Final report

Summary evaluation of The Space

May 2013
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1 Executive summary

1.1 Background to The Space and this evaluation

In May 2012, Arts Council England and the BBC launched The Space, a pilot digital arts service. The Space was conceived as a temporary, not-for-profit digital service through which audiences could access digital works covering a wide range of arts.

Following the completion of the initial pilot phase, May to October 2012, Arts Council England and the BBC commissioned independent evaluations of different aspects of The Space programme, in addition to a series of internal reviews. MTM was engaged to draw on this material to produce a summary evaluation of The Space pilot that would assess the degree to which The Space had met its objectives and highlight the key learning points that could inform its future development.

1.2 How did The Space deliver against its guiding objectives?

The Space pilot was designed to meet three overarching objectives: to build digital capacity in the arts; to support digital creativity and experimentation; and to connect arts organisations with a wider audience and with each other.

Building digital capacity

There was strong evidence that The Space was a success in capacity-building terms. The majority of the 50 arts organisations who were commissioned to develop content as part of the pilot scheme (hereafter, participants) described their involvement as having had a major impact on their digital capacity. Mentoring and training schemes provided by the Arts Council and BBC Academy partnership and the BBC were highly regarded. The principle of commissioning arts organisations of varying capability (rather than just those already digitally experienced) was seen as forward-thinking and developmental.

Participants identified positive impacts on their digital capacity in three main areas: digital skills and capabilities (eg enhanced expertise in digital content production and rights management); culture and mind-set (eg a willingness to consider digital components of future projects from the outset); and the strength of participants’ partner networks. Eighty-three per cent of participants developed at least one new significant partnership (mainly a technical or production partner) and over 80 per cent said they would like to work with this partner again. In addition, there was some evidence of change around organisations’ structure and systems and processes – 60 per cent reported changes in roles, giving greater prominence to digital. Some participants had built new digital approaches into their core work, made changes in roles and responsibilities, and, in three cases, hired new staff.

Supporting digital creativity and experimentation

Arts organisations and audiences alike agreed that The Space has significant potential as a platform for innovative and experimental content. Sixty four per cent of users described The Space as a good place to find high quality and innovative art. Participants who made content for The Space were particularly positive about the opportunity to experiment with new ideas. Even when the ideas were not seen as cutting edge by the wider sector, they were new to the organisations involved and thus innovative in their own terms.

Participants tended to rate their own projects highly, but were more mixed about the degree to which The Space content as a whole was innovative. Other arts organisations commenting on The Space felt that whilst there were a few projects admired by all, which could point the way forward, the artistic output overall was a little too
safe, although the audience praised it. Many peers and users felt that the service was too reliant on video and ‘capture’ projects,\(^1\) and that the technical platform should allow for greater interactivity. While audiences responded positively to the look and feel of The Space, they said that it would benefit from a clearer voice and identity.

**Connecting arts organisations with audiences and each other**

Between May and October 2012 The Space attracted over 1 million visits from 630,000 users, and an average of 30,000 unique users a week. Forty-three per cent of the overall audience was international. Combined with the positive audience feedback about the value of the service, this suggests that The Space did demonstrate its potential as a new model for engaging arts organisations with audiences online. Of the 3,612 Space users who responded to an online survey, 28 per cent had discovered new artists or organisations for the first time, 20 per cent visited an artist’s or organisation’s website after seeing their work on The Space, and 4 per cent purchased tickets for an event. The Audience Appreciation Index was high (77.3 per cent) with most users saying they were likely to recommend the site to others. Around three quarters of the audience rated highly both the quality and the range of content available.

The majority of The Space commissions had their own project-level audience objectives. The evidence suggests that approximately half of these project-level audience objectives were met or exceeded, with the remaining objectives either not being met, or not being measurable. Participants’ views about whether The Space was a success in connecting their organisation with audiences varied significantly. Some organisations had a positive audience experience, but others were disappointed by the size of The Space audience and general levels of awareness of the service. The lack of visibility of The Space was also remarked upon by audience members.

Some users reported that The Space had enabled them to overcome barriers to arts activity (such as mobility, distance and cost). However, a significant number of users who responded to the online survey had experienced difficulties related to the accessibility of the site (11 per cent); navigating the site (15 per cent) and finding content (17 per cent). A significant minority also reported technical problems in viewing content.

### 1.3 Summary of key lessons arising from The Space pilot

Four overarching findings from The Space pilot are consistent across the various evaluations and should be considered in the design of any future iteration of the service. In addition, a range of more specific, operational and process based lessons are highlighted that could help improve the service going forwards.

**There is demand for the audience-facing content and experiences provided by The Space**

Users of the service tended to be positive about both the concept and the content on offer: three quarters of survey respondents rated the quality of material on The Space as good or very good. Stakeholders throughout the arts sector were positive about the value a service such as The Space can add as a platform for reaching audiences but also as a stimulator of creative and digital innovation.

The evidence available thus suggests that there is demand, both within the arts sector and from a wider audience, for a service offering the kind of content and experiences provided by The Space. The following lessons offer some practical examples of what might make this service a more attractive proposition to audiences going forward.

**There are a number of ways in which the service could better meet audience needs**

The evaluations suggest a number of ways in which The Space could be refined to better meet audience needs going forward:

- The Space would benefit from a clearer identity and stronger editorial voice

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\(^1\) MTM London, The Space Participants’ Evaluation, 2013
- The site navigation should be redesigned to support more systematic search and discovery by users (user testing found that the information architecture did not lend itself to the systematic discovery of content)
- Greater integration with social media would make it easier to share, comment and discover content
- The service should be less reliant on video and should enable more interactivity
- Streaming and browsing should be improved to avoid any issues with viewing or listening to content
- Accessibility should be improved

**Greater emphasis on marketing and content syndication would help future versions of The Space reach a wider audience**

The Space would benefit in future from a more proactive syndication and distribution strategy, whereby content is made available to audiences via third party sites so as to maximise audience reach beyond The Space platform. These third party sites would likely include social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, but also others, such as those belonging to newspapers and specialist arts services.

Evidence from the evaluations suggests that awareness of the pilot remained low amongst the potential audience. A better resourced marketing effort to raise public awareness of The Space would significantly increase audiences. Leveraging the BBC’s own assets and cross promotion could also have a significant impact in this area.

**The Space has demonstrated that it can be a powerful vehicle for developing digital capacity and for stimulating creativity and innovation – however, possible tensions between its varying objectives need to be carefully considered and managed**

The Space had many positive impacts in terms of capacity-building. In addition, its most successful creative commissions point the way to a future vision for The Space that incorporates linear ‘capture’ projects, content about art, and bespoke, interactive ‘born digital’ projects.

However, the pilot showed that it is challenging to deliver the full range of The Space’s capacity-building, audience-facing and creative media objectives equally. The highest rating projects in audience-terms will not necessarily be the most innovative creatively, and the most successful capacity-building projects will not necessarily be the highest rating in terms of audiences or creative innovation.

Going forward, there is an opportunity to develop a strategy which better accommodates these tensions. One suggestion might be to develop a commissioning strategy that differentiates more clearly between different types of projects, while continuing to accommodate a range of content: from more mainstream, popular commissions designed to attract large audiences, through to more innovative and experimental projects. Capacity building should continue to be important.

