters. As such, the current report partly constitutes the basis for an expert workshop (Activity 6.2) and a more future-oriented and policy-oriented strategy document (Activity 6.3).

The review and analysis in the next chapters focuses on 1) the societal and economic processes that to a large extent define the context of Work of the Future, 2) the main characteristics of the Work of the Future itself, and 3) the relation of these characteristics to the operations of creative entrepreneurs and SMEs in regional business clusters. Figure 1 shows these three elements in an indicative schedule. The structure of the report follows this schedule from left to right. First, Chapter 2 discusses the long-term processes that partly constitute the background of the Work of the Future. Then, Chapter 3 to 5 discuss the main characteristics of Work of the Future (the grey boxes in Figure 1). Finally, Chapter 6 briefly discusses the conclusions and provides an outlook on Activities 6.2 and 6.3.
2 Trends in the societal and economic context

2.1 Introduction

The origins of Work of the Future can be found in a number of overarching long-term processes that have changed - and still change - the societal and economic context in which creative entrepreneurs and SMEs operate. These processes typically entail a time-span of decades, rather than years. Moreover, many of these processes are intertwined and hard to demarcate, making any categorization arbitrary to some extent. For instance, McKinsey distinguish five trends: technology, a widening gap between supply and demand of skills, a geographical mismatch between workers and jobs, an increasing income disparity, and ‘growing pools of untapped talent’ (MGI, 2012:1). The Institute for the Future (IFTF, 2011:3-5) identifies six ‘drivers of change’, related to the growing role of smart technology, media, longevity (aging), computation and data, the increasing scale and complexity of production and value chains (Figure 2).

While the trends identified by McKinsey seem to emphasize labour market factors and those of the Institute for the Future technological development, the underlying factors, as well as the outcomes, are not that different. In WP6 of Crealab we distinguish processes with regard to six societal domains: 1) industrial development, 2) technology, 3) labour, 4) consumption, 5) socio-demographics, and 6) policy. The next section discuss the first five topics on the basis of a concise review of current literature. Policy will be discussed in the report on Activity 6.3.
2.2 Industrial development

From the 1960s, a transformation took place in the western world from the industrial to the post-industrial city. This started with a decline and collapse of manufacturing industry in western cities since the late 1960s. The rising unemployment that followed was a main component of an urban crisis in quite a few countries in the 1970s and early 1980s. The mid-1980s and the 1990s saw the growth of a service economy that was primarily based on the first dotcom-bubble, and was the key characteristic of what became defined as the post-industrial economy. This was followed, and partly accompanied, by a strong growth in economic branches based on either information and knowledge or creativity and culture (e.g. Scott, 2000; Hall, 2000; Hutton, 2010).

In the past decade we also witnessed a process of reindustrialisation mainly characterized by an increase of knowledge- and creativity-based industries. This is definitely not a renaissance of the manufacturing industrial economy based on large-scale vertically organised corporations that flourished until the end of 1960s. The types of companies involved are small and flexible rather than based on mass-production technology, while the reindustrialization process itself is still in a tentative stage (Clark, 2014).

The giants of mass-production have all but disappeared from Western high-income countries, at least as far as their production facilities are concerned. What remains - for the time being - are management and those activities most connected to the symbolic economy, and creativity: design and marketing. Counter-tendencies may be observed as well, occasionally, in which product development is outsourced, or production brought back. The key development, then, seems to be the much increased worldwide mobility of economic activities. This was enabled
by technology, and reinforced by the raise of shareholder capitalism that often led to 'short-termism' (Morgan et al., 2013:401) and cost-cutting strategies.

2.3 Technology

Many domains of the economy and society have dramatically changed over the past few decades due to technological developments. Most imposing and influential in this respect has been the emergence of new ITs. In fact, the term IT itself has become a bit outdated. The above mentioned first dotcom-bubble that was at the root of the growing service economy at the end of the past decade, was indeed first and foremost driven by technologies that gave a push to easier and more rapid exchange of large quantities of information. Highly significant with regard to the current discussion, however, is the more recent emergence of new ITs that have intertwined and revolutionized many existing creative industries (media, advertisement, photography and AV) and have induced new cross-overs between creative sectors with other sectors. Examples are the development of serious games and apps that have raised the level and quality of paramedical care.

In addition to new products, internet and related communication technologies facilitate cooperation over long distances and enable new business models and forms of production. This is even more the case since introduction of mobile technologies (Varnalı and Varnalı, 2014:28). Technologies such as 3D printing and CAD also enable small-scale and flexible production in manufacturing industries (Clark, 2014:434).

2.4 Labour

Unemployment remains a problem also in advanced economies, partly due to the decline of traditional manufacturing industries. New economic sectors and re-industrialization characterised by the emergence of primarily small-scale businesses tend to generate insufficient employment to compensate for his loss of jobs. Consequently, employment growth is lagging behind economic recovery more after each successive downturn period (MGI, 2012:1). Moreover, as Figure 3 shows new employment involves mostly jobs for which specific high-end skills are required, rather than blue collar jobs (IFTF, 2011:9). At the same time, employment in low-skill, low-wage service industries is increasing relatively. Together, these developments point at a ‘vanishing middle’ or a ‘decline of the middle-skills jobs’ (Tüzemen and Willis, n.d.). As a result there is a growing mismatch between supply and demand of labour.

