

Kluwer Copyright Blog

The Future of culture. Financing and governance in the digital age. World Knowledge Dialogue 2023

Marianna Foerg (King's College London) · Thursday, July 27th, 2023

June this year saw Montreux hosting an international congress, bringing together 50 experts from various disciplines, discussing the future of culture in the digital age. The congress was also streamed online and the recorded videos of the three plenary sessions are available to view [here](#).

According to the [University of Geneva's website](#), one objective of the congress was to “*explore the consequences of digital technologies on culture, in particular on the creative industries*”. Importantly, the congress participants were to come up with the actual policy recommendations to improve the existing legal framework. The programme of the event can be found [here](#).

Prof. Yaniv Benhamou (Faculty of Law/Digital Law Centre, University of Geneva) hosted the congress. The expert panels were divided into four different groups. Each of the groups had to discuss a particular issue and come up with policy recommendations.

Several keynote speakers delivered their presentations during the first two plenary sessions, as follows:

1. Change in cultural and creative industries

- Mathieu Jaton (Director of Montreux Jazz Festival) – “*How new technologies and new medias will change the music business*”
- Anthony Masure (Head of the Art and Design Research Institute, HEAD – Genève (HES-SO)) – “*Paying for culture or paying for artist?*”

2. New modes of remuneration for creators

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- Aude Launay (Independent researcher, curator, text worker) – “*The culture of Web3 economies*”
 - Neil Beloufa (Visual artist and producer at EBB) – “*SCANNERS*”

3. New modes of governance

- Primavera De Filippi (Director CNRS, Faculty Associate Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University) – “*Blockchain and the Commons. An exploration of blockchain tech and anti-rival economics*”

4. Change in heritage institutions

- Emmanuelle Bermès (Ecole nationale des chartes, PSL, Digital technologies applied to history) – “*Change in heritage institutions*”

5. Circulation of creation & cultural globalisation

- Yves Citton (Professor of literature and media at the University of Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint Denis) – “*From Attention Capitalism to Cultures of Curiosity*”

Following the presentations from the keynote speakers, on the second day of the congress the four expert groups had a chance to present their proposals for potential reforms. Briefly, those proposals were as follows:

Group 1: Role of intermediaries and machines in creation

Group 1 discussed the role of the platforms and intermediaries in accessing creations. Their main idea was that computer algorithms are a threat to cultural diversity. Therefore, companies that own the content should not own the algorithms, and *vice versa*. User would have to choose the algorithm. FRAND licenses could be used. Algorithmic recommenders could be certified by an international agency (such as UNESCO, European Commission or European Council).

Group 2: Role of the public in the creation

Group 2 identified three areas of concern: 1) increasing agency of the public (i.e., the ways of understanding how content is promoted and how diversity is generated); 2) increasing algorithmic transparency (e.g., clarity as to when the content has been sponsored, as well as reporting obligations to the public; and 3) human creation versus machine (i.e., protection and promotion of human creativity).

Group 3: Web3 for a better remuneration

Group 3 proposed two main ideas: 1) automatic and transparent redistribution of payment system (automating the payments via smart contracts; possibilities of UBI for young artists and pension funds for retiring artists); and 2) Temporary Autonomous Art Zone (TAAZ) (creation of bubbles of small ecosystems for trading art).

Group 4: Role of collective management organisations

Group 4 outlined three main ideas: 1) promotion of cultural diversity and quality of outputs (i.e., the need to improve the socio-economic conditions of professional creators and distinguishing them from amateur creators); 2) taxation of the turnover of streaming platforms (i.e., a fair share of the value of the platforms shall be allocated to the creators); and 3) acknowledgement and promotion of the function and the value of the collective rights management.

Summarising the main outcomes, Prof. Benhamou outlined his own takeaways from the group discussions, which were mainly in two areas – the implementation of cultural diversity and the use of an interdisciplinary approach in solving the problems of the digital age.

Indeed, it is hard to make any predictions about the human and machine dichotomy. However, the more we discuss the possible issues of the digital age, the more prepared we feel for whatever the future may hold.

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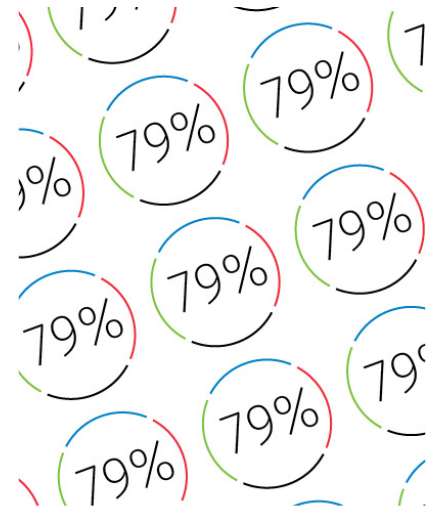
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