**Other operational lessons for improving the service**

In addition to the high level points discussed above, the evaluation findings suggest a range of more specific, operational and process-related lessons that might help improve The Space in the future:

- A more collaborative and iterative commissioning process, allowing for more dialogue with arts organisations, could lead to more interesting and ambitious projects with a clearer sense of purpose. The timescale was regarded by some as too challenging and the process too ‘linear’: submit project, approve or not approve, go to build
- Individual projects should be supported to develop objectives that are fit for purpose. During the pilot, some were insufficiently ambitious, some too ambitious, and many of the stated objectives did not have a measurable target
The technical platform should be both sufficiently robust and flexible enough to accommodate a broader range of project ambitions. For example, during the pilot, the platform restricted the potential for user contributions.

The content publishing, ingestion and management processes should be streamlined and refined. Modifications should take into account the requirements of participants (e.g., for regular, up to date data and greater control of their content) and also the fact that many of them are relatively inexperienced in this area.

Analytics and data capture, and the communication of this information to arts organisations, should be improved.

The success of the training programme run through the Arts Council and BBC Academy partnership should be built upon, with additional in-depth training in a range of high-demand areas such as rights management.

The successful mentoring programme could be further refined. For example, by ensuring mentors are engaged from the beginning of each project, and by using mentors with a wider range of skills, such as expertise in ‘born digital’ projects that go beyond video capture.
2 About this report

In May 2012, Arts Council England and the BBC launched The Space, an experimental digital arts media service and commissioning programme that aimed to transform the way people connect with, and experience, arts and culture.

Following the completion of the pilot phase, May to October 2012, Arts Council England and the BBC commissioned independent evaluations of various aspects of The Space programme and undertook a number of internal reviews.

MTM London was then engaged by the Arts Council to bring the key learnings together into one succinct summary evaluation of The Space pilot.

The work was undertaken by MTM in February and March 2013 in partnership with Magic Lantern CEO, Anthony Lilley. The evaluation was managed at the Arts Council by Paul Glinkowski and at the BBC by Susannah Simons.
3 About The Space Programme

3.1 Programme background and objectives

The Space is an experimental digital arts media service and commissioning programme launched in May 2012 by Arts Council England in partnership with the BBC.

The Space was conceived as a temporary, not-for-profit and free-to-air online service through which audiences could access a wide range of arts digitally, and in particular those that were taking place as part of the London 2012 Festival and Cultural Olympiad. The service was designed with three core objectives that relate to the development of the arts sector:

- To build digital capacity in the arts
- To support digital creativity and experimentation
- To connect arts organisations with a wider audience and with each other

The Space went live on 1 May 2012 and could be accessed online, on mobile platforms and some digital TV platforms (ie Freeview HD channel 117). The pilot phase of The Space ran from May to October 2012.

The Space is a major project within Arts Council England’s creative media policy and its Public Value Partnership with the BBC.

Exhibit 1: Overview of The Space and its objectives

3.2 The context for the development of The Space

The Space was conceived and developed within a relatively short timescale, but emerged from years of discussion and joint working between the two principal partners within the framework of the BBC and the Arts Council Public Value Partnership, 2009-12. Planning for The Space began in December 2010; funding was agreed by both partners in September 2011; and a Memorandum of Understanding agreement to proceed was signed in November 2011. The
Arts Council and the BBC wanted the service to be live in time for the Cultural Olympiad, to capture the activity and reflect the spirit of 2012.

The BBC provided the technology solution, which included commissioning the technical platform. Work on this began on 1 November 2011. Day to day management of the site was also provided by the BBC Live Service team who were responsible for receiving, processing, uploading, assuring the quality and compliance of, publishing and generally managing the service content.

The Arts Council commissioned and funded much of the content on The Space through a grants programme. This was launched in November 2011, attracting 750 ‘expressions of interest’, from which the Arts Council and the BBC shortlisted 130. Each shortlisted organisation was contacted by the BBC in advance of making a full application. In February 2012, 51 commissioned grants were awarded to 50 organisations. Some of these organisations had just four months to develop and produce work for the service launch on 1 May 2012.

Alongside the commissioned grants, the Arts Council was also legally responsible for the service and was in charge of branding and communications. Resources for brand development, marketing and communications were limited to less than 1 per cent of the overall project budget, and the service was ‘soft launched’ in May. The Space PR launch strategy drew over 124,000 unique visitors on the first day, securing significant national broadcast, press and digital media coverage including on the BBC Ten O’Clock News. All promotion then stopped until mid-July due to technical issues with the platform.

3.3 Overview of the type of projects featured on The Space

Arts Council England invested a total of £3.5 million in 51 original commissions to be featured on The Space. These were produced by 50 organisations which, collectively, represent a cross-section of the publically funded arts sector in England by artform, region and size. Two thirds of these participants were Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations (hereafter, NPOs). However, there were some commercial organisations (e.g. Faber and Faber) and a number of arts organisations that had not received ACE funding before (e.g. John Peel Centre for Creative Arts). After The Space went live, further commissions were made by the arts funding bodies in Scotland (3), Wales (6) and Northern Ireland (3). The Space also featured archive material from the BFI, the Arts Council Film Collection and the BBC. Some ‘direct commissions’ were also supported, to fill identified gaps in content and to cover important events. Additionally, The Space hosted a small number of submissions from artists and organisations who put forward their work for inclusion on the service.

There were three overlapping editorial strands to the 51 original commissions:

- **Strand 1 – Capturing the event or artistic work:** Projects focused on the capture or reinterpretation and dissemination of a live event. Some of the projects were available live through real time streaming, while others were uploaded after the event

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2 London based organisations received 50 per cent of the National portfolio funding budget in 2011/12, compared to 47 per cent of funding to London based organisations in The Space. The spread of participants by artform was also broadly in line with National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) levels, although music received comparatively more funding from The Space (28 per cent compared with 12 per cent) and theatre proportionately less.

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• **Strand 2 – About the event or artistic work:** Commissions designed to provide additional content about an artistic work, so as to extend audience knowledge, understanding and engagement. For example, behind-the-scenes access through interviews with staff and cast members.

• **Strand 3 – Creating new work:** Using The Space to experiment with the different artistic possibilities offered by emerging technologies.

A significant proportion of the commissions spanned multiple editorial strands: for example, a simulcast of a live show that included additional behind-the-scenes content about the event.

**Exhibit 2:** Distribution of projects by editorial strand and the funding (in millions) each strand received

![Distribution of projects chart](chart.png)

Each commission was led by an arts organisation and delivered through partnerships with technology and production suppliers, supported by a BBC mentor.
4 To what extent did The Space meet its objective to build digital capacity in the arts?

4.1 Overview

Responding to the shift towards digital within society as a whole, arts and cultural organisations are going through a process of digital capacity building, involving new staff, new skills, new partners, new software and systems and new working processes. Reflecting this, digital capacity building was one of The Space’s core objectives. Each organisation funded to realise a commission was assigned a mentor and encouraged to participate in a formalised training programme run by the BBC as part of its contribution to The Space.