A simultaneous development is the increasing disaggregation of jobs into various tasks. This occurred before in the manufacturing industries, but now increasingly affects jobs in knowledge-based services as well. In law and healthcare it is common for paralegals and paramedics to perform time-consuming, basic tasks, leaving the lawyers and doctors only the tasks they need to do (MGI, 2012:3). The same model more and more applies to other sectors, made possible by ever more advanced IT. Disaggregation of jobs also facilitates outsourcing of certain tasks to specialized niche producers. Hence, the share of freelancers and other self-employed is increasing in many sectors of the economy.
2.5 Consumption

The emergence of an ‘experience economy’ (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) means that the symbolic value of products and services, but also of spaces and activities in cities, is increasingly important (e.g. Chatterton and Hollands, 2002; Jansson, 2003; Jayne, 2006; Miles and Miles, 2004). Consumption practices “are imbued with symbolic meanings we ascribe certain meanings to” (Jayne, 2006:5-6). The design, feel and image of what we consume “help us to construct our identities, understand our place in the world and mark attachment to social groups, spaces and places” (ibid.). For some goods and for specific groups of consumers this symbolic value is even more important than the actual user value, and fashion or image, rather than wear, are the main reasons driving replacement purchases. Hence, whereas for instance in the development of cars until about the 1990s technology generally prevailed over design (and hence engineers prevailed over designers), the opposite is true nowadays, in some cases to the extent that even engine sounds are designed and amplified. Likewise, the feel of materials has become an important selling point and urban spaces are being designed on the basis of a carefully configured ‘authenticity’. In addition, leisure has become an important economic sector, characterized by global players and a mix of high and popular culture, which may lend a specific image to products and services connected to the ‘stars’.

Although private consumption has increased in size, the mass-consumption society of the 1970s no longer exists. Lee (1993, in: Miles & Miles, 2014: 32) charted the rise and fall of a mass consumption society in the post war years, followed by the consumer society - exploited by consumer capitalism - in which we live today. Related to the demand for consumption to contribute to the construction of personal or group identities, many products and services are increasingly individualized according to customers’ preferences, even if this individualization often involves merely variations on a common basic design. On the one hand, this is a consequence of the increased attention customers pay to symbolic values, which are to a large extent subjective and individual values. On the other hand, IT enables more flexible ways of individualized, on-demand production that were not feasible in the days of mass production.
This applies to manufacturing, but also to service industries where standard travels, television, music albums etc. are increasingly replaced by tailor-made services.

The above means that affordable products and service now offer a level of individualization and experience that used to be reserved to exclusive bespoke products, while at the same time they can be more technologically advanced because the costs of R&D can be spread over a large number of individualized but basically identical copies (cf. Baruth, 2015). Moreover, the emphasis in many other sectors is shifting from ownership to use. This is evident in for instance the music industry, where services such as iTunes and Spotify are rapidly driving the audio CD from the market (at the same time niche markets that still value ownership often hark back to older technologies such as long play records or film photography). Also for products that cannot be digitalized, for instance the car, the focus particularly among the urban young is now shifting from ownership to use.

2.6 Socio-demographics

European societies as a whole grey, but central parts of cities attract in particular young people (students, recent graduates, dual earning couples in pre-family stage). Average household size decreases, and the share of one-person households and single-headed families is increasing, the latter by as much as 25% since 1980 in OECD countries. Ageing has severe consequences for pension systems, resulting in a gradual rise of the average retirement age (MGI, 2012:9-10). At the same time, youth unemployment remains a problem, being epidemic particularly in Southern Europe. Other relevant long-term processes include the increase of the level of education of workers - and of the required level of education for jobs - and an increase in the labour participation of women (Watson et al., 2003:203).

The tendency towards individualisation implies the weakening of individuals’ ‘standard biography’ that was determined by class, family, gender, church or community, and its replacement by a ‘do-it-yourself biography’, in which “individuals must produce, stage and cobble together their biographies themselves” (Lootsma, 1999).

2.7 Implications

On the whole, the above developments have a profound influence on economic production and the working life of individuals, both in practice and in the way these topics are being perceived and discussed. Although we should be careful to generalize, it is safe to say that more work than before is organized in small-scale firms and project-based networks of firms, self-employed and freelancers. Markets have become much more fragmented and production tends to be more demand-driven, as is explicitly commented by Mommaas (2000) for the leisure industry. The raise of individualism and the symbolic economy means a boom in the number of market niches, even though many of these may be less unique than marketing suggests.

Production, and increasingly also other economic activities, has become more mobile, partly due to IT and strategic behaviour of businesses. This implies the shift of activities between countries, but also the increase of remote and temporary labour. This means larger groups of workers are confronted with flexible labour relations, new types of working environment, and an increased need to take care of their own career and skills.
3 Emergence of new, flexible working relations

3.1 Introduction

“Most want flexibility; but insecurity is what they get” (Watson et al., 2003:203).

One of the characteristics of work of the future is the rise of various types of flexible working relations and, consequently, more precarious labour. Typically, this means an increase in the share of part-time and temporary employees, job-combiners, freelancers and other self-employed, and a decrease in the share of permanent staff. Workers face more choices, but also more frequent risks. Working relations are temporary and variable, being largely project-based. The term ‘precariat’ has been coined for this, a combination of proletariat and precarious (e.g. Standing, 2011, in: Bain and McLean, 2012:97). It has been disputed, however, as it suggests a more or less coherent ‘class’, while precarious work affects a group of high-end knowledge and creative workers, but also lower-end service jobs.

3.2 Flexible working relations in the creative industries

In many sectors, particularly in the service industries and academia, the share of the above types of working relations is increasing. In most sectors this is particularly the case for young workers, who find it increasingly hard to get a fixed position. For instance in the Netherlands, 39% of workers between 15 and 24 years old had a flexible contract in 2012, against 25% in 2002 (Beekmans and De Boer, 2014:65). In the creative industries, however, this is the case for all age groups (Morgan et al., 2013:399), and the share of self-employed is well above average. For instance, in the UK the share of freelancers in the creative industries is estimated at 40%, whereas it is 12% for the economy as a whole (Mould et al., 2014:2443); likewise, Abreu et al. (2010:314) found that 3,5 years after graduation about 11% of ‘bohemiens’, against 3% of ‘non-bohemiens’ are self-employed. Figure 4, below, also indicates a relatively high share of self-employed, in particularly self-employed without employees, in sectors associated with the creative industries, such as arts and entertainment, media, computer programming and architecture. Some branches are characterised by a bifurcated structure of a large number of freelancers and self-employed and one or a very few large ‘ruling’ companies, e.g. film or music industry. Moreover, in some branches of the creative industries, notably in arts such as music and painting, but also for instance in consultancy services, precarious, project-based labour - what Bain and McLean (2012) call the artistic precariat - has been fairly normal for a very long time. This suggests that the growth of the creative sector in recent years, and the increasing attention paid to the business model of this sector, may have partly contributed to the increase in precarious labour (Morgan et al., 2013:401; Kim, 2014:563-4).

