Institution: University of Ulster
Unit of Assessment: 35
Title of case study: Influencing the development of public policy on creative digital participation

1. Summary of the impact

This case study demonstrates sustained impact on UK government and devolved government policy in the area of creative digital participation; on the regional implementation of that policy; on publicly funded community initiatives that benefited from that implementation; and on the NI school curriculum. It will also outline the beginnings of similar impact on an international scale: on government education policy and school and university curricula in, for example, Namibia and South Africa, where the underpinning research has been disseminated.

2. Underpinning research

This is an on-going, multi-dimensional programme of research that has generated impact from its high public profile and its cumulative effect as well as from the individual outputs. Originating in the education policy work of **Moore**, who joined the University in 1999, and developed through collaborations with members of the committees and boards on which he has since served, it has more recently been taken forward on a research-group basis at the University of Ulster's Research Centre for Creative Technologies (RCCT).

As Chair of the Education Working Group of the NI Film and Television Commission (NIFTC; now NI Screen), Moore was responsible (with Cary Bazalgette of the British Film Institute) for *A Wider Literacy: The Case for Moving Image Media Education in Northern Ireland* (2004). This paper was widely recognised as the first major contribution to the debate about education and the digital ecology in NI. Its wide dissemination led to Moore being invited to apply to join the Content Board of OfCom, and in 2008 to chair the NI Media Literacy Hub (NIMLH), an OfCom-sponsored body that included representation from the BBC, the Education Guidance Service for Adults (EGSA), and the permanent secretaries of devolved government departments. Moore's work with these two bodies led to the National Media Literacy Conference coming to the University in 2009 and the co-opting of Moore to the Digital Economy Working Group (2009), tasked with carrying out research and development for the Digital Economy Act 2010. It also facilitated access to the primary resources that would inform a second document, Moore's *Digital Participation Plan for NI*, aligned with the *National Plan for Digital Participation* (both in 2010). The *Digital Participation Plan for NI* examined the state of digital take-up in NI and made a number of recommendations as to how the new literacies ('infoliteracies') could be enshrined in both formal and informal practice across the education sector and, crucially, the arts. Following this, Moore collaborated with the then Visiting Professor to the RCCT, **Lilley**, to produce a third major document, *Counting What Counts* (published in 2013), commissioned by Arts Council England and Nesta.

There have been three main strands in Moore's programme of research into digital practice:

1. investigations into the potential and actual impact of new technologies on literacy (broadly defined) and creativity in the context of formal education and conceptual artistic practice. These have spanned a wide range of approaches, from creative practice (a sound exhibition for the National Gallery in Namibia, *Cross(referenc)ing the Namib*, which examined how digital technologies can illuminate issues of identity in a developing national culture) to theory (*A Wider Literacy*), and the ethnographic (a year-long project leading to the *Tablets in Schools* report in 2013) to the pedagogical (an RCCT project introducing Raspberry Pi technologies to eight-year-olds to investigate how coding impinges on developing wider definitions of literacy).

2. The measuring of wider public attitudes towards the digital space. Working on an on-going basis through the NIMLH, this has been carried out by means of public consultation and meetings with key stakeholders and interest groups (2009-). These have included the Department of Education (DE), the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), and the Department of Employment, Trade and Investment (DETI); EGSA; Screen NI; various community groups (e.g. Northern Visions Broadcast Company); and, latterly, the Culture Company Ltd., Derry (responsible for developing the UK City of Culture 2013 programme and, more important in this context, its legacy strategy).

3. Assessing the possibilities (and awareness of those possibilities) of big data in the arts sector. A development of certain aspects of the *Digital Participation Plan for NI*, this strand of the research aimed to locate the practicalities of reaching out to arts audiences in the digital space. Preliminary conclusions were outlined in *Counting What Counts*, with further assessment (of take-

up of the metrics tools proposed in the document) programmed for the coming years.

3. References to the research

Moore G P & Bazalgette C (2004) A Wider Literacy: The Case for Moving Image Media Education in Northern Ireland. NIFTC.

Moore G P (2007) *Cross(referenc)ing the Namib*, National Gallery of Namibia: Windhoek (NB submitted to RAE2008).