The evaluations showed that The Space was successful in building digital capacity amongst participants, with the following views typical:

- “This was the first time sounduk Arts has worked on a project for which filming was an integral part. It was a massive learning curve for us in terms of the technical and financial scale of film work (ie the range in quality and therefore cost).” sounduk Arts, Sonic journeys
- “It’s rare for us to undertake such a large and complex technical project, so the experience of commissioning, project managing, dealing with external agencies and managing multimedia content was incredibly useful in building up the team’s skills.” Faber and Faber, 60 years in 60 poems

Over 80 per cent of organisations rated both the BBC training courses for The Space and the BBC mentoring system as helpful or very helpful. Typical reflections on this included:

- “Our mentor was fantastic… He called in favours and gave up additional time, and we owe huge thanks to him for the end result.” Turner Contemporary, Margate Digital TV

As The Space commissions were delivered between two and six months before the evaluation, only immediate capacity building impacts were captured. Further work would be needed to assess the longer term impacts. That said, positive changes were observed in participants across three main areas: skills and capabilities, culture and values, and partnerships. In addition, more limited positive change was observed across structure and staffing and systems and processes. The definitions of these categories, and the extent to which positive impacts were reported in these areas, are shown in Exhibit 4 and described in more detail below.3

Exhibit 3: Analysis of digital capacity impact across five key areas

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3 MTM analysis: a score of 0 denotes low levels of change, and a score of 5 reflects significant impact amongst participants
4.2 Skills and capabilities

Participants, who were often starting from a low base of experience and skills, identified learnings in a range of areas related to the commissioning and production of digital content and services. Learnings covered many key skills including production management, multi camera shoots, managing live streams, reconceiving digital content and using editing software. Specific examples included:

- “Practical skills around scheduling and timetabling – for example, shoot days and planning to ensure all the short shoots happened within a finite timescale.” Watershed Arts, InSync
- “A better understanding of the technical management skills necessary to produce a live stream.” Turner Contemporary, Margate Digital TV

Organisations’ understanding of rights and intellectual property issues was also enhanced:

- “There has been significant learning around company structures to hold rights, and a deeper knowledge gained of contractual details both with sub-contractors and the musicians.” Vortex Jazz, Vortex last Sunday
- “We’ve learnt a huge amount around rights clearance, we now have a different contract for film production based on what we learnt from The Space – we updated it as a direct result of taking part in the programme.” Whitechapel Gallery, Behind the Scenes

4.3 Culture and mindset

There was evidence of culture change in participating organisations, with many interviewees claiming that the programme had led to a change in mindset, approach and aspirations for their work. Many said they would now consider digital components to projects at the outset of their development as a matter of course:

- “When anyone makes a show, we now build digital into our thought process, and think about the online life of this show – not as an add-on, but as part of the show itself.” Contact Theatre, Countryboy’s struggle
- “The most significant impact is that when we see the work we can consider the digital possibility of presenting this work…it has given us confidence that there is a digital future for presenting the type of work we support and we are just beginning to learn about it.” Crying Out Loud, Circus Postcards

Participating organisations also reported that The Space had increased their confidence about what they could achieve using digital technology, and about what was possible.

4.4 Systems and processes

Organisations’ operating systems and processes were not found to be significantly altered by participation in The Space. This is not necessarily surprising given that The Space funding was on a short-term, one-off basis, meaning sustained process and/or systems change would either have to be cost-neutral, or funded from elsewhere.

Where examples of participants building new digital processes into their core work were reported, they related mainly to integrating digital planning into the earlier stages of project development, or purchasing video editing and other production software for use in-house.

4.5 Structure and staffing

Organisations’ structures were not found to have been considerably altered by participation in The Space. This might be linked to the one-off nature of the project and the fact that the evaluation was carried out almost
immediately following The Space pilot. Several organisations were contemplating permanent internal changes, but these had not yet been implemented.

The impact on staffing was more significant; just over half of the participants said that The Space had led to a permanent change in roles and responsibilities in their team. Sixty per cent reported changes in roles, giving greater prominence to digital. In addition, three participants said that The Space had resulted in them taking on a new hire:

- “Since The Space we have taken on a new full time employee who is responsible for digital development. Taking advantage of digital opportunities for future productions has been moved further up our list of priorities.” Shakespeare’s Globe, Globe to globe
- “The Space allowed us to take on a full time digital officer and she has been absolutely superb.” National Theatre of Wales, The nature of crisis

### 4.6 Partnerships

The Space helped to encourage partnerships between arts organisations and organisations in the wider creative media and technology sectors. All but three of the participating organisations were involved in at least one commercial partnership or supplier relationship as part of the programme. Eighty-three per cent developed at least one new significant partnership. These were usually very successful, with over 80 per cent of participants stating they would like to work with the same partner again. The most common partnership type involved the arts organisation procuring services from either an independent digital content production company or from a technology provider (eg a website design and build agency). Over 100 independent suppliers were contracted by arts organisations as part of The Space’s value chain, injecting money into regional and local creative and technical media sectors.

Working with specialist suppliers enabled participants to gain valuable experience: to procure specialist services; to learn skills directly through exposure to new techniques and technologies; and, crucially, to produce work in partnership that greatly extended what they could have produced alone:

- “The Space allowed us to fulfil a long term ambition of working in a close and sustained partnership with a production agency. This has resulted in so much learning and will allow us to produce much higher quality work.” Eclipse Theatre, 10 x 10
- “It taught us a lot about commissioning suppliers and developing partnership working, bringing in expertise when required rather than trying to do everything ourselves.” Fabric, Time and place

### 4.7 In summary

Overall, organisations were extremely positive about the capacity building impacts of The Space:

- “We now know how to raise our game when it comes to producing innovative dynamic material for online use… it is exciting to think we can start to produce content for a digital platform that reflects the quality of the physical work and physical space… to industry standards.” Whitechapel Gallery, Behind the Scenes
- “Our horizons and ambitions have been fundamentally changed for the better.” Britten Sinfonia, Cultural Britain: state of the nation

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4 In this respect, The Space builds on the success of a previous BBC and Arts Council England collaboration, Building Digital Capacity for the Arts, which was launched in March 2011 and run in partnership with and delivered by the BBC Academy
“[We are] beginning to think about work specifically created for digital audiences.” Aldeburgh Music, The Aldeburgh World Orchestra Project
5 To what extent did The Space meet its objective to support digital creativity and experimentation?

5.1 Introduction

The second objective of The Space was to support digital creativity and experimentation. This objective applies equally to the artistic projects commissioned and submitted to The Space, the editorial content developed around these works, and the service itself.

To test the success of The Space in this regard, Arts Council England and the BBC commissioned:

- A peer review of the quality and innovation of the service, and the projects hosted on it, bringing together the views of 32 project mentors and of arts organisations and artists who had not taken part in The Space
- Evaluations of six specific projects, carried out by Arts Council artistic assessors as part of a wider artistic assessment programme
- An online user survey, tracking audience usage of and opinions about The Space
- User experience research, outlining the findings from eight in-depth user testing sessions

In addition, all 50 participants who took part in the commissioning programme were asked to review and provide reports on the extent to which their projects had met their original objectives, including around quality and innovation.