The insecurity of precarious work concerns both the availability of work as such, and the often low and unstable income it generates. This poses workers for several problems:

- Compared to employees, precarious workers on average earn considerably lower incomes and receive less non-wage benefits (Eurofound, 2013:32). The lack of a sufficient and stable income may imply that workers cannot afford to settle, buy a house, raise a family etc. The insecurity related to this may be reinforced as family and communities no longer provide a ‘roadmap’, as the more traditional examples seem no longer valid or feasible. Altogether, this means an increased and prolonged dependence on precarious labour may complicate the transition from youth to adulthood (Kim, 2014:596; Morgan et al., 2013:402).
Temporary workers and self-employed tend to be less secure than permanent staff, not only because they lack job security, but also because they often lack pension plans, minimum wages, and have no or less rights to social security benefits. Furthermore, contracts for freelancers may be less robust than employee’s contracts, especially in those rare cases where parties depend on oral agreements (Kim, 2014:567; Umney and Kretsos, 2014:574-8).

Figure 4: Share of self-employed by sector.


The above problems are reinforced because freelancers’ careers tend to be successive - going from one project to another - rather than (uninterrupted) linear, as is the case for employees (Morgan et al., 2013:406). This means they lack the prospective of gradual improvement of pay and security many employed enjoy. This makes it hard to start an established career. Many creative have to do uninteresting, underpaid of even free work in various stages of their career, either to compensate for period in which they have little or no income from their core business, or for reasons of networking and acquisition (Morgan et al., 2013:412; Umney and Kretsos, 2014:573). Many have mixed feelings about the latter. More than employees, self-employed depend on reputation, goodwill and the exchange of favours (Umney and Kretsos,
2014:586). Doing work for free may generate goodwill, but may also shape a dangerous precedent. Furthermore, it may hurt one’s self esteem to do a job but not get paid for it.

Some workers in the creative industry are worse off than others in this respect, for instance visual artists compared to creatives in advertisement or commercial business services. Ruyters (2005) goes one step further by commenting that these artists are indispensable for a vital and attractive creative city but are, due to their low and unstable incomes, the first victims of gentrification processes where these other creatives contribute to.

The position of self-employed and freelancers, being rather on their own and mostly lacking for instance a specific place in an office and an office community, makes it hard for them to unite against common problems (Kim, 2014:572). For one thing, many are not even fully aware of their rights in this regard, and of for instance unfair or even illegal treatment. If they are, their apparent inability to change things all too often results in fatalism and a reluctant acceptance (Umney and Kretsos, 2014:574). Labour market policy, finally, tends to overlook freelancers and self-employed, thus doing little to improve their situation (Mould et al., 2014:2437-8).

3.3 Creatives’ perspectives on flexible working relations

To be sure, not all workers perceive the new, flexible working relations in the same way, regardless of the problems mentioned above. On the whole, a more positive attitude towards flexible labour among workers can be noticed next to a negative, reluctant one. These different attitudes often, but not always, relate to the personal circumstances of workers and the way they got into a situation of precarious labour (Morgan et al., 2013:403; Mould et al., 2014:2452).

One reason for the increase in precarious labour is outsourcing by employers. Services that are not part of the firm’s core business, such as catering or distribution, are separated or outsourced to other, existing firms. One step further is the outsourcing of core tasks. In many cases this occurs by the lay-off of employees, who then become self-employed, often working for their former employer, but now themselves bearing the risks of the instability of markets. In the terms of Mould et al. (2014:2442) these are in many cases false freelancers (that are in fact employees) or forced freelancers (who only have one client), who got into a situation of precarious labour more or less involuntarily, and are less likely to have a positive attitude.

A more positive perspective is held by in particular young workers who consider self-employment and temporary employment as a way to avoid the ‘suffocating security’ and ‘corporate control’ of a regular job. On the one hand, a mix of romanticism and negative stereotypes seems to be involved. On the other hand, however, research in London indicated that freelancers indeed seem to do the more creative parts of the work, in particular the development of new products and services (Mould et al., 2014:2447). Younger workers of the so-called generation Y, particularly when higher educated, tend to favour a flexible life-style, including flexible employment (MGI, 2012:7). Thus, in order to attract and retain these groups, employers must provide options for remote working, either at home, in shared offices spaces or in various ‘third spaces’ such as coffee corners.

There is a tendency to regard a precarious working situation as an offer that creatives have to make for their artistic and intellectual freedom (cf. Morgan et al., 2013:403). Yet, as Ross
(2013:9) notes, making a personal sacrifice may be accepted among many creatives, but it is not a precondition of creativity. The above perspectives on the precarious working situation of creative represent the extremes of a range of opinions. In fact even if we limit our scope to the creative industries, it is hard to tell which perspective prevails among which groups of workers, as personality, professional success and a tendency to ‘keep up appearances’ may all obscure the picture (cf. Morgan et al., 2013:403). Especially young creative workers and start-ups tend to the more positive approach. Kim (2014:563-4) signals a strong belief among creatives in their own professional capacities and their ability to shape their career. Abbing (1993) already suggests that there is an, unproven and possibly untrue, belief among many creatives that they are not suitable for normal jobs. Nonetheless, freedom of corporate control and management systems is important for many creative, as is a sense of control over their creative product and their working periods (Kim, 2014:570). Hodgson and Briand (2013:311-2) describe how many creative workers tend to resist both traditional rational management models and the introduction of new models, both of which find it hard to deal with the creative production process. This may result in a ‘battle between creative and suits’.

