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*EPSRC Cultures and Communities Network+ Interim Report*

Dr Aristeia Fotopoulou and Dr Kate O'Riordan

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Funding Bodies



Publishing platforms:



Universities:



## Introduction

The objective of the network was to bring together different strands of feminist media-technology studies research that pursues questions about a) how non-institutionalized communities engage in digital media, and b) how to sustain feminist networked knowledge production. These aims were inspired by work in feminist media studies and science and technology studies. Any reference to specific scholars runs the risk of eliding the work of others, and this is not the intention here, however it is worth noting that we were thinking about the *Digital Dead End* by Virginia Eubanks, and projects by Sharon Daniels, Natalie Bookchin and Mary Flanagan that touched on these issues. We were also influenced more immediately by the outcomes of the EPSRC CCN+ Expertise and Knowledge Scoping Study and Workshop, and the work of scholars involved in these including Caroline Bassett, Aristeia Fotopoulou and Maureen McNeil. A third element to which we made connections were feminist and queer media projects and alternative forms of publishing, networking and disseminating and in this we intended the project to intersect with the Fembot Collective and FemTechNet in the USA, and the Open Humanities Press and ReFrame in the UK.

Feminist/queer scholarship and activism can make, and has historically made, important interventions in sustainability both on national and international levels and in its theoretical and practical embedding to technology. In particular, feminist cultural production has a long history of working to enable engagement with computing, technology and media making. Art and activism are areas of cultural production that cut across communities of exclusion, including intersections of gender, sexuality, race, age, ability, economics and language.

## Aims

We aspired to bring together scholars, research and projects such that they might be in conversation with each other in different ways. This was in order to meet the primary aims of the network:

- 1) To learn. In the face of exclusion how do people become enabled to engage in digital media
- 2) To create. How can an understanding of these engagements be sustained and made into stable, long-term, forms of networked knowledge

This interim report takes stock of the work carried out so far and outlines plans for the duration of the project. The project was suspended for three months due to the PI taking medical leave for the same period.

## Progress

Following on from the award notification the project commenced 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013. The first network workshop was held on 17th of May at the University of Sussex: *Queer, feminist social media praxis*. During this early phase we also conducted a national search for a project administrator and appointed Anna Sloan to the project, we tasked her with organizing communications, and her primary responsibility was setting up the project website <http://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/susnet/>

The first phase involved scoping and planning with network participants to identify further participants, research that we wanted to connect to, and deciding on the format for content for the website. It also involved website planning and gathering video content for the site. We identified key events to record and key people we hoped would provide video content. In anticipation of the project, we had already recorded content from the Lesbian Lives Conference in February 2013, and we recorded sessions from the first network workshop, we also commissioned talking head videos from contributors.

Anna Sloan, together with Rachel Tavenor and Georgia Rooney, edited the video material and attached clips to a project logo before uploading to the site, we used *Vimeo* for the video hosting and *Wordpress* for the website.

A timeline of events in the early stage includes:

February 2013

- Steering group meeting

March 2013

- CCN+ Network Knowledge Exchange trip to the US in March 2013 (Aristea Fotopoulou)

April 2013

- 'Susnet: Sustaining networked knowledge', Paper presented by Aristea Fotopoulou at the CCIG Forum 'Enacting Public Engagement: Collaboration and Critique Within/Beyond the University'. 23 April 2013. The Open University.

May 2013

- Project commences
- First project workshop
- Anna Sloan appointed to project

June 2013

- Start website development
- Meeting with *Reframe* (hosting the website)
- 'Feminist spaces and digital methodologies: Mapping reproductive technologies as a social controversy online,' Paper presented by Aristea Fotopoulou at the FWSA 2013 conference ['The Lady Doth Protest: Mapping](#)

Feminist Movements, Moments and Mobilisations', 21 – 23 June 2013  
(Feminist and Women's Studies Association, UK & Ireland).

July 2013

- Design website
- Issue CFP for special issue of ADA: Issue 5, *Queer, Feminist Digital Media Praxis* (follow up to the first workshop)
- Present project at *Ecosex Symposium*, Colchester, UK  
<http://ecosexlab.org/schedule/england/>

August 2013

- Finalise format for talking head video and solicit content
- Edit video content
- Planning for next workshops
- Anna Sloan leaves the project
- Decide on papers for special issue of ADA

September 2013

- CCN+ meeting
- Edit video
- Assemble content

October 2013

- Project presentation by Kate O'Riordan at Digital Culture section of ECREA, University of Bonn, Germany <http://dccecrea.wordpress.com/workshop/>

SUSPEND PROJECT (PI on medical leave)

February

- First edit of papers for ADA

March 2014

- Recommence project
- Continue to solicit content
- Revise project plan
- Interim report

## Outline of work

March 2014

- Continue to solicit content for the conversations part of the project
- Develop website

April 2014

- Mapping and visualisation of people, forms of engagement, issues and community/sector actors from, expertise workshop, digital activism workshop and ADA
- Develop platform (e.g. *Gephi*) to function as mapping and visualization tool
- Edit special edition of ADA

May 2014

- Work on visualization

- Publication of ADA

June 2014

- Coding workshop (TBC)
- Network meeting + launch event

July 2014

- Final report
- Final dissemination

## **Dissemination**

- Launch event – TBC

## **Participants**

Tully Barnett, Caroline Bassett, Megan Bigelow, Monica J. Casper, Cecile Chevalier, T.L. Cowan, Giuliana Cucinelli, Aristeia Fotopoulou, Karin Hansson, Joan Haran, Rachel Hurst, Olu Jenzen, Alez Juhasz, Irmi Karl, Sarah Kember, Susana Loza, Dayna McLeod, Maureen McNeil, Darnell L. Moore, Michelle Moravec, Lusike Lynete Mukhongo, Lyndsey O'Connor, Kate O'Riordan, Nathan Rambukkana, Jasmine Rault, Noopur Raval, Georgia Rooney, Roxanne Samer, Anna Sloan, Carol Stabile, Rachel Tavenor, Helen Thornham, Joanna Zylinksa, Liesbet van Zoonen