5.2 Does The Space service support creativity and experimentation?

All of the groups consulted agreed that The Space concept has real potential as a platform for creative and experimental content. Both peer reviewers and audience members felt that The Space filled a gap in the market, and were pleased that an attempt was being made to address this:

- "It offers something completely unique to us that we've never seen before – somewhere to experiment and create, and place our content." Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation
- "It's a great new platform for cutting edge creative and arts work." Sheffield Doc/Fest, From the Sea to the Land Beyond
- "I just love that it exists! It's been very exciting to see what's being added, and I'm thrilled that the site covers so many areas of the arts." Audience member, Pulse survey

However, some arts organisations felt that there was scope for the service to be more innovative and experimental and to have a clearer identity. Three broad themes emerged in relation to this: brand and editorial voice; interactivity; and ease of navigation.

5.2.1 The Space would benefit from a clearer identity and editorial voice

Peer reviewers, participants and audience members all felt that the service does not yet have a developed identity and voice. Although the site is consistently branded with The Space logo, most people wanted the site to give a clearer sense of the purpose and vision:

- "It's not clear who The Space is for and what its personality is." Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation
- "I don't really know what I was expecting – the site's aims are unclear to me." Audience member, Pulse survey
5.2.2 The Space could be more interactive

Many interviewees from the peer review commented on the lack of interactivity, both with individual projects and of the platform as a whole. The over-emphasis on 'sit-back' video and the lack of opportunities to share content via social platforms were commonly remarked upon:

- “Projects sit on The Space platform – it doesn’t look like they interact with it in any way.” Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation
- “There’s so much video on there – it’s like BBC4 online.” Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation
- “Enabling users to interact with the service through Twitter or Facebook would automatically make users more involved.” Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation

5.2.3 The Space would benefit from an information architecture that allows greater ease of navigation

Almost all peer interviewees commented on site navigation. There was a perception (not correct) that the site is structured around Arts Council England’s artform definitions. This was seen as a barrier to audiences discovering content, as it did not reflect how arts organisations and audiences interact with and search for content online. It was suggested that structuring the site around experiences – for example, around archive and video-on-demand content rather than artform – might reflect audience usage more accurately.

A perceived lack of editorial context around projects also contributed to audiences and peers reporting difficulties discovering content. Almost a quarter of comments made by users were around navigation and site design:

- “It’s not straightforward or obvious what content is on offer. Although there’s not yet a vast amount of content available, the navigation isn’t very intuitive.” Audience member, Pulse survey

5.3 Is the artistic content hosted on The Space high quality and innovative?

For The Space pilot, Arts Council England, with BBC input, initially commissioned 53 separate projects from 52 organisations, each of which would provide a stand-alone output for the service. Two organisations were not able to realise their projects, leaving a total of 51 commissions from 50 organisations.

Views varied about the degree to which these commissions were high quality, innovative and inspiring. The most commonly held views are summarised below, categorised according to three broad groups of respondents: Space participants who provided the content being reviewed; their peers from within the arts sector; and audience members who consumed it.

5.3.1 The artists’ and arts organisations’ view

While opinions varied widely, the majority view was that the body of work on The Space was ‘good rather than great’. One or two examples of ground-breaking artistic content were consistently identified, but, overall, there was felt to be too much emphasis on video:

- “Some individual projects were really interesting, such as the Will Self essay, but so much of what else is on there is oriented around video, particularly in the Dance category – these don’t feel like great or unique ideas for their artforms.” Space Associate, Artistic Evaluation

A number of works were highlighted and praised for exemplifying quality in different ways:
Exhibit 5: Projects mentioned as outstanding by the Artistic Evaluation

**High production values: Russell Maliphant Company, Erebos**

This project used creative filming techniques to capture a dance performance. The result was a high-quality, visual output that built on, rather than replicated the live experience. 

"It's been beautifully filmed, and you wouldn't be able to see something like this in the theatre — but it doesn't feel cutting edge as a piece of innovative art."  
Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation

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**Great idea: London Philharmonia, Universe of Sound: The Planets**

Almost all interviewees viewed the Philharmonia project as one of the most unique and interesting projects on The Space, praising the inventiveness of the idea, as something that has not been seen elsewhere online.

"It's not just beholden to video – it's allowing audiences to explore and create their own experiences."  
Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation

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**Building connections with audiences: Sheffield Doc/Fest, From the Sea to the Land Beyond**

Building an emotional connection with audiences was seen as one important element in creating high quality artistic experiences on The Space, and From the Sea to the Land Beyond was seen as a best-in-class project on this front.

"I loved this project – a great piece of art creates a strong connection with audiences, and this project really does this."  
Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation

Whilst some projects, such as the Globe to Globe series by Shakespeare’s Globe, were lauded for making performances more widely available and creating a resource for future audiences, peers who were experienced in digital production noted that there was scope for such projects to be more experimental and technically ambitious.

There was a perception that the balance of projects chosen for The Space favoured large, mainstream organisations and did not fully represent the sector overall, or practice in particular artforms:

- "It is important to represent all these genres, I like the breadth of the site, but to make each one a complete representation of that sector a greater number of projects will be needed, particularly greater representation for smaller organisations."  
Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation

Arts organisations felt that in future The Space could give more emphasis to nurturing and showcasing cutting edge, innovative practice:

- "There aren’t many projects on the service that feel cutting edge, or like R&D experiments – it feels like a shame, and a bit of a missed opportunity – this is where the real innovation is going to lie, in trial and error, and in testing projects over time."  
Mentor, Artistic Evaluation

A small number of projects were consistently identified, by arts organisations and audiences alike, as showing innovation in terms of artform development and production, creating genuinely new experiences:

Exhibit 6: Examples of innovation in the artform

**Innovation in art form and content about the arts:**

- **Britten Sinfonia, Cultural Britain: state of the nation:**  "Listening Machine was one of the only projects I saw on The Space that felt truly digital in the sense that the whole experience only exists online, in this place."  
Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation

- **Faber and Faber, 80 years in 60 poems:**  "An excellent complement to Faber’s traditional publishing programme. The use of technology to contextualize the poetry, and present it in new forms, adds to a reader’s experience of the work."  
Arts Council Artistic Assessment

- **Renaissance One, Tongue Fu Flicks:**  "It's an extension of the poetry art form – allowing access to a completely new experience of poetry. I was transfixed by it."  
Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation

- **London Review of Books, Will Self’s Digital Essay:**  "A completely different approach to how you experience an essay – you can interact with it and create your own navigation."  
Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation
In terms of **innovation in distribution**, a number of projects were seen to offer an innovative way to experience artistic content:

Exhibit 7: **Examples of innovation in content distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation in distribution:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pilot Theatre, The York Mystery Plays</strong>: “This was an ambitious project – taking a very large piece of outdoor theatre and filming it for an online audience to enjoy in a way that goes far beyond the more conventional proposition of just filming it and transmitting it.” Arts Council Artistic Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shakespeare’s Globe, Globe to Globe</strong>: “It’s distributing something widely that only a very small number of people have access to in the live arena.” Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sheffield Doc/Fest, From the Land to Sea Beyond</strong>: “The postcard creator is incredibly engaging – it’s a really touching experience, that give you a sense of ownership over the project.” Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>London Philharmonia, Universe of Sound</strong>: “It’s using digital to create a new experience of a live event – it’s doing something new with something that already exists.” Arts organisation, Artistic Evaluation</td>
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In general, and as set out above, the majority of work on The Space was seen by arts organisations as good rather than great. The majority of projects were felt to have delivered a high quality artistic experience or to have been highly innovative, with only a small number of projects delivering both outcomes. Very few projects were felt to be neither high quality nor innovative.