In short, we may observe two dilemma’s regarding the above. First, creatives are considered increasingly important for innovation and economic growth, but this is not reflected in their pay and labour market position (Abreu et al., 2010:307; 318). On the contrary, they are confronted with relatively low and unstable incomes and insecure employment. Second, in spite of the long-term precarious labour market position of creatives, the creative industries remain highly popular with young people as they promise a ‘marriage of art and work’ (Morgan et al., 2013:398; 400).

3.4 Coping with flexible working conditions: examples

How do creatives cope in practice with flexible and precarious working conditions? Some examples may provide insight in this. Since the constraints of the current report did not allow extensive field work, these examples and those discussed in Sections 4.4 and 5.4 have been based on a reassessment of cases studied within the three-year INTERREG IVC project InCompass (www.incompasproject.eu). Several cases show how individual creative entrepreneurs and start-ups cooperate in some kind of collective, either by operating self-managed working spaces or by cooperating in the acquisition of large commissions.

CoFWRD/Project 161 (Medway, UK)

CoFWD (co Forward) is a co-working community and workplace at 161 High Street, Rochester, Medway. CoFWD/Project 161 provides support to starting creative entrepreneurs, particularly in programming, web-design, writing, blogging and music. At the time of the study in 2014 the project hosted 43 creative people who work independently or are employees of the four start-up companies located in-house. There are no more than three persons per business, although that is not a formal rule. All tenants, whether they are corporates or self-employed, are working on a commercial basis. Many do not focus on one activity but do several small things to survive, either several creative activities, non-creative work or neighbourhood activities. Only seven of them work full-time as creative entrepreneurs.

In practice CoFWD/Project 161 is a self-managed project, run by clients on the basis of a few rules and common sense. Everyone helps with tasks such as cleaning and maintenance. The entry of new tenants is by mutual agreement, invoices etc. are all by e-mail to minimise the
paperwork. There is no marketing strategy, but tenants are expected to spread the word, be active on social media and blogs, and to become involved outside their own work priorities (InCompass, 2014a).

Media Evolution City (Malmö, Sweden)

Media Evolution City (MEC) in Malmö provides workspaces and services to about 60 small firms of 1 to 5 employees in the digital media sector. It is a multi-tenant business environment that rents the ground floor of a new four storey building that opened its doors in April 2012 at the location of a former hall for ship building in the heart of the old industrial harbour area Västra Hamnen in Malmö. This location is next to the offices of Swedish Television, the Malmö Incubator (MINC) and the University of Malmö. On the top floors of the building larger companies are accommodated, many of which maintain relations with MEC. In addition, there is a range of meeting and conference spaces, as well as a restaurant. MEC is a private company owned by the non-profit organisation Media Evolution.

A main activity of MEC is matchmaking, i.e. facilitating collaboration by organizing physical proximity and contacts in the building between businesses in the different branches of media industries – being small or big – as well as with its members from academia and public sector. In fact, the small and medium-sized companies consider each other’s presence in the building (on different floors) and the opportunities for cooperation created by that co-presence as significant incentives to rent work space in the building. Ideas for innovations in products and services are indeed often conceived by small firms, but these tend to lack the size and weight required to carry these through. MEC creates a platform to manage business development projects in which they are matched with medium larger players.

MEC effectively also operates as a consulting company, making use of the specific expertise of member businesses ‘in the house’ to acquire and carry out commissions. In practice MEC functions as a contractor for commercial consulting assignments for external parties, which are carried out by incubatees. This generates about 25 percent of the income of MEC and allows incubatees to work on large assignments which they could have accepted as individual start-ups. Also, this way of working facilitates the cross-over relations within regional clusters that were mentioned in Chapter 1 (InCompass, 2013a).

Summary

The above examples show how young creative, all working as individual self-employed or in micro-enterprises, somehow organise themselves to some collective goals: to manage their own working space, or to collectively acquire large commissions that they could not handle individually. They also show how many creatives cannot survive on the basis of their creative work alone, and need other jobs or activities.

The collective acquisition in MEC is organized by the management, and is possible partly because of the strict focus of MEC and start-ups on specific sectors. It benefits the individual start-ups, but also MEC itself, that gets a certain income from it. An epilogue to the case of Project 161 also shows, however, that self-organized collectives of individual creatives may be fragile. In June 2014 CoFWD left the Project 161 building and shortly after closed. The self-management model essentially relied on the efforts of a few very committed residents, two of who got job/business offers elsewhere without other member taking over their responsibilities.
4 Changes in the required working and entrepreneurial skills

4.1 Introduction

The increase of flexible, often insecure working relations as described in the previous chapter, has implications for the skills needed by workers and entrepreneurs. Freelancers, self-employed and in many cases temporary employed are responsible for their own employability, and hence for maintaining and updating their own skills. As Morgan et al. state, these workers and entrepreneurs have to develop a ‘reflexive self’, considering their own qualities for employers and clients. They also have to be ‘occupationally agile’, being able to shift between different tasks and different jobs, either successively of simultaneously (Morgan et al., 2013:402). On the whole, the skills discussed in literature may be distinguished in two categories. First there are professional or vocations skills, i.e. those skills that involve the substance of one’s occupation. In addition, there are entrepreneurial and management skills that self-employed and freelancers need to set up and run a business.