Moore G P (2010) *Digital Participation plan for NI*. OfCom, London.

The Digital Economy Act 2010 (DCMS): www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/24/contents

National Plan for Digital Participation 2010 (BIS/DCMS):
www.digitalparticipation.com/sites/default/files/national-plan/National-Plan-Digital-Participation-Final.pdf

Lilley A & Moore G P (2013) *Counting What Counts*. Nesta, London.
http://www.nesta.org.uk/about_us/assets/features/counting_what_counts

Moore G P (2013) 'Tablets In Schools: An Ethnographic Study'. RCCT.
http://rcct.ulster.ac.uk

4. Details of the impact

The Working Group discussions (chaired by Moore) that formed the starting-point for *A Wider Literacy* involved the full range of stakeholders; this meant that the impact of the document was relatively swift. The strategy derived from it by the NIFTC was taken up by four departments of the devolved government: DE, as part of its 'EmPowering Schools' Strategy, the Department for Employment and Learning, DCAL and DETI. Within a year, it had led to the founding of three flagship digital learning centres across NI. These were located at the Armagh Multi Media Access (AmmA) Centre, Studio-ON in Belfast, and the Nerve Centre in Derry (see testimonial from the Chief Executive of the Nerve Centre). The recommendations in *A Wider Literacy* have also been adopted in Namibia (where they are now part of the national curriculum; see testimonial from Chief Technical Trainer, Namibian Broadcasting Corporation) and South Africa (where they have informed teacher-training programmes at City Varsity, Cape Town).

The research and development carried out by the Digital Economy Working Group (of which Moore was a member 2009-10) had national legislative and policy impact in that the Digital Economy Act 2010 and the National Digital Participation Plan were derived directly from it. More significant, however, is that while spending cuts meant the Plan was shelved by the incoming Coalition Government in the other home nations, the NI devolved government immediately implemented Moore's *Digital Participation Plan for NI*, believing that its recommendations would have especially beneficial impact in the post-conflict environment. These recommendations have been enacted by government through the work of the NIMLH. One basic change brought about has been a significant redirection of resources into the digital space, resulting in an increase in the use of digital platforms for governmental business (ample evidence of this can be found at www.nidirect.gov.uk, perhaps especially at www.nidirect.gov.uk/department-of-agriculture-and-rural-development, where there is now extensive online provision for the farming community; see testimonial from Director of OfCom, Belfast).

But it is in the area of education that it has had most effect: the implementation of the *Digital Participation Plan for NI* has allowed schools more freedom to explore the benefits of digital technologies in the classroom, as evidenced in the long-term projects conducted by e.g. Wallace High School, Lisburn (an ethnographic study into the impact of 'disruptive' technologies on a large secondary institution), and St Mary's Primary School, Tempo (a pedagogical study of the impact of creative technologies; see testimonial from a teacher at St Mary's Primary School, Tempo).

Counting What Counts has, in the short time since its publication in February 2013, had considerable influence on the debate over big data and the arts. It has also had impact in practical terms: the metrics tools it examines, and whose integration it proposes (in a so-called 'big-data dashboard') are to be piloted formally by various Arts Council England funded bodies. The sectoral impact of Moore's programme of research more generally is evidenced in the number of invited presentations, including keynote addresses, he has been asked to make at international policy and industry conferences, e.g. national media literacy symposia in Greece, South Africa and Namibia, and a national television forum in Argentina. The research was also showcased at the Westminster Get Creative Forum in 2012, and cited by the European Commission as a key text for the EU: it

was the object of an invited keynote address at a meeting of EU culture ministers in Lithuania (October 2013; see e-mail from Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania). Finally, it has ensured increased visibility for NI as an international leader in the theory and practice of creative digital participation.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact Testimonials from:
Director of OfCom, Belfast
Education Officer, Screen NI
Chief Executive, The Nerve Centre
Chief Technical Trainer, Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
Teacher, St Mary's Primary School, Tempo
Invitation from Head of the Division of International Relations and European Affairs, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania
http://rcct.ulster.ac.uk