Exhibit 8: **Illustrative overview of artistic content**

5.3.2 **Space participants’ view**

The majority of participants regarded their own output as **high quality and innovative in their own terms**, whilst acknowledging that it would not necessarily be seen as innovative or high in quality for a more expert content producer such as the BBC. Over 90 per cent of participants rated their project as having strongly met or met its objectives overall, including its quality and innovation objectives.

Where participants expressed reservations about their own project, these often related to limitations in The Space platform and/or the short development time. A **significant minority of the participants believed that the technical platform had limited their vision**, reducing the scope of their artistic output. Limitations to the technology platform meant that some organisations, such as London Review of Books and Blast Theory, opted to host their projects on
external micro sites. Other micro sites were co-hosted on The Space, such as the John Peel record collection and the York Mystery plays. However, in all cases navigational issues on the micro site meant that users found it difficult to find their way back to The Space home page. In addition, several organisations had envisaged better integration with social media to enable users to interact with their work, and believed that their end product was made less effective as a result.

Overall, participants were more reserved about the degree to which the content elsewhere on The Space was innovative and high quality than they were about their own project:

- “A lot of the work on the site is interesting and enjoyable but I am not sure you can say that it represents the best of what is out there in terms of being innovative...” Space participant
- “Some of the projects are extremely high quality, but overall the story is mixed...although this is perhaps to be expected given the range of projects...” Space participant
- “The Space project didn’t really lend itself to innovation; we have been producing digital content using these techniques for some time. The opportunity was around the funding allowing better execution of the end product rather than doing something truly new.” Space participant

The most digitally experienced organisations tended to be more challenging in their judgements on innovation, whereas organisations coming to digital content production for the first time were inclined to be more favourable in their assessments of innovation.

A small number of projects emerge from the participants’ evaluation as stand-out projects in terms both of quality and of degree of innovation:

- The Britten Sinfonia’s Cultural Britain: The State of a Nation, was a first for the organisation but also for the sector. The project used a piece of software to monitor the Twitter activity of 500 people around the country and translate the sentiment on their Tweets into music. External interest in the project was signalled by the fact that Twitter made a video about it from its head office in San Francisco
- The John Peel Centre for Creative Arts, John Peel’s record collection, represented a step-change for the small, newly-formed organisation that produced it. It provided a compelling audience experience that made clever use of Spotify, and gained strong user figures and press coverage

Overall, participants in The Space valued the opportunity to experiment and take risks and push boundaries in digital content production. Without the incentive of Space funding many of the organisations involved would have lacked the time, money or inclination to conceive and implement their projects. There was strong support for the continuation of this type of opportunity:

- “This focus on experimentation – freedom to generate new ideas balanced by structured support through the mentors and funding – is important, rare and deeply valued by everyone who took part.” DanceXchange, Playground
- “We appreciate that for Arts Council commissioning original work is very risky, we don’t direct our artists so it’s hard to know what output will be generated. It is incredibly important to continue to invest behind more high risk commissions as it gives us the hugely valued opportunity to make high quality new works.” Artangel, A room for London

### 5.3.3 Audience view

Audiences tended overall to be complementary about the quality of projects hosted on The Space: 74 per cent of users in the Pulse Survey rated the quality of content on the site as either good or very good.

Users generally also felt that The Space offered audiences something unique and exciting – 64 per cent of Pulse respondents felt The Space was a good place to find innovative and excellent art:
• “The Space is an extraordinary - and very necessary - venue for new and innovative art. I love it, and refer it to my students and friends.” Audience member, Pulse survey

• “For a new medium I think it is a great place to see new and innovative artforms.” Audience member, Pulse survey

• “I like that it offers something different from the routine ‘popular’ TV programmes, something more intelligent and considered.” Audience member, Pulse survey

The Space was praised and appreciated for allowing people access to arts organisations and, in particular, to events, that many would not otherwise have access to:

• “I have never been able to experience the Globe Theatre before. The Space provides a wonderful opportunity on-line.” Audience member, Pulse survey

• “You should get as many things up there as possible, it’s great for democratising theatre/opera and getting more people to see things that they wouldn’t be able to afford to see or be able to see due to distance/being free at the time when things are on!” Audience member, Pulse survey

That said, the range of organisations represented on the site was perceived as rather ‘mainstream’ and London-centric.

• “It seems relatively mainstream – The Globe, Tate, Serpentine, John Peel.” User, User testing research

• “At the moment it doesn’t seem to be offering anything to anyone outside a central-London urban arts eclectic audience.” Audience member, Pulse survey

Issues were also frequently raised around difficulties of navigation and the technology platform. Almost half of the comments from the Pulse survey related to these areas:

• “The content and quality is excellent. My main suggestion is about navigation. Once something’s off the front page it’s hard to find it, or to know it’s there.” Audience member, Pulse survey

5.4 Summary

Arts organisations and audiences alike agreed that The Space has significant potential as a service providing creative, high quality, innovative and experimental content. The commissioned organisations were positive about and appreciative of the opportunity to experiment with new ideas, and most felt they had pushed the boundaries of experimentation in their own terms.

Peers, participants and audiences expressed a wide range of views about the extent to which the content on The Space, and the service overall, was creative and experimental. This reflects the fact that art often polarises opinion, and also reflects different levels of expertise and awareness of what is possible using digital media.
6 To what extent did The Space meet its objective to connect arts organisations with a wider audience and with each other?

6.1 Introduction

The third objective underpinning The Space was that it should explore new models for connecting arts organisations with a wider audience and with each other. At a programme level, the Arts Council and the BBC aimed to test the demand for arts experiences through internet connected devices, to understand more about the audiences for these, and to gain insights into their needs and behaviours. At a project level, the majority of Space commissions had audience-related objectives, ranging from straightforward audience targets for a simulcast live performance, through to broader audience development objectives, such as to reach a new or younger audience.

6.2 What did we learn about audience demand for The Space?

From 1 May to 31 October 2012, The Space attracted over 1 million visits, from over 630,000 unique users. It averaged around 40,000 visits per week by 30,000 unique visitors, who recorded a total of over 2.5 million page views. The Space audience very largely accessed the site through laptops, tablets and mobiles; only 3 per cent of users accessed content through IPTV (‘smart’ TV).

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions about demand for The Space from these headline numbers as the service was ‘soft launched’, with a limited marketing budget, the brand was new and untested and there were technical issues, particularly within the first six weeks of the service. However, those who used the service tended to be positive about the concept and the content on offer. Three quarters of respondents rated the quality of the content on The Space as good or very good. Audiences also rated their overall impression of The Space highly, at an average of 7.6 out of 10, where 1 is ‘poor’ and 10 is ‘excellent’. Users appeared keen to share their experiences on The Space site, with a third doing so via Facebook and email, and a fifth through Twitter.

A small number of projects were disproportionately popular compared to The Space content as a whole. Of the 51 initial commissions, John Peel’s record collection was by far the most popular in terms of audience visits, securing four times the number of visits as the next most popular commission. The overall traffic to The Space displayed two large peaks: one at the launch, driven by a combination of the launch PR, and publicity around the commissions, including the John Peel record collection; and one in October, following a further PR push and material related to The Beatles’ Magical Mystery Tour being featured as part of the Arena Hotel collection.