4.2 Professional and vocational skills

Training of professional and vocational skills of students is from way back the task of education. Maintaining and updating these skills is important for workers, but this has mainly been taken care of by employers. These often organized or paid for training they deemed necessary, including an initial period for new employees. With temporary staff, employers are less likely to invest in training, while freelancers and self-employed are fully responsible themselves for maintaining their skills. Literature does not in general consider this a real problem for self-employed. Kim (2014:596) states that modern technology, especially mobile devices, required less advanced skills to work with than was the case with older technology. This has a significant impact on the required skills, as many workers need little more than a smartphone and laptop. Even for those that are less computer savvy, the problem is partly not one of the use of technology, but of attitude (cf. Varnali and Varnali, 2014:28).

Some authors suggest that the increase of outsourced and short-term employment may have adverse consequences in terms of skills, however. As Kim (2014:596) mentions, temporary workers cannot build up expertise. This is detrimental for their résumé, but also may also have an impact on the quality of their work and the creativity they are able to develop.

4.3 Entrepreneurial skills

Besides professional and vocational skills, the increase in flexible working relation make entrepreneurial skills more important than before. This is particularly the case for entrepreneurs, freelancers and self-employed. Viability and growth potential of a creative enterprise requires that an initial creative idea must be turned into a commercial product that can be marketed. On the whole, creative entrepreneurs and self-employed should not only be passionate within their discipline, but must also know how to run a profitable enterprise (Aggestam, 2007:35). Creatives might be expected to possess entrepreneurial skills and attitude because of the long-standing tradition of self-employment and precarious labour in the creative industries. Practice is different, however. One of the characteristics of creative industries according to Caves (2000) is that workers in these industries care so much about originality of their goods and integrity of their style of working and living that they are willing
to settle for lower wages than offered by 'humdrum' jobs, and there is a tradition to neglect entrepreneurial skills in creatives' education.

According to HEA/NESTA, the fear of many creative for damaging creative integrity is also being explained by robust and widely held conventional stereotypes of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in art, design and media academies (HEA/NESTA, 2007). Until quite recently, the academic community tended to place a higher value on cultural and creative originality - as component of professional and vocational skills - than on commercial success. These stereotypes are often inappropriate role models for students, suggesting that entrepreneurship is something beyond their reach and not relevant, or even detrimental to their activities. The report concludes that “students and graduates in art, design and media are uncomfortable with the term entrepreneur” (HEA/NESTA, 2007:67).

On the other hand however, students and graduates in creative disciplines are more likely than other students to start their own business than other students (HEA/NESTA, 2007:67). Likewise, creatives in general also seem less adverse of commerce than they used to be (Rutten et al., 2005:3). Partly, the tendency to start their own business is a matter of necessity, due to the fragmented structure of the sector. But whatever the current commercial attitude of creative students and entrepreneurs is, establishing a non-conventional image of entrepreneurship requires permanent attention by institutes for higher education (e.g. Brown, 2007; Taylor, 2007; Jacobs, 2009).

Focusing on management skills and capabilities, Pestrak (2007:111-2) summarizes four different types of deficiencies, challenges in his words, that need to be addressed: strategic thinking, i.e. making the choices about the direction the firm should go and what needs to be done to get there; leadership, i.e. the ability to define and implement the organizational structure and culture that make the assistants ‘do what they not necessarily want to do’; financial control, i.e. financial planning, budgeting, accounting and control per se; and management systems implementation.

The above implies that many freelancers and self-employed require coaching and training in entrepreneurial skills that they did not learn during their professional education. For start-ups in the early stages of their life-cycle support is often available, either by business incubators or other support or incubation programmes. Start-ups, if they meet the criteria for admission to the programme, can get various kinds of support, often including administrative, fiscal and legal advice or access to affordable loans. Furthermore, incubators or start-up networks offer access to networks of potential business partners and clients. Less support tends to be organized that aims at workers that become self-employed or entrepreneurs later in their career. Moreover, part of this group made this move due to outsourcing, rather that out of a deeply felt vocation.

4.4 Acquiring entrepreneurial skills: examples

Several examples below show how creative entrepreneurs and start-ups invest in professional and entrepreneurial skills, and how incubators and support programmes can contribute to this. It also show how in some cases skills of various creative entrepreneurs supplement each other, increasing their collective know-how and strengthening their position.
London Met Accelerator and Hatchery (London, UK)

The London Metropolitan University Accelerator specialises in the incubation of, and delivery of business development programs for high value, innovative, growing businesses in information and communication technology, interactive media, e-learning and design. It provides support for either individuals or small companies, over flexible timescales, with virtual incubation option. The Accelerator consists of an incubator and a pre-incubation programme, the Hatchery. There are 30 to 35 businesses in the incubator, and 55 in the Hatchery (February 2014). The Hatchery is just for students from London Metropolitan University, the incubator is also open for others. The main focus is on digital, technology and IT, but is shifting towards the creative industries lately.

The Accelerator is part of the university. The relation is important and mutually beneficial. In a way the Accelerator benefits from attitude changes in the British higher education system. Student satisfaction surveys and employability are critical for universities nowadays, more than the number of professors or the scientific output. Oxford and Cambridge stay on top whatever happens, but other universities have to undertake efforts to attract students. Particularly universities in the middle ground are struggling, also as, for financial reasons, it becomes more difficult for many people to go to the university at all. It has been proven that entrepreneurial training increases employability. This means there is an increasing pressure for academics to include this in the curriculum. Students are also a lot more aware of this. The incubator and the Hatchery are a means for the university to improve the employability of its graduates, which is increasingly important in the UK, also as a criterion for public funding. Meanwhile, students themselves are increasingly aware of the possibility to start their own business. The Accelerator offers them work space and a range of support services.

The Accelerator applies a collaborative approach to learning. It is considered important to share any knowledge within the building, as many start-ups deal with the same problems (something that is made quite explicit to start-ups entering the building). For example, it is considered crucial to have an IT firm in the building to help other start-ups. This principle is further stimulated by the presence of start-ups and business in different stages of maturity (early ideas or more mature businesses). In addition, there are mentors that can help start-ups informally.

The Accelerator’s Hatchery programme gives passionate students and graduates of London Metropolitan University the opportunity to transform an idea into their own start-up business, in a low risk environment. Every year there are 140 to 170 applications for the Hatchery. This is narrowed down to 60 to 70, who are invited for an interview. About 40 remain. Over a two-week period, these pitch their ideas. In the end about 20 remain, which are accepted to the program for six months, and have full access to all facilities. After these six months there is a final review. If they pass this, they are in the incubator for another six months. After a total of 12 months of support, they should be either viable as a business on their own, or attractive for investors (InCompass, 2014a).

Valnalón (Gijon, Spain)

Valnalón Technological City is a public agency dependent on the Council of Economy and Employment of the Government of the Principality of Asturias. It is established in the former steelwork of Duro Felguera in the heart of the former coal mining and iron and steel
What makes Valnalón rather unique is its programme to integrate entrepreneurship in curricula of all three levels of the formal education system in the region. Valnalón is now acknowledged as a best practice in the field of integration of entrepreneurship education and business development by several regional, national and European bodies. Its current staff counts 24 people of which about half is working in the field of entrepreneurship education. The other half focuses on entrepreneurial promotion (incubation and business support) and administration.

The objective of entrepreneurship education is to foster knowledge, abilities and attitudes which create the basis of an entrepreneurial spirit of children and young people. Basically, it aims to foster their entrepreneurial abilities and skills to take initiatives, focus on innovative problem solving, and be flexible but with an open mind for planning and organization. The desired effect of this programme, a more enterprising regional society, contributes to social change and progress in various respects. In this programme Valnalón works together with schools and teachers (and students) as both clients and collaborators in integrated projects. The programme starts at the primary level of education and ends up in vocational education and university. The programme is acknowledged by the official Secondary Education and Vocational Training Curriculum. After the tertiary level of education, entrepreneurship, or an entrepreneurial approach, should grow further, ideally leading to a rich ‘harvest’ of entrepreneurial people. Thereto, the programme also attempts to stimulate personal motivations for lifelong learning to foster entrepreneurial skills and spirit.

The entrepreneurial promotion programme consists of three sub programmes which together make up the final stages of the Entrepreneurship Training Chain model of Valnalón:

- **Create** - pre-incubation. For would-be entrepreneurs who come to Valnalón with a good idea but no skills and resources to put it into practice.
- **Develop** - incubation. A business centre that rents out office and workshop space as well as provides services and facilities to already existing companies.
- **Consolidate** - helping to build new entrepreneurial infrastructures to accommodate companies.

Finally, Enterprising Network aims to interconnect the programmes presented above. It supports local employers and schools to get in touch and to establish fruitful, effective and sustainable partnerships.

Valnalón has built up and maintains a strong engagement in education, aiming at introducing the broad field of entrepreneurship in curricula at all three levels of formal education. Its ties to schools, universities, the regional education board and the national Ministry of Education are quite solid. Furthermore, it recently started the programme Enterprising Network that narrows the gap between educational institutes and employers (businesses) by mobilizing students in practical projects with companies (InCompass, 2014b).
MINC (Malmö, Sweden),

MINC (Malmö Incubator) is based in a former industrial building in the western harbour area. It started in 2002 as a pilot approach to business support and to encourage the growth of new companies in the city. MINC operates a 24-month programme of support to start new businesses. It can accommodate up to 30 incubatee companies but it gets about 200 applications per year. Of these, 17 are selected for a 3-month in-house trial period. Their plans and ambitions are assessed by two business coaches. Fifteen of these pass the trial-period and continue the remaining 21 months of the programme. The primary selection criterion is entrepreneurial talent; it is considered more important than the actual business plan, which can be adjusted. The incubation programme itself is standard, but it can be adjusted for specific incubates if necessary. All applicants to the incubator programme must found their company before entering the incubator (90% of them are shareholder companies). All incubation takes place in the building, since MINC does not believe in virtual incubation (i.e. incubation programmes that do not include the provision of a physical work space).

Figure 5: Vocational and entrepreneurial skills taught at Valnalón, Gijon (left) and MINC, Malmö (right).

MINC focuses on IT, digital media and games, and has a distinct international perspective. It puts a lot of efforts in maintaining close relations with the IT cluster in Silicon Valley. MINC’s business coaches are highly trained in methods that are common in the Valley. They all receive the same training at Stanford University. Many ties also exist to firms in Silicon Valley, for example to Apple, which has bought one of the incubatee firms from MINC. Incubatees make study visits to Silicon Valley, which are organized collectively to share costs, and which are paid by grants from the government (InCompass, 2013a).

Summary

The above examples discuss various approaches to the development of entrepreneurial skills for creatives. The case of Valnalón - and to some extent the Hatchery - show the value of starting early in students’ educational career, in secondary school or even before. Rather than waiting for graduates to apply for training and coaching, it actively stimulates them to think about the possibilities of starting their own firm. Benefits for the start-ups and benefits for the regional economy go together in this case. Valnalón can only do so, however, due to its relation to educational institutions and to public authorities that decide on the educational
curricula. The Hatchery has this relations partly by default, being part of London Metropolitan University.

The case of MINC shows the value of concentration on one sector (IT and media). This allows MINC to target its entrepreneurial training at the specific needs and peculiarities of that sector. This includes the tailor-made training of business coaches and the access to international networks of IT firms, both of which a more general training programme could not offer. The Accelerator, finally, puts a strong emphasis on mutual learning by start-ups. This is an aspect seen in many incubators and shared working spaces, but rarely it is put into practice as consistently as here.

Bot in these examples and in literature, most attention is paid to the acquiring of entrepreneurial skills, rather than vocational or professional skills (with the partly exception of IT skills). This suggests that the latter are perceived as less problematic, as most creatives are quite driven in their work.