Whilst John Peel and the Magical Mystery Tour content were the most popular in terms of size of audience, some other commissions showed stronger performance in terms of the depth of engagement by those who visited: for example, Sadler’s Wells’s film Sita Oh Sita had low bounce rates (37.4 per cent, compared to an average of 56.9 per cent for The Space website overall) and an average page view time of 13.28 minutes (compared to a 3.36 minute average).5

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5 Bounce rate refers to the percentage of traffic that lands on the site but leaves immediately. Dwell time refers to the average period of time spent by a user on a given page or site.
6.3 What did we learn from The Space about the audience, their needs and behaviours?

The Pulse survey\(^7\) of 3,612 respondents showed that 61 per cent of visitors to The Space were male and \textbf{76 per cent of visitors were aged 35 or over}. There was a significant overseas audience, with 43 per cent of visits coming from outside the UK. Within the UK, The Space audience was London-centric, with one in three UK visits to the service made within the capital. The Pulse survey suggests that the typical The Space user in the pilot phase was likely to be a \textit{keen online and live arts consumer}: over 83 per cent of respondents said they had attended three or more arts events in the past year.

Mosaic profiling was used to analyse which English socio-demographic groups were using The Space the most.\(^8\) This analysis showed that the most common profile group, compared to the general population, was \textbf{Liberal Opinions}: young, well-educated city dwellers enjoying the vibrancy and diversity of urban life.\(^9\) Within this group there was a particular preponderance in two user sub-types:

- \textbf{Urban Cool}: successful city dwellers owning or renting expensive flats in fashionable inner urban locations
- \textbf{Bright Young Things}: well-educated young singles paying high rents to live in smart inner city apartments

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\(^6\) Note, data is only for Space commissions and excludes popular BBC editorial pages including the Arena Magical Mystery Tour pages

\(^7\) The Pulse survey was an online self-selecting user survey, so respondents are not necessarily representative of overall users of The Space

\(^8\) Mosaic analytics combines a wide range of information from over 400 sources to create a summary of the likely characteristics of each UK household

\(^9\) Note that it is possible for over three quarters of The Space audience to be aged over 35 but for the most common The Space socio-demographic group by the Mosaic profile to be “young, well-educated city dwellers” for a number of related reasons: the average age of UK population is 44, therefore 35 is comparatively young; and Mosaic data uses postcodes and only describes the average characteristics of a person in that group, therefore you could be classed in a demographic where one of the characteristics of the group is being young but actually be 40 or 50 or more
A set of hypothetical use cases for The Space are presented below, derived from an internal click-stream analysis of The Space users. This analysis suggests a complex picture of how people are consuming arts online, and their motivations for doing so:

- **User case 1:** users interested in a particular artist or organisation, who came to The Space because of an interest in a particular commission and were prepared to engage with that content in-depth. This group often accessed projects through direct links from an organisation’s own website or social media pages. For example, the data around the *Sita Oh Sita* project suggests a very engaged audience who came specifically to the site for that content from social media platforms (reflecting Sadler’s Wells’ sophisticated use of social media). They were often sufficiently interested when they got there to watch the full video, resulting in a low bounce rate, and average dwell time on this page of over 13 minutes. Further examples of audiences with strong connections to participating organisations were evident in user feedback comments:
  - "I was emailed by the BFI about their live streaming of Champagne." Pulse survey

- **User case 2:** engaged arts fans who came to The Space to explore the service, rather than for a particular commission, or who arrived at the site through a particular link and then went on to explore it further. For example, two thirds of visitors to Turner Contemporary’s Tracy Emin and Stephen Fry interview stayed on The Space site and went on to explore further material.

  The average duration of a user visit increased substantially throughout The Space pilot. During May 2012 the average site visit was two minutes and six seconds but by September this had risen to six minutes and 13 seconds, potentially indicating a more engaged user-base developing as the service matured. Many of the comments left by users reflect this mindset and use-case:
  - "Most importantly I found things I was not looking for! And this was great." Pulse survey
  - "What really interests me with The Space was the unexpected encounters [sic]. I think I know what I want to see but The Space takes you on a journey of discovery to the unfamiliar." Pulse survey

- **User case 3:** visitors who came to The Space to experience events that they would otherwise be unable to reach due to location, disability or cost. When asked about access to live events, 13% of Space users stated that their access was limited by a disability. Many users also said that The Space allowed them to access shows they could either not afford to see live, or could not travel to see:
  - "This is a great way of providing access to performing art for people who are excluded by expense, distance or not owning a car." Pulse survey
  - "I am delighted I have found this site…. I can’t travel on public transport without assistance and have to rely on people to take me places in cars so this has opened up a whole new world for me." Pulse survey
  - "It’s a great way to try out unfamiliar artforms without spending huge amounts of money [sic]." Pulse survey

### 6.4 What did the audience say about the quality of The Space service?

There were two broad areas where users were asked to provide feedback on The Space service: content available on the site; and the look, feel and usability of the site.

#### 6.4.1 Quality and range of content on The Space

The user response to material on The Space was generally positive, with 77 per cent of users rating the quality of the content as good or very good. The range of content also scored well, with 71 per cent of respondents rating it as good or very good. In particular, users appeared to like the fact that The Space brought a wide range of material together in one place, some of which was not readily available elsewhere:
• “All excellent, a great database of information like an online exhibition centre.” Pulse survey

• “I love the variety of all the arts in one place.” Pulse survey

• “Great to have sound, film, art, music and information all together [in one place]. Fantastic.” Pulse survey

• “I am dissatisfied with the provision of cultural content on television generally and this will be a welcome alternative.” Pulse survey

The service was mostly perceived as focusing on video material, with audio, textual and interactive content less often noticed and discussed:

• “It is a ‘YouTube’ site. A film website.” Cogapp user testing research

• “A video showcase of the latest cultural and artistic talents - video is the main thing.” Cogapp user testing research

6.4.2 Audience feedback on The Space service

The user response to the aesthetics, ease of navigation and accessibility of The Space was more mixed than the response to the content on the service.

Over two thirds of Pulse survey respondents rated the look and feel of the site as good or very good and The Space attracted an audience appreciation index rating of 77.3 per cent for overall user impressions.

However, as with the peer reviewer and participant findings (5.2.1), some users believed that the service did not yet have a sufficiently clear proposition statement, purpose or voice:

• “Participants missed a clear proposition statement ... [they]... generally overlooked information related to the scope, proposition and contributing organisations.” Cogapp user testing research

• “I think it is difficult to get information on what the general idea of the site is – you have to navigate to the bottom of the page to the ‘What is The Space’ link. This information should be highlighted in one of the main menu options at so that it is immediately accessible - this would make it easier for newcomers to understand the concept of what you are doing.” Pulse Survey

In terms of usability, user response was generally positive about the layout of the site, with the main navigation patterns intuitively well understood and regarded as being good at allowing users the chance to come serendipitously across artforms and artists:

• “The top categories were self-explanatory and generally seemed to work to provide a sense of orientation and the scope of The Space.” Cogapp User Experience Research

• “You can stumble across something you would not normally look at.” Cogapp user testing research

However, user testing found that the information architecture did not lend itself to the systematic discovery of related content. Some users also described themselves as overwhelmed by the large volume of content available. The users recommended a series of fundamental changes to address these issues, including differentiation of layout and look and feel for the homepage as well as sub-category landing pages and a metadata-based promotion of related content on the contents page.