5 New, non-traditional working environments

5.1 Introduction

The emergence of new working environments involves on the one hand the increase of remote working, i.e. working at home or at other locations outside the office. In the other hand it also entails the increasing popularity of offices and other physical work places that are in some way different from the traditional. In particular the latter are no new phenomenon to the creative industries, as artists always tended to work in ateliers and workshops, and for instance advertisement agencies and architects have a long-standing preference for offices that stand out in some way. In recent decades, however, these trends have become more general, both within the creative industries and other sectors. The outlandish campuses of some of the IT giants in Silicon Valley come to mind - described lavishly in Dave Eggers novel The Circle - but the same can be observed at a much more modest scale, and much closer to home.

5.2 Remote working

IT technology made remote working possible for a much larger group of employees. The spread of broadband internet connections was crucial for this (MGI, 2012:3), as was the introduction of affordable mobile devices such as laptops, tables and smartphones (Beekmans and De Boer, 2014:65). As has been mentioned above, many creative workers need little more than a laptop and a smartphone to do their job, and can work virtually everywhere where internet is available, whether at home or at other locations such as espresso bars, libraries, in public transit or even outdoors. This does not mean face-to-face contacts are not important anymore; on the contrary, they are essential for contact with colleagues and clients (e.g. Grabher, 2002; Storper and Venables, 2002:4), but they don’t necessarily take place in office buildings rather than in a variety of ‘third places’ such as pubs, restaurants and above all the coffee bar. This leads to an increase in the demand for such semi-public places (Beekmans and De Boer, 2014:64; 80).
Remote working may bring about some difficulties. Richardson and McKenna (2014:731-2) signal the issue of discipline, as well as a fear of some remote workers to be forgotten, as they are ‘out of sight, out of mind’. For them, the office serves as a place to socialize and have informal meetings. This is the more true for freelancers that have less bonds to fellow workers anyway (cf. Morgan et al., 2013:407). Moreover, remote working can reinforce the blur of work and free time. As Richardson and McKenna (2014:725-6) state, office and work can be perceived as different spaces, but they are not fixed entities as is often assumed. Due to IT workers feel ‘obliged’ to be assessable all the time, also outside office hours. Remote working tends to further dissolve the boundary between work and free time, as it essentially means taking work home, where work activities tend to spread over the day. Florida’s (2002) notion of the ‘Time Warp’ covers it all: interwoven time schedules and intensification of time use, both in the short term (day of week) and over a longer period of time.

Mixing work and free time can be especially tempting for workers in the creative industries, because they generally perceive their work as attractive and pleasant - making it effectively a ‘seductive vampire’ (Kim, 2014:564).

5.3 Non-traditional physical working spaces

Creatives have specific location preferences that to some extent correspond to the non-traditional working environments that are an element of the Work of the Future. This was emphasized for instance by Florida (2002) and his concept of quality of place, and has been analysed numerous time in different cities and regions.

There is a tendency to overgeneralize the location preferences of creatives. Not every one of them prefers to live and work in an old factory with a pub downstairs. Preferences differ between people, sectors and life stages. For instance creatives who have families tend to value good schools and nearby shops over pubs and nightlife. Also, workers in the more technology-oriented sectors often have different preferences from those in the more ‘artistic’ branches. The first for instance put a higher value of space and the natural environment. The distinction between ‘bohemians’ and ‘nerds’ (e.g. Marlet, 2009), although an overgeneralization, is illustrative in this respect.

Whereas the above focuses mainly on the urban and neighbourhood level, it is true also for the working place of creatives itself. Many creatives value symbolic qualities such as authenticity, vibe and ‘meaning’. Accordingly, they have a preference for working places in locations and buildings that offer a lot of these qualities, such as old industrial buildings, schools or port areas that have a certain ‘roughness’. They also tend to favour liveliness and buzz, which is not always found in the same areas, but may be available nearby or can partly be generated by the type of buildings and the way they are used. Typically, for instance, common spaces such as shared offices, meeting rooms, kitchens and coffee corners are deliberately included as meeting places.

5.4 Non-traditional working spaces: examples

Ample examples can be given of non-traditional working spaces for creative workers and firms. These concern more or less conventional working places in non-traditional buildings and environments (e.g. a former wharf), or working spaces that are non-traditional themselves (typically forms of shared office spaces). The latter is mostly the case for young start-up firms,
while more mature firms tend to want their ‘own’ space. Sometimes non-traditional working spaces are combined with types of remote working.

**Hub Milano**

The HUB Milano is the first Italian point of the international Impact HUB network of physical spaces where creatives and professionals share working spaces, have access to common resources and develop business opportunities. Currently, there are more than 25 Impact HUBs worldwide, who together have over 4,000 members. HUB Milano uses the franchise approach of the international HUB network to support businesses by providing businesses or individual entrepreneurs shared office space, mentoring and networking. The HUB focuses in particular on social entrepreneurs, not necessarily in the creative industries.

The philosophy of the Hub is to let people work side by side, to share and exchange knowledge etc., in order to activate innovation and new ideas through collaboration. The HUB sells ‘time-based membership’ for the use of certain spaces (work, meeting spaces etc.) in the building. Membership reflects the different needs of people for accessing the HUB and using its services. The building consists of a highly modular space of 500 m² with adjoining courtyard. The space is composed of a large central hall, which serves as a space of co-working by day and a space for large events in the evenings and at weekends, as well as several smaller rooms and a huge kitchen, the Valcucine.

The HUB Milano has 340 members. Some buy a few hours a month only to make use of the digital services, others buy much larger ‘packages of hours’ to work here, up to 24/7 (unlimited membership). The length of the ‘bought time’ can change from month to month, including months of no time at all, and membership is in principle not limited to a maximum period. If members are not in the HUB for some time, they stay connected to the community by social media (InCompass, 2013b).