Users with visual or auditory impairments rated the accessibility of The Space site as very poor, which is a significant issue for the service given that 13 per cent of the respondents to the (self-selecting) Pulse survey described themselves as being limited by a disability in some way:

• “The experience of the 2 blind users (both who work in the Arts) using the site – on Windows PC + Jaws, Voiceover on Mac and Voiceover on iPad – was dreadful.” Hassell Inclusion Report
• “The lack of ability to search for, and find, subtitles for video content infuriated the deaf/dyslexic user….Rather than aid the disabled users, they considered the site’s accessibility page “unhelpful” at best.” Hassell Inclusion Report

Finally, many users commented that difficulties with the technology system compromised their ability to access content. Just under a quarter (24 per cent) of Pulse respondents said they had experienced problems such as unreliable streaming, or device, platform or browser compatibility issues. Frustrations commonly centred on the length of time taken for content to load, and issues with streaming audio-visual content:

• “No video ever streamed properly. Usually gave up.” Pulse survey
• “The recording of the War Requiem kept stalling and there was no sound.” Pulse survey
• “Major issues viewing the videos. They take so long to upload, most of the time I just give up.” Pulse survey

6.5 Did individual projects on The Space meet their audience-related objectives?

Participant views about whether the programme was a success in connecting their organisation with audiences were mixed. Some organisations had a positive audience experience, with the John Peel Centre for Creative Arts describing themselves as “overwhelmed” by the level of audience engagement with their project.

However, many were disappointed by the size of The Space audience:

• “Given the size and reach of the BBC we had hoped that the audience might have been larger and that a greater number would trickle through to our own website.” Space participant.

Several noted that their content received stronger audience figures on their own site than on The Space. For example, Britten Sinfonia’s Listening Machine project received 16 times the audience on its own stand-alone site as on The Space (38,000 unique users compared to 3,784).

This mixed experience is reflected in an evaluation of whether projects had met their own audience-related objectives. Exhibit 7 illustrates the range of different types of objectives participating organisations set themselves and the different ways in which they were or weren’t met, or were or weren’t measurable. Overall, approximately half of the project-level audience objectives had been met or exceeded, with a further half being either not met or not measurable. Some of the original targets were relatively unambitious (perhaps reflecting some participants’ desires to set targets they could meet), whereas others were the opposite, perhaps reflecting unrealistically high expectations based on the assumption that the BBC’s involvement would guarantee high audiences for the service.

Whilst a small number of arts organisations were very active and successful in marketing their own content on The Space, others cited the need to prioritise directly income-generating work, or even waiting for the associated live event to sell out before promoting their work on The Space.
6.6 Did participation in The Space programme have an effect on audiences beyond The Space?

Though it is difficult to prove causality, there is some evidence that The Space may, in different ways, have had a positive impact on live and place-based audiences.

6.6.1 Broadening the reach of a sold-out live event

The Birmingham Opera Company’s production of Stockhausen’s Mittwoch had sold out, but audiences were able to view the performance by the Helicopter Quartet on The Space. In the first week, compared to 500 people for the premiere and the total live audience of 2,500 (for all nights, including the rehearsal), a further 10,465 people were able to watch it online.

6.6.2 Driving increased audience figures for live events

Firm evidence is lacking on The Space’s ability to drive box office sales for place-based events. However, anecdotal evidence suggests a positive impact in some cases. When asked about the impact of The Space on box office sales, 16% of participants believed that The Space ‘had a positive impact’, and a further 32% said it ‘may have’ had a positive impact. ¹⁰ No organisation reported a negative impact on box office sales due to The Space. In addition, an

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¹⁰ We do not have data to establish how much overlap there was between the live audience and the online audience, nor to establish the wider impact on future purchase behaviour and brand affinity and awareness (for both Birmingham Opera Company, the work and the performers). N =36.
online survey of visitors to The Space indicated that 4% of those surveyed had subsequently purchased tickets for an event after seeing an artist's work.

Exhibit 11: Positive impact of participation in The Space on organisations’ audience metrics

6.6.3 Increased audience figures on other online platforms

There is considerable evidence that for some organisations their participation in The Space may have had a positive impact on their wider audiences online. An online survey of visitors to The Space indicated that 20% of those surveyed had visited artists’ or organisations’ websites after seeing their work. Over half of participants said that they had ‘definitely’ seen an increase in social media metrics that they could attribute to The Space, with a further 83 per cent saying they had ‘definitely’ or ‘maybe’ seen an impact on their own web site usage rates.

Britten Sinfonia’s Listening Machine project is an example commissioned by The Space commission contributing to increased audiences for the participant on other platforms:

- Listening Machine audiences on The Space were relatively modest, at around 3,784 unique users
- However, the commission also operated on its own micro-site (listeningmachine.org). Through this, the commission reached a further 38,000 unique users, making 40,000 in total – roughly the same number of people that Britten Sinfonia played to live in 2012
- As the project relied so heavily on Twitter (it turned Tweets into music), Twitter in San Francisco made a video of the project, which has been seen by a further 35,000 people. In addition, Britten Sinfonia gained a substantial additional following on Twitter and Facebook

6.6.4 Providing a launch-pad for content available on other platforms

Sheffield DocFest’s project From the Sea to the Land Beyond (Exhibit 10) combined an original composition with archive footage of the UK coastline. It was developed for The Space as an interactive project, allowing users to select their favourite footage and piece of music to create ‘virtual postcards’. Subsequent to this the full length film was shown on BBC4, illustrating the potential for online commissions to migrate to broadcast in certain circumstances. This was a first for the organisation and a huge success, generating press coverage and a high level of social media engagement.

6.7 Summary

Findings from The Space pilot suggest that there is demand for the content and experiences provided by The Space, and in this sense the programme has met its audience objectives. The site attracted over 1 million visits in the pilot period, and an average of 30,000 unique users a week, and through this the funding bodies have learnt valuable
lessons about the potential audience for the service, and about their needs and behaviours. Overall, independent evaluations suggested that there was considerable appetite for The Space, and audiences were mostly positive about the content hosted on the site. Users raised a number of issues related to technology and browser problems, navigation, search and video streaming.