**Trinity Buoy Wharf (London, UK)**

Located near Canary Wharf and the O2 dome, Trinity Buoy Wharf is a mixture of modern and historic buildings. The latter are part of the Buoy factory, the newer ones are especially designed for the growth of creative industries. Trinity Buoy Wharf is a thriving centre for the arts and creative industries with a community of over 350 like-minded people enjoying the unique, though rather isolated, riverside location. It offers a variety of work spaces; there are no less than 110 different spaces, some very small. Regular workspaces range from 200 square feet (18.6 m²) to 1,000 square feet (92.9 m²) and allow a great flexibility for tenants. Because of the location outside the centre of London the rent level is relatively low. As Trinity Buoy Wharf could not afford new buildings made from traditional materials, a large number of work spaces has been constructed from transformed redundant shipping containers (Figure 6).

Trinity Buoy Wharf also temporarily rents out spaces for the arts, corporate hospitality, weddings, conferences, exhibitions filming and many others. It offers amenities such as studio and gallery space, a pier, boat club, school, rehearsal rooms and two dining options. On concert days there is a ferry to the O2 dome on the opposite banks of the River Thames. Several larger organisations are also located in the area, such as the English National Opera, the Faraday School, the Prince’s Drawing School and the University of East London (InCompass, 2014a).
Media Evolution City (Malmö, Sweden)

Media Evolution City (MEC) in Malmö (see Section 3.4, p. 14) is located in a former port area that includes a mixture of new buildings and old industrial buildings and port facilities. Thus, it combines modern facilities with an industrial ‘feel’. The concept of the building was designed by Media Evolution in close cooperation with architects and the property developer Wihlborgs Fastigheter AB - an unusual way of working by developers. Due to the contributions of Media Evolution, the concept facilitates ‘new ways of working’ characterized by collaboration, synergy and knowledge sharing that add to achieve the objectives to create an environment for innovation and business development by MEC.

MEC rents the entire ground floor of the building. It has divided this floor in spaces for small businesses that are subleased to Media Evolution member firms, most counting 1 to 5 workers. The ground floor has a capacity of 500 workers and is practically fully occupied. In addition, there is a range of meeting and conference spaces for rent, as well as a restaurant in the building. There was no need to advertise the availability of the work space by a media campaign, word of mouth does all the work. The floors 2 to and including 4 of the building are rented out by the owning company to existing medium-sized companies in the media industries. Most of these companies range between 10 and 100 employees. While many of these companies may have considered each other as competitor, now many of them are working together.

Unplanned informal networking is encouraged by the open physical structure of the ground floor. MEC is designed to be ‘a city in a city’. There are ‘streets’ and public facilities at ground floor level, and staircases are designed to be meeting places. Interaction is further increased by using windows rather separate spaces (InCompass, 2013a).
Summary

The cases described above show only some of the many types of non-traditional working places that have emerged in recent decades. Nonetheless, they show a wide variety, from the shared office space in the HUB Milano that can be rented on a flexible basis according to entrepreneurs’ need, to the working spaces in redeveloped industrial heritage in case of Trinity Buoy Wharf. MEC provides kind of a combination of this, offering shared or individual working places and a range of shared amenities. Trinity Buoy Wharf also shows the attractiveness of non-traditional working environments for other than creative workers and entrepreneurs. It generates part of its income from renting out spaces for social and cultural activities.

In particular the example of the HUB Milano shows how types of remote working can still include a form of cohesion. Members of the HUB have access to working places and activities in the HUB Milano or in any other HUB worldwide. This implies, to some extent, a separation of the physical working place and its social and networking aspects, and effectively increases the latter.
6 Conclusions

The review of the main characteristic of the Work of the Future in the preceding Chapters has necessarily been concise, rather than comprehensive. Nevertheless, insight was gained in three phenomena that are the main elements of the Work of the Future as conceived here. First, this concerns the emergence of new, flexible working relations, which mean larger groups of workers are confronted with the insecurity of precarious labour and the need to take their career in their own hands. Second, the skills required of workers are changing, in particular with regard to entrepreneurial and business skills. Third, new types of working environment have become more common, either remote working at home or elsewhere, or working places that are still physical, but that are shared and located in unconventional buildings and environments.

These elements of the Work of the Future may be more familiar to creative workers than others, as they have been part of the work in arts and culture for decades, if not centuries. However, this does not concern all of those working in what are now labelled the creative industries. Besides, in particular the need for a more entrepreneurial attitude poses a problem for many, as such an attitude has not been part of their mind-set, nor of their education. This has been changing only in recent years.

The cases described above focus on start-ups, self-employed and micro-businesses in the creative industries, ranging from musicians and playwrights to web designers and games developers. They show the problems related to the Work of the Future, but also various approaches to deal with these problems. These approaches focus not so much to the mitigation of job and income insecurity, but certainly to the provision of working spaces and the development and sharing of skills. The latter seem issues creative workers are better able to control, either individually or as some form of collective, while job and income insecurity is often regard with a sense of powerlessness or, from a more romantic but not necessarily more justified point of view, as a ‘price’ to be paid for creative autonomy.

If we look beyond current trends, several questions remain. First of all, what will be next? The developments that characterize the Work of the future and the trends underneath it will continue to evolve. Without losing ourselves in mere speculation, can we say anything about the speeds and direction of future developments? This was partly addressed by Le Blanc and Seibel (2015), who pointed at the increasing role of for instance information brokerage. Furthermore, what does Work of the future mean in terms of policy? So far self-employed have been largely invisible in policy and legislation (Mould et al., 2014:2437-8), despite their vulnerability in terms of job and income insecurity, social security and pensions. On the whole, policy and legislation often is lagging behind reality, but how can policy-makers keep up with developments regarding the Work of the future? And finally, what does Work of the future mean for the functioning of creative workers and entrepreneurs, and for their involvement in wider business clusters? What is the role of characteristic of Work of the Future in the connection between creative industries and regional clusters, and the unlocking of innovations?

Within Crealab, Activity 6.3 aims to delve deeper into questions such as the above. As such, it forms a counterpart of the review in the current report.
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