Participants’ views about whether the programme was a success in connecting their organisation with audiences were mixed. Whilst some organisations had a positive audience experience, others supported the size of The Space audience and general levels of awareness for the service. At an individual project level, approximately half of the self-defined audience objectives had been met or exceeded, but a further half had either not been met or were not measurable.
Exhibit 12: Britten Sinfonia – wider audience impact

Britten Sinfonia’s 2012 audiences (excluding The Space)

- Core audience: over 42,500 people saw Britten Sinfonia live during 2012
- Britten Sinfonia is regularly featured on Radio 3 and throughout 2012 reached more than 1 million listeners
- Britten Sinfonia’s website receives over 36,000 hits per year
- Social media: During The Space programme Britten Sinfonia gained over 1500 Twitter followers and 250 Facebook fans

The Space wider audience impact

- 3,784 unique users saw the project on The Space site
- 38,000 unique users visited the project on an externally hosted microsite
- Britten Sinfonia gained 1,500 Twitter followers and 250 Facebook fans
- Twitter in San Francisco made a short film about the project that was seen by over 35,000 people
Exhibit 13: Sheffield Doc/Fest – wider audience impact

Sheffield DocFest’s 2012 audiences (ex. The Space)

- Seen live by over 30,000 people at their annual festival
- Outreach and engagement – industry conferences and talent outreach programs reach in excess of 1600 people annually
- Average website hits of 12,657 per month, peaking at over 20,000 a month around the festival
- Social media: prior to The Space Sheffield DocFest had approx. 2500 Facebook fans and 8000 Twitter followers

The Space wider audience impact

- Broadcast on BBC4 Storyville 0.5 million viewers, double the average slot rating. DVD of the show had been produced
- Press coverage of The Space project included The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph and Catlin Moran
- #SheffDocFest trended against Xfactor generating 1.54 million impressions and gained 5000 Twitter followers and 1000 Facebook fans
- Space views May-Oct for Sheffield DocFest: 5052 page views by 2365 unique visitors, who made 3011 visits.

Further online audience engagement linked to The Space
7 Lessons arising from The Space pilot

Four overarching findings from The Space pilot are consistent across the various evaluations and should be considered in the design of any future iteration of the service. In addition, a range of more specific, operational and process based lessons are highlighted that could help improve the service going forwards.

There is demand for the audience-facing content and experiences provided by The Space

Users of the service tended to be positive about both the concept and the content on offer: three quarters of survey respondents rated the quality of material on The Space as good or very good. Stakeholders throughout the arts sector were positive about the value a service such as The Space can add as a platform for reaching audiences but also as a stimulator of creative and digital innovation.

The evidence available thus suggests that there is demand, both within the arts sector and from a wider audience, for a service offering the kind of content and experiences provided by The Space. The following lessons offer some practical examples of what might make this service a more attractive proposition to audiences going forward.

There are a number of ways in which the service could better meet audience needs

The evaluations suggest a number of ways in which The Space could be refined to better meet audience needs going forward:

- The Space would benefit from a clearer identity and stronger editorial voice
- The site navigation should be redesigned to support more systematic search and discovery by users (user testing found that the information architecture did not lend itself to the systematic discovery of content)
- Greater integration with social media would make it easier to share, comment and discover content
- The service should be less reliant on video and should enable more interactivity
- Streaming and browsing should be improved to avoid any issues with viewing or listening to content
- Accessibility should be improved

Greater emphasis on marketing and content syndication would help future versions of The Space reach a wider audience

The Space would benefit in future from a more proactive syndication and distribution strategy, whereby content is made available to audiences via third party sites so as to maximise audience reach beyond The Space platform. These third party sites would likely include social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, but also others, such as those belonging to newspapers and specialist arts services.

Evidence from the evaluations suggests that awareness of the pilot remained low amongst potential audiences. A better resourced marketing effort to raise public awareness of The Space would significantly increase audiences. Leveraging the BBC’s own assets and cross promotion could also have a significant impact in this area.
The Space has demonstrated that it can be a powerful vehicle for developing digital capacity and for stimulating creativity and innovation – however, possible tensions between its varying objectives need to be carefully considered and managed

The Space had many positive impacts in terms of capacity-building. In addition, its most successful creative commissions point the way to a future vision for The Space that incorporates linear ‘capture’ projects, content about art, and bespoke, interactive ‘born digital’ projects.

However, the pilot showed that it is challenging to deliver the full range of The Space’s capacity-building, audience-facing and creative media objectives equally. The highest rating projects in audience-terms will not necessarily be the most innovative creatively, and the most successful capacity-building projects will not necessarily be the highest rating in terms of audiences or creative innovation.

Going forward, there is an opportunity to develop a strategy which better accommodates these tensions. One suggestion might be to develop a commissioning strategy that differentiates more clearly between different types of projects while continuing to accommodate a range of content, from more mainstream, popular commissions designed to attract large audiences, through to more innovative and experimental projects. Capacity building should continue to be important.

Other operational lessons for improving the service

In addition to the high level points discussed above, the evaluation findings suggest a range of more specific, operational and process-related lessons that might help improve The Space in the future:

- A more collaborative and iterative commissioning process, allowing for more dialogue with arts organisations, could lead to more interesting and ambitious projects with a clearer sense of purpose. The timescale was regarded by some as too challenging and the process too ‘linear’: submit project, approve or not approve, go to build
- Individual projects should be supported to develop objectives that are fit for purpose. During the pilot, some were insufficiently ambitious, some too ambitious, and many of the stated objectives did not have a measurable target
- The technical platform should be both sufficiently robust and flexible enough to accommodate a broader range of project ambitions. For example, during the pilot, the platform restricted the potential for user contributions
- The content publishing, ingestion and management processes should be streamlined and refined. Modifications should take into account the requirements of participants (eg for regular, up to date data and greater control of their content) and also the fact that many of them are relatively inexperienced in this area
- Analytics and data capture, and the communication of this information to arts organisations, should be improved. The success of the training programme run through the Arts Council and BBC Academy partnership should be built upon, with additional in-depth training in a range of high-demand areas such as rights management
- The successful mentoring programme could be further refined. For example, by ensuring mentors are engaged from the beginning of each project, and by using mentors with a wider range of skills, such as expertise in ‘born digital’ projects that go beyond video capture
Appendix A: Documents considered in compiling the summary evaluation

This evaluation of The Space drew on the following internal reports commissioned or produced by the Arts Council and the BBC:

**Arts Council England, Artistic Assessments (January 2013)**
In depth assessments of a selection of six projects featured on The Space

**Arts Council England, Profiling users of The Space (March 2013)**
Mosaic profiling data of The Space users

An overview evaluation of marketing and communications for the pilot phase of The Space

Future recommendations for The Space marketing and communication strategy

**CogApp, The Space: User testing research (November 2012)**
A report on cognitive user testing, analysing the navigation and interaction of users with the site and the overall communication of The Space proposition

**eDigital Research, Pulse survey – website survey: Initial findings (August 2012)**
Independent evaluation of the pop-up Space user survey, commissioned by the BBC Audience and Marketing

**Emblem Digital, The Space: Pilot analytics report (February 2013)**
An independent evaluation of The Space audience patterns and behavior, based on the Google analytics data, commissioned by Arts Council England and BBC

**Hassell Inclusion, User testing of The Space with disabled users (December 2012)**
A report on the experience of users with disabilities accessing The Space, commissioned by Arts Council England

**MTM, Evaluation of The Space: Impact on Participants (February 2013)**
An independent evaluation of the impact of The Space programme on participating organisations, commissioned by Arts Council England and the BBC

**MTM, Evaluation of The Space: Artistic quality and innovation (December 2012)**
An independent evaluation of the artistic quality and innovation of The Space, commissioned by Arts Council England and the BBC

**TrendSpot, The Space: Pulse evaluation deep dive (February 2013)**
Qualitative analysis on Pulse survey data to provide an overview of audience perceptions
### Appendix B: The Space pilot initial 51 commissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Expression of Interest artform</th>
<th>Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan Sillitoe Committee</td>
<td>Sillitoe and the art of Life-cycle maintenance</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>East Midlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldeburgh Music</td>
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